

The Racialisation of Social Scientific Research on South Africa

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The study of South African societies has been framed within the logic of the "factual" existence of "race" and "ethnicity". A brief historical account of the context of studies shows a range of unresolved questions in mainstream research on South African society. It has not been shown exactly why and how "race" and "ethnicity" are sociologically useful categories for analysis and has not actually been made clear how "race" and "ethnicity" help "explain" South African society. The mainstream research has been marked by the empirical-analytical approach which guides to the paradigm of divided society. How has mainstream work sought to establish a critically distant position from apartheid thinking, and has it been able to move substantively beyond the "official" "racial" and "ethnic" classifications of apartheid ideology? - are two main problems discussed in this paper.

Key words: RACE, ETHNICITY, RESEARCH PARADIGM, DIVIDED SOCIETY, SOCIAL INTERVENTION

Within the domain of social scientific knowledge production in South Africa, there has been a socio-politically influential group of methodologically "mainstream" sociologists and political scientists. Reflecting common-sense appearances and following the dictates of empirical-analytical social science - including the application of statistical methods and the canon of objectivity (Fay, 1975) - the study of South African societies has been framed within the imagery and logic of "race" and "ethnicity", such that, for many years, efforts to engineer social change away from apartheid were predicated on the "factual" existence of "race" and "ethnicity".

In line with such understanding there was a general concern to develop and promote a particular consociational and federal vision of South African political life. And this vision was taken forward politically during the 1970s and 1980s, with the active involvement of many of its academic proponents, by Chief Buthelezi and his Inkatha party; as Inkatha's position became marginalised, the vision was adapted and extended as a negotiating platform by "verligte" ("enlightened") Afrikaner nationalists led by F. W. de Klerk, who in 1989 succeeded P. W. Botha as leader of the National Party and opened negotiations with the liberation movements (MacDonald, 1992; O'Meara, 1996).

A brief historical account of the context in which mainstream work and its vision arose will be helpful. H. F. Verwoerd who, as Prime Minister (1958-1966), transformed the piecemeal implementation of the pre-Second World War segregation into the post-war design of grand apartheid, was himself sociologist. Before the war, Verwoerd held a chair in sociology at the University of Stellenbosch, one of the first Universities after the University of Chicago to have such a department. The intellectual justifications of the apartheid design were bolstered in the two decades after the war by the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Gordon ,

1991). Most of SABRA's social scientific subscribers were Afrikaans-speaking members of the "Broederbond" (League of Brothers), a secret politico-cultural organisation comprised of most male members of the ruling Afrikaner elite (Wilkins and Strydom, 1978). In turn, SABRA members dominated in SASOV, the "Whites-only Suid-Afrikaanse Sociologievereniging" (South African Sociological Association), and were also to be found in its counterpart organisation in political science, in which some English-speaking social scientists uneasily participated.

"Racial" segregation was legislatively imposed upon universities in 1959. The African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-African Congress (PAC) were band a year later, their leaders went into exile or underground, and most of the latter group were captured in 1964. Until the end of the decade, above-ground opposition was sustained in liberal terms by the non-racial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), by Helen Suzman in Parliament, and by the Rand Daily Mail newspaper. At the beginning of the 1970s, English-speaking social scientists mainly of this liberal persuasion, broke away from SASOV and together with a couple of renegade anti-Broederbond Afrikaans academics, established the non-racial and regional Association for Sociology in Southern Africa¹. Social anthropologists and political scientists of like mind also became active in ASSA. Ironically, this occurred just as the influence was spreading, in "racially" segregated schools and the specially-established "ethnic" universities, of the racial and separatist Black Consciousness Movement led by Steve Biko - which soon developed a research strand of its own (Pityana, 1981).

Among English-speaking social scientists within South Africa who were concerned with what was termed "race relations", the dominant outlook during the 1960s and 1970s thus had a liberal political intent, in opposition to the prevailing legislatively enacted racism of apartheid (Horrell, 1971). This pressing concern with "race" readily found a social scientific locus in "plural society theory", then in its heyday. From this perspective analyses of South Africa centred on "ethnicity" for its understanding of the genesis and process of "racial" categorisation prevalent in everyday as well as in legal and political discourse and practice (van den Berghe, 1967; Kuper, 1974); and the chosen methodologies were those of empirical social science².

This developing mix of liberal politics and pluralist thinking soon faced radical challenges. Within South Africa in the early 1970s, NUSAS students, inspired by the renaissance of Marxism in Europe, helped revived African trade unionism through taking part in previously dormant industrial councils and setting up industrial aid societies. Young Marxist social scientists who had undertaken postgraduate degrees in England or France, and were participating in nascent worker organisation, began to establish or recast industrial sociology courses in sociology departments (Webster, 1991). At the same time, a Marxist inspired revision of South African social and labour history was beginning to unfold, primarily in England, initiated by South African social scientists and historians in exile (Wright, 1977; Johnstone, 1982). By the mid-1980s it was argued that neo-Marxist sociology was dominant in some sociology departments at English-language South African universities (Jubber, 1983).

The revival of Marxist thought was, however, marked by a number of failings (Posel, 1983). Most notably, there has been an inability to rise above crude materialism and theoretically specify just how class intersects with non-economic forces, and there has been a "misconceptualisation of the sources of power and privilege in South Africa" (MacDonald and James, 1993: 388). Moreover, as Marxist writings have been predominantly historical and an-

¹ See "Editor's Preface" in Helm (ed., 1977). For an account of ASSA's role, see Webster (1991). SASOV amalgamated with ASSA in 1992, to form the non-racial South African Sociological Association, SASA.

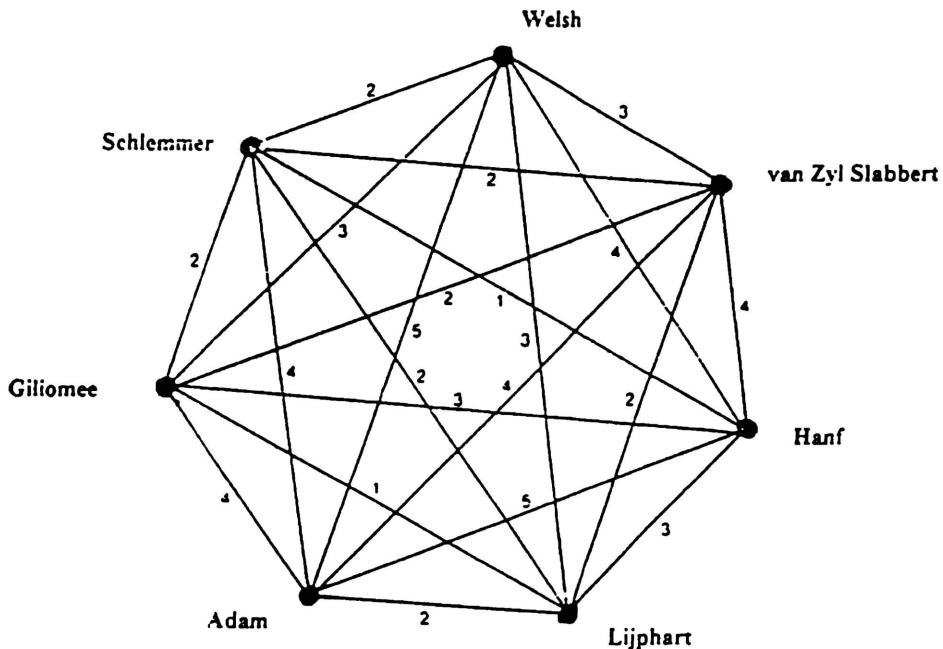
² Many of these empirical, usually attitudinal, studies are outlined in Lever (1978). Also see Morse and Orpen (eds., 1975).

ti-empirical in approach, there has been - with rare exception (Fisher, 1978) - little use of surveys or serious attention to attitudinal data, especially of a quantitative nature. As a result, in the 1980, emphasis on "race" and "ethnicity" was not significantly displaced but remained the taken-for-granted starting-point in much social scientific research. "Race" and "ethnicity" continues to be seen as independent sociological factors, having their own effects and determinate relationships with bearing on the country's future trajectory.

The Mainstream Network

In the apartheid years, most society-centred analyses concerned with promoting visions of a future South Africa took "race" and "ethnicity" as descriptive and analytical categories, and proceeded to see the key players as "racial" and "ethnic" groups. In this regard, since the 1970s and especially over the 1980s, a closely-knit network of scholars and the associated intellectual framework can be explicitly identified by linkages in the literature. Taking the major mainstream social scientific books on South Africa published between 1971 and 1993, and charting interlocks through social network analysis (Scott, 1991) - in terms of co-authorship, contributors (in the case of edited books), preface acknowledgments and dust-cover endorsements - the central connections can be presented as a sociogram (see *Sociogram 1*). This network of individuals forms the hegemonic core of the mainstream, in which the standards for other works were set in terms of the types of questions posed and data used. The sociogram clearly reveals a marked pattern of mutual validation, with individual writers using each others work and advice to legitimate their own writings.

Sociogram (1) INDIVIDUALS INTERLOCKED THROUGH FIFTEEN LEADING SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC BOOKS ON SOUTH AFRICA, 1971-1993



The key books include Hanf. et al. (1978/1981): **South Africa: The Prospects of Peaceful Change**, Adam and Giliomee (1979): **Ethnic Power Mobilized**, Welsh (1979): **South African Options**, Lijphart (1985): **Power-Sharing in South Africa**, Adam and Moodley (1986): **South Africa Without Apartheid**, Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989): **From Apartheid to Nation-Building** and Horowitz (1991): **A Democratic South Africa**?³ Focus falls on books because they are more widely read and cited than journal articles (Blau, 1973), and offer more detailed and sustained overviews of South African society. Attention is given to acknowledgments in the prefaces rather than cross-citations because the former are stronger indications of shared values. It is evident that this is not a parochial network. It has been linked into, and consolidated by, global dimensions of social science. The network include the internationally - known academics, Adam, Lijphart and Hanf. It is, however, a network within which - in terms of apartheid racial designations - "Black" social scientists have only been present at the margins.

There are various other ways in which the network has been pervasive and interlocked. Many of the individuals identified in the sociogram have formed part of an international academic community. There have been dozens of international conferences on South Africa; such as, most notably, the conference on "Change in Contemporary South Africa" at Mount Kisco (USA) in 1975, the "International Conference on Intergroup Accommodation in Plural Societies" at Cape Town (South Africa) in 1977, and "The Prospects for Peaceful Change in South Africa" conference at Titisee (Germany) in 1978 - the first two of which resulted in key books (Thompson and Butler, eds., 1975; Rhoadie, ed., 1978). The network has also been interlocked through membership of professional associations and the editorial boards of South Africa's leading social scientific journals such as "**Politikon**", "**Social Dynamics**" and the "**Journal of Contemporary African Studies**".

This has not been an "invisible" college (Crane, 1972) but a clearly visible social circle in which there has been a considerable degree of face-to-face contact. Most of the "stars" identified in the sociogram (those individuals with the highest number of interlocks) have been opinion leaders in as much as they have frequently contributed to the press, radio and television. They have frequently written articles for "The Star" (Johannesburg) and "Cape Times", for business-oriented magazines such as "Leadership", "South African International" and South African version of the "New Statesman", "Die Suid-Afrikaan". These are individuals that have most been sought after to give keynote speeches to high-profile conferences, workshops and briefings.

Although not totally unified, and with some individuals having shifted ground over the years, this network has been marked by a particular approach (the empirical-analytical) which guides research to a set of problems - the reform of a "racially" and "ethnically" **divided society** - and as such constitutes a "paradigm" (Kuhn, 1970). But just how has seeing South Africa in terms of "race" and "ethnicity" helped to explain it? And how has mainstream work sought to establish a critically distant position from apartheid thinking? Has it been able to move substantively beyond the "official" "racial" and "ethnic" classifications of apartheid ideology, especially given the ruling National Party's shift, in the 1950/1960s, from "racial" to cultural rhetoric, from "race" to "ethnicity"?

³ The rest of the fifteen key books are : Adam (1971), Thompson and Butler (eds., 1975), Rhoadie (ed., 1978), van der Merwe and Schrire (eds., 1980), Berger and Godsell (eds., 1988), Giliomee and Gagliano (eds., 1991), Adam and Moodley (1993). This selection of key books is supported by citation analysis. The Social Sciences Citation Index, January 1986 to December 1996, gives 180 citations to the work of Adam, 112 to Giliomee and 71 to Schlemmer. Lijphart is one of the world's most cited political scientists. The sociogram represents the core of the network charted from the key books in that it shows all those individuals who are fully interlocked with each other (the entire network is too complicated to profitably show as a sociogram). The numbers on the sociogram indicate the particular number of interlocks connecting any two individuals.

Basically, the mainstream has subjected "race" and "ethnicity" to a more sophisticated understanding than that offered by apartheid ideologues. "Race" and "ethnicity" have been seen as more fluid and contextual, and it was argued that they should not have been unjustly used to allocate distinct rights and set legislative boundaries between people. The National Party's classifications were seen as false, for, as Lijphart puts it, "the constituent segments of this plural society can be finally determined only by a process of free and voluntary affiliation and free competition" (1985:50). It was argued that once we move away from imposed "individual distinctions" based on "race" and the "artificial" aspects of "ethnicity" created by apartheid, the political saliency of "race" (but not its reality) will submerge and "ethnicity" will emerge as something of value to be defended. Here, as Adam and Moodley stated: "Good racial relations would be ethnic relations" (1986:16, and in Banton, 1983:397).

In the context of such understanding it was consistently urged that South Africa ought to move towards an open pluralism by creating institutions that accommodate "racial" and "ethnic" differences, and that would allow for voluntary "racial" and "ethnic" group attachments and freedom of association. This is a central theme that runs from the early days of the Spro-Cas (1973) "Political Alternatives Report" through to the demise of apartheid (Rich, 1989). The theme evolved, from attempts in the 1970s to chart an evolutionary course away from separate development by linking "homeland" and non-"homeland" areas together in a consociational federalist system through national debates on consociational power-sharing in the 1980s, to proposals for constitutional structures and mechanisms during the transition years (1990-1994). On this basis, the mainstream network first countered the "ethno-national" racially-based grand apartheid design of Verwoerd on the one hand, but then moved to moderate the non-racial unitary State design of the African National Congress on the other hand. And now with the advent of South Africa's new democracy the future is viewed in pessimistic light, it being argued that given the country's "racial" and "ethnic" divisions "consolidation may take a long time" (Schlemmer, 1994:22) or even that "the evolution of a liberal democracy is most unlikely" (Giliomee, 1995:104).

Unanswered Question

There are, however, serious failings in the mainstream approach to "race" and "ethnicity", at both a theoretical and empirical level. These are considered in turn. At theoretical level there has been a failure to provide a coherent position on the "race" and "ethnicity". Instead, what has been offered are definitions of "race" and "ethnicity" which are sometimes overlapping, sometimes synonymous, sometimes dovetailing with definitions of "nationalism", "culture" or "social group". The mainstream paradigm has presented an eclectic and changing mix of "primordial", instrumental and social constructivist approaches to "race" and "ethnicity" in order to try and give specific meaning to presumed inner attributes and account for their independent causal significance.

"Race" and "ethnicity" are considered of primary import in the South African context - why? What are the essential differences for which "race" and "ethnicity" account? Thoughtful answers have not been conspicuous. In **"Ethnic Power Mobilized"**, Adam and Giliomee (1979) saw "race" and "ethnicity" as explaining something which "class" could not, but just what this was not clearly explained. They failed to theoretically specify just how "race" and "ethnicity" are constituted as separate orders in society and dialectically interact (Wolpe, 1986). To move analysis forward there was an increasing rejection of the kind of simple "primordialism" which infused Lijphart's (1985) **"Power-Sharing in South Africa"** in favour of an effort to forge a convergence of "primordialism" with a careful measure of social constructivism. In this view, whilst it is assumed that there is a prior "primordial" infrastructure, "racial" and "ethnic" consciousness are treated as latent universal potentialities which only come to the fore under certain social contexts to meet or serve people's socio-political inte-

rests. But just how do we explain where “racial” and “ethnic” consciousness comes from in the first place?

In the search for an answer, in the case of “ethnicity” in particular, focus has centred on social psychological processes of group formation and the “need” for group identity. Gilio-mee (1990), for example, has seen the potency of “ethnicity” in terms of “the psychological demands for the affirmation of group worth”: Schlemmer (1991) has written that “ethnicity” “offers the immediate rewards of ego-expansion and psychological gratification”; and Horowitz has maintained that “the sources of ethnic conflict reside, above all, in the struggle for relative group worth” (1995:142). There is, however, a serious problem with this. Whilst such social psychological approaches may help explain the intensity of social cleavages it is not made clear how they explain their specific nature. Just how do social psychological mechanisms link to “ethnicity” as opposed to other factors, such as “class”? What is the specificity of “ethnicity” in and of itself? How do “group differences” relate to “ethnic differences”?

These questions remain unanswered. From Lijphart’s recourse to “primordialism” to Horowitz’s “careful measure” of social constructivism there remains the common belief that there is “something there”. But we are never told what specifically is “there”; in the final analysis there has been and remains, a failure to establish the coherent position that offers valid answers as to the thinghood of “race” and “ethnicity”. In consequence we encounter a theoretical dead-end. The search for a convincing theory of “race” and “ethnicity”, in the key works, has been unsuccessful. In light of this it is hard, at a *socio-theoretical level*, to see why we should use such terms as “Black” and “White”, “Zulu” and “Xhosa” except as the *end-product* of an explanation of why they continue to occur in everyday life. Nonetheless, mainstream social scientists proceeded “to tell the story”, granting “race” and “ethnicity” independent causal significance. The reason why the mainstream work has remained under-theorised is that considerable reliance has been placed on the strength of “race” and “ethnicity” at the level of empirical evidence, especially as revealed in quantitative data. As Horowitz has written, empirical survey data proves the “continuing importance of racial, ethnic, and subethnic identities in South Africa” (1991:85). This reflects the ontological and epistemological primacy, which empirical-analytical social sciences ascribes to what can allegedly be directly observed; such that truth-claims must be consistent with the empirical “facts” collected and revealed in objective manner (Fay, 1975).

This, however, is to lead from one set of criticisms to another. For, there has been a reluctance to recognise that to view society in terms of “racial” and “ethnic” categories is to work with totalizing concepts of group identity which tend to deny “internal” differences and cross-cutting commonalities, mask diversity and multiply identifications, and conceal the contingency and ambiguity of every identity. In particular, a central focus on the categories of “race” and “ethnicity” has resulted in the neglect of the complexity of social differentiation with regard to age, gender, religion, education, occupation, wealth, status, region and urbanisation. There has been little attempt in mainstream texts to analytically disentangle “race” and “ethnicity” from other factors. None of the key books gives any real concern to dealing with complex causal relations where we attempt to control and handle many variables, there have been no sophisticated multivariate analysis designed to tease out the independent effects, if any, of “race” and “ethnicity” (and in this sense the mainstream’s professed commitment to empirical-analytical science falls short).

Typical of this is Gilio-mee and Schlemmer’s use of a survey of “Black” industrial workers to show that differences in “ethnic” attitudes in “endorsing the answer category of ‘angry and impatient’ with regard to feelings about the political situation in South Africa” (1998:168) varied between Zulu (62%), Xhosa (44%) and Sotho (45%). Is it the case that “ethnic” category is related to political choices without the mediation of other factors? Such recourse to “ethnicity” is not self-explanatory. More recently, this shortcoming has been re-

flected in the view that the April 1994 election was little more than a straight "racial census", with "Whites" voting for the National Party, and "Blacks" voting for the ANC; "one can use the term 'racial census' for the outcome of the 1994 election: the choice of political party correlated with the position in the racial or ethnic hierarchy of a particular group" (Giliomee, 1996:97).⁴ But why should "race" be taken as a most important determinant of voting behaviour? Simply to show the correlations between "race" and people's voting behaviour can actually say nothing as to causation. It cannot be automatically assumed that "race" determined the way people voted. What of other background characteristics such as age, gender, religion, level of education and class location (Mattes, 1995)? In any event, it cannot simply be said that the political parties in South Africa represent exclusive "racial" interests; particularly with regard to the ANC, but also with the new National Party.

What has transpired in mainstream work is that the determining salience of "race" and "ethnicity" has been inferred, never shown. There has been no attempt to spin out a *fully specified* theory of the connections between "race" and "ethnicity" and other variables such as political attitudes and voting, to thereby yield empirically testable predictions or propositions. "Race" and "ethnicity" should not be left to speak for themselves, they stand in need of further explanation. People may indeed place value on considering themselves as "Black" and "White", "Zulu" or "Xhosa", but the question is how and why do these conceptions of identity have meaning?

Moreover, while there is indeed much evidence to show that most South Africans subscribe (in one form or another) to "racial" or "ethnic" terms of identity, there is also counter-evidence which shows that some South Africans refuse to accord "race" any significance, and that some African people have not internalised "ethnic" labels but have seen them as partial and imposed, with no subjective significance in day-to-day interaction⁵. People have contested the "collective selves" promoted by apartheid society; notably through non-racialism, which is based on the principled rejection of a racialised understanding of South African society. There are many examples of the presence of non-racialism as subjectively lived experience, especially for people located within organisations and institutions that have professed a non-racial standpoint; such as the ANC, South African Communist Party, Congress of South African Trade Unions, the South African Council of Churches and Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, the English-language universities, and many smaller professional, labour and civic organisations (Foster, 1991; Norval, 1996). Mainstream scholars have not given a *voice* to the non-racial alternatives projected by many anti-apartheid organisations.

Just as seriously, there is scant recognition in mainstream work of the need for more contextual and interpretive research methods which would probe the subjective experiences, perceptions and feelings that shape peoples' responses. To stress the empirical "facts" of "race" and "ethnicity" is not to offer "insight into the genesis of the present patterns of response and their relationship to the intrinsic meaning of what is experienced" (Adorno, 1972:245; Keat, 1979). In particular, by their recourse to socio-psychological notions of "ethnic" identification, mainstream writings have tended to neglect the diachronic dimension, i.e. change over time. For instance, they have thus underplayed - or misrepresented - what has been conspicuous about the pattern of support for African political parties since the mid-1970s: the relatively steady growth in support, across all language-groupings, for the ANC⁶.

⁴ See also Schlemmer, 1994; Johnson and Schlemmer, 1996).

⁵ On the rejection of "race", see Frederikse (1990). On the rejection of "ethnicity", see the surveys of: Brandel-Syrier (1971), Edelstein (1974), Mayer (1975), Dreyer (1989).

⁶ In this regard, contrast Horowitz (1991:48-61) with Orkin (1989a:84).

Through such omissions, empirical social research promotes the objectification of the Other such that the presumed "facts" of "race" and "ethnicity" come to actually frame survey questions and the collation of findings. The two major social scientific surveys - Hanf (1977) and Buthelezi Commission (1981) - both conducted separate standardised surveys for "Black" and "White" opinion and offered restrictive, selective and even manipulative choices in questions and answers⁷.

More than this, the use of externally imposed "racial" and "ethnic" categorisation can lead to debilitating circular reasoning in which the meaning of non-racial and non-ethnic awareness is never fairly confronted. In Horowitz's *A Democratic South Africa?*, for example, we find that the belief in "ethnicity" remains unchallenged regardless of empirical findings. In one case, it is concluded that "when Xhosa provide a nonethnic response to an identity question on a sample survey, they are reflecting their view of South African society" (1991: 69-70). But how can non-ethnic response be attributed to "ethnicity"? Similarly, Adam and Moodley (1993:76) argued against the non-racialism of ANC by pointing to estimated voting preferences according to "race" in opinion polls conducted over 1991 and 1992 which indicated that the ANC holds less attraction to "Indians", "Coloureds" and "Whites" than the National Party. But what, at this level, is the value of analysing non-racialism in terms of "race"? After all, a "racially" mixed organisation is not necessarily non-racial (Taylor, 1992).

In sum, there are clearly a range of unresolved and largely unrecognised tensions and obstacles in mainstream research. It has not been shown exactly why and how "race" and "ethnicity" are sociologically useful categories for analysis. It has not actually been made clear how "race" and "ethnicity" help "explain" South African society. Mainstream scholars have generally assumed rather than demonstrated that "race" and "ethnicity" proved the basis of South African society, have not probed the meaning of the categories around which their analysis revolves, and have failed to explore the relationship between "race", "ethnicity" and other forms of social differentiation. And not surprisingly mainstream scholars have not found themselves at a loss to account for the advent of a non-racial democracy which has rejected specific forms of protection for "racial" or "ethnic" group politics.

Constraints on Understanding

To begin to understand why mainstream social sciences have not come to terms with understanding "race" and "ethnicity" we must recognise how the root causes of all these problems can be traced to the emphasis placed on an empiricist conception of data and "the interest in controlling an objectified environmental world" (Apel, 1979:6; Habermas, 1988.). Centrally, the objectification of the "facts" and commitment to objectivity in the process of enquiry which are characteristic of empirical-analytical social science, renders social enquiry highly susceptible to the sway of South Africa's racialised social order. This is because the question of "objectivity" with regard to "race" and "ethnicity", as the mainstream do, is to take a position. It is to state that one believes such "things" exist and should count as pre-formed data. To be objective on "race" and "ethnicity" is not a non-ideological, value-free standpoint; objectivity is implicated in the failings of mainstream work and should not be regarded as being beyond question.

The problem is that empirical social science fails to see society as an active subject. It "confuses the epiphenomenon - what the world has made of us - with the thing itself" (Adorno, 1972:244; Bernstein, 1979). The racialisation of social scientific research, whereby "racial" and "ethnic" identity are taken for granted, occurs through the silence of empiricism; through the "forgetting" of a history in which racism in South Africa is seen as grounded in

⁷ The Hanf et al. questionnaire first asked respondents if they had heard of Inkatha and what they thought the organisation could do for them. Immediately afterwards it asked respondents for their leadership choice. See Orkin (1989a:296).

nineteenth century Western thought (and earlier colonial frameworks), and is a product of European modernity (Crais, 1992); a history in which "racial" and "ethnic" conceptualisation has been socially constructed to serve as ways for ordering, controlling and ruling society.

Once "race" and "ethnicity" are seen as categories invented in a social process to pursue social differentiation and perpetuate inequality, it is clear that "race" and "ethnicity" do not exist outside meanings imputed by people. And it follows that to use them *uncritically* is to engage in inscription, not description; it is to use words that uphold investments of power and privilege. Looked at from this perspective, mainstream social science has not only reflected South Africa's racialised social order but has actually been implicated in its very constitution.

Part of the problem is that there has been a failure to see how "race" and "ethnicity" themselves have entered social science in terms of specific theories and methods, especially through discredited nineteenth century anthropological theories (Barkan, 1992; Harding, ed., 1993). There has been a failure to see "race" and "ethnicity" as residues of pre-Enlightenment thought rooted in Europe.

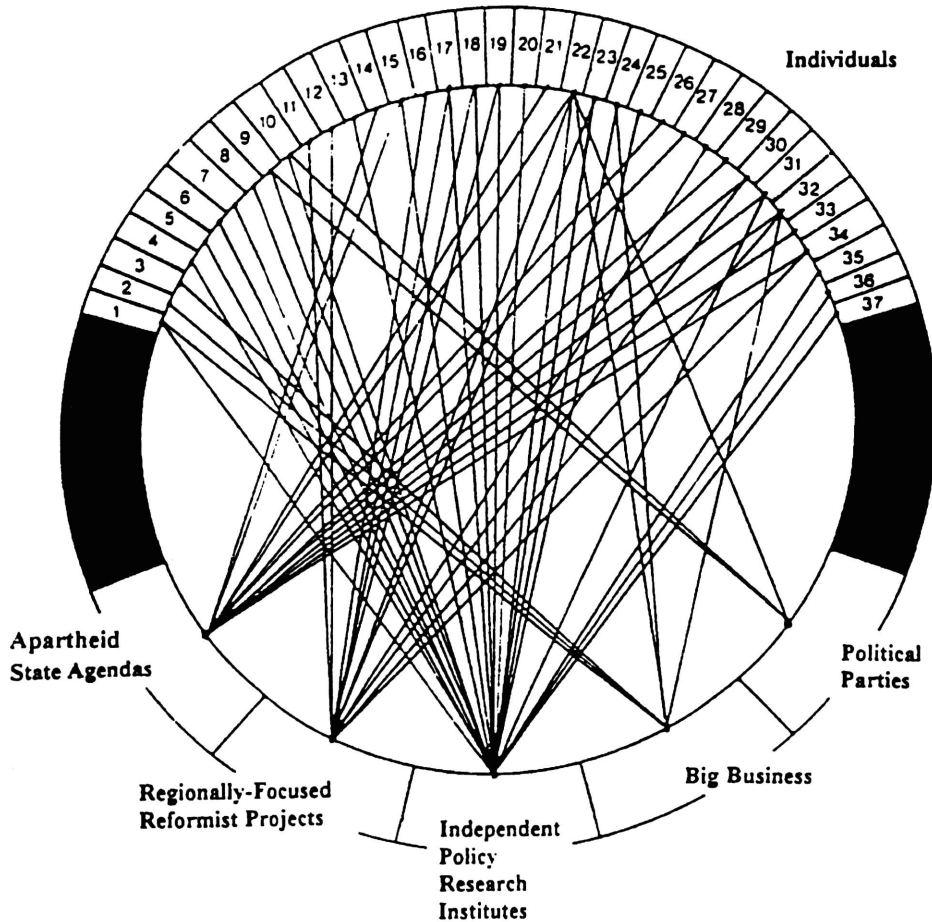
The racialisation of mainstream work, the assumption that there are to one extent or another such givens as "racial" and "ethnic" groups, also has roots in the weight of the earlier social scientific orthodoxy which conceptualised South African society in terms of the "sociology of race relations" and "plural society theory", both of which are marked by an inability to take "race" as problematic in itself. For instance, the work of Kuper (1974) and van den Berghe (1967) - both of whom are cited or personally acknowledged in many of the key texts - treats "race" as an irreducible constituent of human identity, having independent causal significance⁸. To more thoroughly understand the racialisation of mainstream research and to account for its wide acceptance, we have to turn to consider the social relations between knowledge and power in South Africa under National Party rule. We have to understand how the production and use of social scientific knowledge was determined and reinforced by its location in, and connections with, the power structure of apartheid South Africa. The extent to which the mainstream has been tied to various institutional agendas and political interventions is shown in the sociogram (see *Sociogram 2*). This sociogram locates all those individuals identified in our analysis of the fifteen key books in a wide research field which intersects with the Apartheid State, big business, regionally-focused reformist projects, independent policy research institutes and political parties⁹. The sociogram points towards the

⁸ See, in particular, Wolpe (1986:111-12). On the reductionism of "race relations theory" also see Miles (1989). For a critique of "plural society theory", see Johnstone (1976).

⁹The sociogram refers to the following institutions and projects: State Agendas (Constitutional designs, Human Sciences Research Council, South African Bureau of Racial Affairs); Big Business (Anglo-American Corporation, South African Foundation, Urban Foundation); Reformist Projects (Quail, Lombard and Buthelezi Commissions); Policy Research Institutes (South African Institute of Race Relations, Africa Institute, Centre for Intergroup Studies, Centre for Policy Studies, Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa, South African Institute of International Affairs, Institute for Multi-Party Democracy); Political Parties (Progressive Federal Party/Democratic Party, Inkatha). The sources used included a wide range of circulars, reports and publications of the above mentioned bodies, it also included confidential discussions with the key informants. The 37 individuals charted on the sociogram are: (1) M. Spicer, (2) P. Berger, (3) A. Bernstein, (4) N. Charton, (5) T. R. H. Davenport, (6) R. M. de Villiers, (7) A. du Toit, (8) B. Naude, (9) D. Welsh, (10) F. van Zyl Slabbert, (11) A. Lijphart, (12) R. I. Rotberg, (13) M. Savage, (14) D. A. Kotze, (15) H. van der Merwe, (16) W. B. Wosloo, (17) H. Adam, (18) O. Dhlomo, (19) H. Giliomee, (20) A. Boraine, (21) P. LeRoux, (22) L. Schlemmer, (23) G. C. Olivier, (24) G. G. Maasdorp, (25) A. S. Matthews, (26) N. J. Rhoadie, (27) N. M. Stulz, (28) J. L. Sadie, (29) B. C. Lategan, (30) M. Wiechers, (31) W.J. Breytenbach, (32) R.M. Godsell, (33) B. G. Ranchod, (34) A. Lombard, (35) J. Dugard, (36) D. Schreiner, (37) W. de Klerk. These individuals represent the sum of those people in the network analysis of the fifteen key books who have at least one direct interlock with the institutions and projects cited above.

fact that, for some, there has been a considerable degree of status, prestige and influence, an influence which also stretches to the exercise of significant "control" over academia and the politics of publishing¹⁰. Of the thirty-seven individuals identified in the sociogram only one - in terms of apartheid designations - is "Black".

Sociogram (2) THE MAINSTREAM SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FIELD, 1971-1993



When one considers this research field in more detail, it becomes apparent that the direct ties to State programmes became more prominent in the 1980s as the National Party turned to the reform of apartheid. Many in the mainstream played a part in debates around the

¹⁰ Both the Human Sciences Research Council and the South African Institute of Race Relations publish reports and books under their own imprint.

1983 Constitution, such as in submissions to the Constitutional Committee where the work of Lijphart was of central import (Worrall, 1981; Taylor, 1990). There has also been much association with the para-statal Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), which is the major source of funding for social science research within South Africa, and has been responsible for channeling funds that run into many millions of rand into technocratic research or programmes linked to the National Party goals. Here, mainstream involvement included participation in HSRC committees, projects and publications, most notably the large-scale interdisciplinary 1985 Investigation into Intergroup Relations¹¹.

Ties with the key regionally-focused reform projects - which did not directly involve the National party (or the ANC) - have included the Quail (1980), Lombard (1980) and Buthelezi (1982) Commissions, and the Natal/Kwa Zulu Indaba (1986). All of these projects advocated forms of regional consociational federalism. The Quail Commission spoke of a "multiracial condominium". The Lombard Commission proposed regional government for Kwa/Zulu Natal. The Buthelezi Commission and Indaba saw Kwa/Zulu Natal as a model for state government in a consociational-federal South Africa - a position which was central to Inkatha's platform throughout the 1980s (Mare, 1987). Apart from these projects, mainstream work has been carried forward through a wide range of influential "think-tanks" that include the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Centre for Policy Studies, and the Urban Foundation. Under apartheid, the programme of these institutes generally fused dominant political interests with mainstream goals focusing on specific policy issues.

The mainstream's reformists orientation has been closely aligned to the political interests of the Progressive Federal Party/Democratic Party and Inkatha¹², and has dovetailed with big business concern over capitalism stability. In fact, the links with capital are more important than the sociogram indicates, as several major policy research institutes and projects have been funded by big business. The giant Anglo-American Corporation provided major funding for the "South Africa Beyond Apartheid" project and was a prominent participant in the Buthelezi Commission - in which some mainstream scholars were involved¹³. The South African Sugar Association and Durban Chamber of Commerce initiated the Lombard Commission. Likewise, the Indaba was heavily sponsored by capital. Also, various forms of corporate sponsorship and funding have come from Mobil, Schell, First National Bank, Barlow Rand and Anton Rupert.

By locating the mainstream paradigm in this wider research field it is apparent that it had considerable institutional backing. And this, it should be recognised, is because of its concern with social engineering and the connections of empirical-analytical social science with the idea of control (Habermas, 1971; Fay, 1975), concern to incrementally reform the political agenda through co-operation rather than radically transform it. Such concern has had real material advantages for social scientific research and has contributed to significant National Party policy changes, but it has had an intellectual price: the neglect of critical thinking. It has helped ensure that certain kinds of questions do not get asked. It has prevented many from seeing South Africa in a realistic way.

¹¹ On the HSRC see: Marais et al. (1988), Cloete and Muller (1991). The HSRC (1985) Investigation into Intergroup Relations accepted 93 research tenders and 12 special projects. For a critique of HSRC (1985), see Goldberg (1993: 177-84).

¹² van Zyl Slabbert was once PFP Leader of the Opposition, Schlemmer was once Director of the Inkatha Institute.

¹³ The "South Africa Beyond Apartheid" project resulted in the publication of Berger and Godsell (eds., 1988). Anglo-American Chairperson, H. F. Oppenheimer, was appointed to the Buthelezi Commission. Constituted by Buthelezi in 1980 the Commission was a 44 member body, appointed by the Kwa-Zulu legislature.

It is time, however, to oblige those who adhere to the mainstream paradigm to confront, through critical self-reflection, the deeper assumptions and structure of interests underlying such work. Mainstream social scientific research must begin to face the fact that its strongly empiricist beliefs have prevented serious theorising on "race" and "ethnicity". Such beliefs limit our power of explanation in that we are led towards seeing "race" and "ethnicity" as objectively given, and away from investigating deeper questions around how they have been socially constructed, through state-making imperatives, as conceptual systems for constituting reality and establishing relations of power and forms of inequality. Moreover, there is a need to recognise how the racialisation of social research is compounded by the way in which Apartheid State policies closed the space for critical intellectual work and impacted on academia such that most work has been and is undertaken by those whom apartheid designated "White"¹⁴.

The Way Forward

Insofar as the network of mainstream scholars retains intellectual influence, it is primarily because nobody else has put forward a robust analysis of contemporary South Africa that openly confronts "common sense" views on "race" and "ethnicity". Thus, the way forward must rest on presenting new principles of sociological method - a new paradigms - for understanding the meaning of "race" and "ethnicity".

To begin with "race" and "ethnicity" must be understood as *ideologies* of "race" and "ethnicity" (Guillaumin, 1995). Instead of taking "race" and "ethnicity" as free-standing and enduring independent phenomena to be examined and understood on their own terms, there is a need to reject totally notions of "racial" and "ethnic" determinism and shift focus to the conditions and social relations which generate and reproduce "race" and "ethnicity", to show how they have been socially constructed. This compels scholars to deconstruct *preconceived* notions and assumptions so that these do not uncritically appear in data collection, empirical analysis and theoretical discussion. To the extent that social science analyses take "race" and "ethnicity" as given, and uncritically infers correlation to social and political behaviour, it is poor social science; the significance of "race" and "ethnicity" must be demonstrated within broader analysis.

That people may believe in "race" and "ethnicity" at the everyday level, and explain their actions in such terms, must be acknowledged. But this does not mean accepting their thinghood; it simply means they have been given value because "race" and "ethnicity" are notionally normative, and the extent to which this is the case is precisely what has to be *explained* from a non-racial, non-ethnic standpoint. Indeed, what is required is social science capable of helping to move people beyond such self-perceptions through promoting the emergence of non-racialism.

The way for social research to proceed is to first of all accept the need to move away from the value placed on ascriptive social categories and to focus on the categories of self-identification, to give people their own *voice*, and understand the *process and structure* of ideological thinking. As "racial" and "ethnic" identities are not simply given, but are shifting political constructs, present conditions must be researched, through qualitative methods and more sophisticated statistical techniques, to find extent to which "racial" and "ethnic" thinking really does form part of people's social consciousness. To what extent and why people

¹⁴ Today the Human Sciences Research Council continues to struggle with low credibility and over 80% of permanent university staff are "White", with the majority of "Black" academics employed at the bottom of the employment ladder. See National Commission on Higher Education, 1996. On how the racialisation of academia influences the question of "who studies what?", see Jansen (1991).

have internalised apartheid ideology and work within “racial” and “ethnic” logic? Is there, in everyday life, a formal consistency to “racial” and “ethnic” thinking or is it marked by contradictions and dilemmas? And where is a belief in “race” and “ethnicity” at its strongest in present-day South Africa?

Simultaneously, social research must begin to fully chart and analyse the evidence for the presence and impact of a non-racial outlook, with its alternative interpretation of self-identity which rejects and resists racial politics. A number of empirical studies conducted in South Africa since 1994 reveal that people do actively use “racial” and “ethnic” categories in thinking about their identity, but it is also evident that there are “a wide diversity of identities in South Africa... and most importantly... either when people are able to offer it on their own, or where they have chance to select the option, clear minorities of South African’s take the opportunity to call themselves a South African” (Mattes, 1997: 21). Surveys undertaken by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa have found that percentage of those people identifying themselves as “South African” has increased from 13% in 1994 to 22% in 1995, where as those giving a “racial” or “ethnic” answer declined from 51% to 45% (Mattes, 1997: 21).

Overall, the way forward requires the development of a critical methodology tied to more sensitive and sophisticated forms of empirical analysis of what is called “race” and “ethnicity”. In this, as social science is a social activity, it is not a question of whether quantitative methods are more “scientific” than qualitative methods but a question of how such techniques are used (Aronowitz, 1988:135). Centrally, we must refine methods that do not bypass the question of “meaning” but break-down the immediacy of “race” and “ethnicity” by placing diachronic focus on the process and politics of subject formation. In addition, the limitations of conventional survey research can be transcended by exploring the relation of respondents to non-racial, non-ethnic understanding. This can be advanced through building reciprocity into the research design and questioning respondents on issues of feasible concern to them which they might not otherwise have raised for themselves¹⁵.

Although there is, as yet, not much of a critical tradition in quantitative social science (Irvine et al., 1979), we should move to advancing more sophisticated statistical techniques of data analysis that recognise the importance of diachronic data and are not tied to the hypothetico-deductive orthodoxy; as, for example, through the use of modeling tools such as log-linear analysis. Such techniques would allow us to identify the evolving orientations of human subjects and thus inform emancipatory practice around “race” and “ethnicity”. By measuring the extent to which people have internalised dominant “racial” and “ethnic” ideologies and are engaged in processes of social self-transformation towards non-racial, non-ethnic understanding, we can arrive at quasi-causal generalisations, and try to identify workable points of progressive social intervention¹⁶. Quantitative techniques can uncover evidence on which emancipatory transformation can rely as long as it is recognised that quasi-causal explanation is “only a heuristic means of deepening human self-understanding” (Apel, 1979: 43; Fay, 1975).

In sum, what is required, to escape racialisation, is a deeper level of theoretical analysis in which empirical social research must be placed in a broader meta-factual context where we seek “unity of knowledge combining moral and political with empirical understanding” (Harding, 1986:241; also Horkheimer, 1972). Empirical social research must come to serve as “a

¹⁵ In this regard, see: Laslett and Rapoport (1975), Carr-Hill (1984), Lather (1991).

¹⁶ For the possibilities of such work, see Orkin (1989b and 1992). Orkin shows, through use of log-linear analysis, how Buthelezi’s “ethnic” boundary was breached outwards between 1978-1980 in the direction of the non-racial inclusivism of the ANC, as an actor’s subjective political efficacy was enhanced by a determination to transcend “ethnicity” rather than invert or manipulate it.

type of *historical analysis* of contemporary social forces” (Agger, 1977:19) that uncovers the potential of non-racial, non-ethnic understanding. In approaching “race” and “ethnicity”, we must move to embrace a critical social science, where, as Apel asserts, “the leading knowledge-interest is... directed to ... deepening of self-understanding by critical-emancipatory self-reflection” (Apel, 1979:43). By taking non-racialism as a standpoint for constituting the subject and subjects of critical activity, critical social science can be reclaimed and rejuvenated as being politically relevant¹⁷. Today, in South Africa, with the “end of apartheid” and changing relations of power, there are real spaces for the development of such work.

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¹⁷ On the promise of critical social science, see Fay (1987).

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K RASNOJ ORIJENTACIJI DRUŠTVENIH ISTRAŽIVANJA O JUŽNOJ AFRICI

RUPERT TAYLOR i MARK ORKIN

Proučavanje južnoafričkih društava uokvirivalo se logikom "faktualne" postojnosti "rase" i "etnijske". Kratki povijesni pregled sadržaja takovih studija pokazuje cijeli niz neriješenih pitanja u istraživanjima što čine glavnu struju u proučavanju južnoafričkog društva. Nije se došlo do saznanja zašto, ustvari, i kako "rasa" i "etnijska" postaju sociološki relevantnim kategorijama za analizu. Nije isto tako posve jasno kako to rasa i etnijska omogućavaju objašnjenje južnoafričkog društva. Glavnostrujaško je istraživanje bilo označeno empirijsko-analitičkim pristupom koji vodi paradigmi zavađenih društava (divided societies). Kako si je glavnostrujaška sociologija zamislila uspostaviti kritičku razdjelnicu spram apartheidskog mišljenja, te je li bila u stanju pomaknuti se znatno ponad "oficijelne" "rasne" i "etnijske" klasifikacije ideologije apartheida? - dva su najvažnija problema, o kojima se raspravlja u ovom članku.