

# Chapter 17

## Locating Race in Migration and Diversity Studies



**Kristine Aquino, Laavanya Kathiravelu, and Emma Mitchell**

Stuart Hall (2017a, b, pp. 32–33) views **race** as “one of those major or master concepts. . . that organise the great classificatory systems of difference that operate in human societies. Race, in this sense, is the centrepiece of a hierarchical system that produces differences.” Historically, ‘race’ emerged as a term in Europe to categorise different phenotypical (differences in skin colour, hair and bone) and cultural characteristics (‘ways of life’) across the human population encountered during Europe’s period of colonial expansion. Racial typologies became the basis of a natural and social science that established hierarchies between ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ groups, serving to justify some of the world’s most haunting atrocities. While race was scientifically invalidated in the aftermath of the Holocaust, with the advent of wars, decolonisation, and global migration, racialised ways of seeing human differences have become entangled in new ways with gender, ethnicity, class, religion, nationality, among other categories of difference, to form complex hierarchies in societies characterised by diversity (Alexander & Knowles, 2005, p. 2). Older forms of migration, including forced movements of people in the transatlantic slave trade, through to indentured labour migrations, came to underlie racial divisions along a colour-line created by nation-states principally formed around racial logics (Goldberg, 2002). Meanwhile, newer forms of migration, forced and voluntary, have been influenced by changing global conditions of uneven economic growth, the destabilising of certain regions outside of the ‘West’, and

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K. Aquino  
University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia  
e-mail: [Kristine.Aquino@uts.edu.au](mailto:Kristine.Aquino@uts.edu.au)

L. Kathiravelu (✉)  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore  
e-mail: [laavanyak@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:laavanyak@ntu.edu.sg)

E. Mitchell  
Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia  
e-mail: [e.mitchell@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:e.mitchell@westernsydney.edu.au)

the opening up of previously closed economies such as China (Liu, 2009; Perrons, 2009). These accelerated post-war migrations from the colonial periphery to the colonial centre, from the South to the North and increasingly from South to South, have made more complex the terms of difference in immigrant receiving societies. This chapter locates conceptualisations of race in migration and diversity studies, drawing from intersecting fields of scholarship such as studies of race and ethnicity, critical race theory, comparative migration studies and diversity research. In doing so, it aims to demonstrate the continued importance of considering race not just as a variable, but a key discursive framework in understandings of migration and diversity.

There has been extensive academic discussion about the significance of race in the ‘Global North’. Since the 1970s especially, scholars in English-speaking academies in the UK, Europe, North America, and Australia offered up alternative terms and concepts for classifying group differences and understanding forms of inequality in societies once structured explicitly by racial regimes. An alternative focus on ethnicity, culture, class, and nationality drew criticism from scholars who saw the abandonment of race discourse as only serving to gloss over enduring power structures that perpetuated racism. Today, debates about whether race is still a useful analytical category continue, now grappling with how different kinds of human mobility (and immobility) generate more complex relations of power and inequality in diverse societies. To locate conceptualisations of race in migration and diversity studies, this chapter begins by tracing the wider genealogical history of the term in the ‘Global North’ which is marked by debates around its definition and, importantly, its salience as an analytical and theoretical concept. It then discusses how race as a concept is applicable to the ‘Global South’ and non-Western settings where existing understandings about race are reaffirmed and unsettled. The latter discussion aims to shed light on contexts long marked by border crossings and increasingly dynamic mobilities but where race is less attached to European/Western colonisation and white supremacy. However, this does not preclude that race in such spaces has also proven to be a successfully violent “[technology for the management of human difference](#)” (Lentin, 2020, p. 5).

## 17.1 Race in the ‘Global North’

In the twentieth century, the invalidation by science of the biological certainty of racial difference, processes of decolonisation in the ‘Third World’, and the challenges posed to racial regimes in ‘the West’ by social movements made up of long-oppressed racial minorities, led to the theoretical interrogation of the basis of racism and domination. Race became understood as a ‘social construction’—a disclaimer that race is not real but instead has material effects in the structuring of privilege and disadvantage. This reference, however, still required scholars and activists to engage with the reifying tendencies of race discourse, leading some to call for abandoning the concept of race altogether (Gilroy, 2002). While debates outlined below are at

times protracted—these discussions have been essential to exploring and exposing the complex configurations of systems of inequality, and practices of domination and exclusion. As Lentin (2000, p. 101) argues, these contestations signal the profound difficulties in finding a language to analyse and understand racism without “tried and tested concepts”.

### *17.1.1 Ethnicity, Culture and Diversity*

The concept of ‘ethnicity’, derived from anthropology, emerged as an alternative mode of categorisation to race in the post-Second World War period, referring to a group’s shared ways of life, customs, traditions, language, and beliefs. It was espoused by some as the more apt marker of difference that departed from the idea that heredity shaped human behaviour and instead highlighted factors of culture and the environment. Moreover, ethnicity was understood as discarding the hierarchies of ‘superiority’ and ‘inferiority’ in racial logic. Rooted in a culturalist discourse, scholars like Levi-Strauss, posited ethnic differences as relative to each other and proposed that the term ‘racism’ should be replaced by “**ethnocentrism**” to describe intolerances between different ethnic groups (Lentin, 2005). The uptake of ethnicity as a substitute term was institutionalised across the West by governments dealing with the horrors produced by racial ideologies and the idea of ethnic difference soon came to be articulated in liberal **policies of integration and incorporation** in the US and parts of Europe and policies of multiculturalism in Britain, Canada and Australia, as a means to reconceive the determinants of group membership. Moreover, these policies placed importance on the notion of respecting ‘**cultural identity**’ and the co-existence of culturally distinct yet ‘equal’ groups. Notions of the cultural ‘melting pot’ or multicultural ‘together in difference’ became common political expressions in states which attempted to embrace ethnic and cultural diversity brought on by increased post-war international migration (Hall, 2017a, b). Further, the multiculturalist language of ‘cultural diversity’ was widely adopted in diversity management policies across institutions such as workplaces and educational settings. As observed by Nieswand (2019, p. 1), “diversity offered an alternative to frame heterogeneity that appeared to managers, politicians and policymakers to be more positive and optimistic”.

However, some scholars warned that ‘ethnicity and ‘culture’ could serve as a “**euphemistic substitute**” for race and work to mask the endurance of racial systems of oppression (Dubow, 1994, p. 356). Cultural dimensions of human differences have, after all, always been “part and parcel of racial logics” (Lentin & Karakayali, 2016, p. 142). Balibar (1991, p. 22), writing from the French context, for example, observed a problematising of immigrants that demonstrated old racial essentialisms persisting in the new culturalist discourse. He argued that “culture can also function like nature”, locking groups “into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin” much like race does. Terms such as “differentialist racism” (Taguieff, 1990) or “cultural racism” (Balibar, 1991) attempted to capture

racism based not on racial biological categories but cultural constructions around different ‘ways of life’. Critiques from Essed (1991) and Lentin (2005) in Europe also drew attention to anti-racism projects that celebrated cultural pluralism while perpetuating a racism rationalised around the insurmountability of cultural differences. In Australia, which opened its borders to non-White migration from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, the abandonment of race discourse for a culturalist one was taken up enthusiastically by a government hoping to erase its racist history, characterised by Indigenous dispossession and racialised immigration controls. In doing so, Ang and Stratton (1998) have argued that the state strategically displaced racism as an anomaly in the new multicultural “non-racist” norm. These shifts demonstrate the limitations of culturalist and diversity discourse, which according to Ahmed (2007, p. 235), “become detached from histories of struggle against equality”. It is critiqued for enabling the political denial of racism as institutions prefer to speak instead about “cultural diversity”, “harmony” and “tolerance” (Nelson, 2015).

In the US, studies of immigration and diversity have been led largely by demographic approaches that have overwhelmingly been configured around the overlapping census categorisations of ethnicity and nationality. Racialised divides in many ways, have been represented through discourses that have also attempted to decentre race in favour of cultural explanations. This has led to a thriving scholarship that highlights the particularities of immigrant groups through understanding ethnic enclaving and ethnicised social capital (Portes, 1987; Zhou, 1992). This, in part, has led to culturalist explanations of successful integration and mobility of immigrant groups. The model minority myth of the Asian-American community, as an example of this, has had to be debunked (Lee & Zhou, 2020). The focus on ethnicity and culture conceptualised in broad demographic terms, does also not sufficiently take into account waves of migration for example, and has resulted in the erasing of older histories of enslavement in the celebration of social mobility of Black communities in the US (Cottom, 2019). Goldberg (2015) thus cites the backlash against the cultural turn—particularly manifested in a backlash against multicultural policy—as propelling a “post-racial” ideology into North American politics, enabling subtle mechanisms of domination and exclusion underpinning discussions of cultural difference to operate under the guise of “racelessness”. He argues that the “post-racial” rhetoric empowered the vocalisation of anti-immigration sentiment and normalised exclusionary discourses around “cultural incompatibility”.

Despite the profound problems that the ‘cultural turn’ has produced for race theory and anti-racism praxis, it is significant to note that the reframing was not entirely about replacing the language of race. The culturalist approach fuelled efforts to refine race as an analytic category by drawing attention to the multiplicity and complexity of subjectivity, identity, and positionality, which have ultimately become important considerations in both critical race theory and migration and diversity studies. Works by black feminists like hooks (1981) in the American context challenged dominant representations of the racialised subject through examining the intersections of race, gender, and class. Hall’s (2002) exploration of “new ethnicities” in the UK, focusing on Black-Caribbean migrants, meanwhile, revealed

hybrid articulations of ethno-racial affiliations in the diasporic context. Gilroy's (1993) work on black cultural production in Black British and African-American culture also moved discussions beyond the binaries of essentialist/pluralist notions of racial identity towards analysis of the "syncretic complexity" of black culture. These approaches all encouraged the questioning of the meta-narratives, such as race, that organised the world in grand and generalist terms and transformed conceptualisations of identity in "different disciplines, places and arenas" (Alexander et al., 2012). However, the field was criticised for becoming too preoccupied with textual and representational matters. While highlighting the importance of ideology in racial regimes, ultimately, the elaboration of difference and "excavation of personal identity" has been seen as falling short in converting itself into a "[progressive politics](#)" for marginalised migrant and minority communities (St. Louis, 2002, p. 656).

### 17.1.2 *Class*

For those espousing economic theorisations to understanding the domination of some groups over others, the classificatory debate over race or ethnicity/culture was seen as a mere issue of terminology bearing little fruit in addressing inequality. Structuralists, in particular, persistently argued that a focus on 'soft' issues related to identity distracted from 'hard' systemic concerns around material access and allocation of resources such as housing, jobs and education. These differing positions have also been articulated in philosophical debates around the methods through which equality should be pursued in societies of migration-driven diversity that often pitted the politics of recognition and redistribution against each other (see Taylor, 1992; Fraser & Honneth, 2003). But there was a notable strand of structural analysis, one centred on class relations, which gained prominence in the 1980s and 1990s, to try to explain racialised inequality. In the UK, Miles (1989, 1996) argued against the autonomy of race and culture as analytical and theoretical categories as they obscured the economic relations that produce racism and racialised unequal outcomes across majority and minority groups. For Miles, it is "[class relations](#)" and not "[race relations](#)" that buttress social disparities especially those disadvantaging long time migrant groups and more recent immigrants to the UK like labour migrants or refugees. Race, ethnicity, and culture, he argued, should be seen as residual ideological categories to material class formations. In the US, [stratification theory](#) by Wilson (1978) also encouraged abandoning the racial lens for an economic one to capture the class distinctions in the experiences and consequences of racism, for example, among the varied experiences of African Americans and Asian Americans. In Australia, analysing the experience of low-skilled migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe recruited into Australia as "factory fodder" in the post-war period, Morrissey (1984) situated migrants' disadvantaged circumstances within a segmented labour market where the division of labour was taken to signify that capitalism, and not 'migrant-ness', was at play in structuring racialised disadvantage. Gilroy's

(1991) critique of such styles of class analysis points out, however, that a reductionist economic lens disconnects from histories marked by the intimate relationship between race and class especially in the experience of those who have migrated from old imperial peripheries to post-imperial metropolitan centres. Further, empirical research on the intersection between class and race in America (Lacy, 2007), Canada (Raj, 2003) and Australia (Aquino, 2016, 2017) have shown that socio-economic mobility does not act as a buffer against racism.

While this class/race debate was prominent in the genealogy of race and racism theory, it is located in structuralist approaches that encompass broader understandings of the relationship between race/class, culture/economics. For example the integral role of racism in capitalism in historical and contemporary contexts, centres on Marx's theory of 'primitive accumulation'. This theory holds that the use of direct coercion in the form of colonialism, dispossession and slavery—as distinct from class-based exploitation through the market—was a necessary condition of the emergence of modern capitalism in Western Europe. A range of contemporary structuralist scholars contend that racialised forms of extra-economic coercion cannot simply be consigned to a past phase of emerging capitalism which now fundamentally rests on economic exploitation of wage-labour. Rather, ongoing 'primitive accumulation' is also constitutive of contemporary capitalism and can explain the marriage of the class-based and racial imperatives that underpin the inequality and violence experienced by black, migrant and Indigenous populations (eg. Dawson, 2016; Fraser, 2016). Critical engagement with this literature focuses on the need to structurally locate contemporary experiences of race, without obscuring their specificities (Siddhant, 2021). While not entirely focused on the capitalism-racism link, Bonilla-Silva (1997), writing from North America, has also argued to see racism as a structural issue and asserted the primacy of race in modernity's historical and structural system, in particular, its racial domination projects like colonialism, slavery, capitalism, labour migrations and border controls. Aiming to collapse the dichotomy between ideology/structure, and race/class, Bonilla Silva (2003) contends that, racism and race should be seen in materialist terms as racism as practice and behaviour is a product of (and also reproduces) race as social structure, while race as ideology is also linked to this structuration as it interpellates people into action. Class, meanwhile, he saw as a potentially "uniting factor in progressive politics" so long as it is a "class solidarity through race and gender prisms" (Bonilla Silva, 2003, p. 195). The theorisation of 'racial formation' by American scholars Omi and Winant (2014, pp. 13, 48) also espoused this view—maintaining that race is "a fundamental axis of social organisation in the US" and thus an "autonomous field of social conflict, political organisation and cultural/ideological meaning". Omi and Winant argued to go beyond the simple disclaimer of race as a 'social construction' and urged for locating its formation through varying political projects, including capitalism, and examining struggles at the levels of both structure and identity. These North American authors were crucial in articulating a critical stance against proclamations of a 'post-racial' era in the US which cited shifting class relations like the middle-class mobility of some African Americans or Asian migrants, as evidence of the declining significance of race. Critiques of these approaches, however, have

centred around the charge of “race-centrism” and instead call for a focus on boundary-making and ethnicity as a way to avoid reifying categories of race (Brubaker, 2004; Loveman, 1999; Wimmer, 2015).

### 17.1.3 *Nation*

**National formations** have also been a prominent feature of the classificatory system of group difference in the West. Hall (2017a, b, p. 136) points out that “the allegiances and identifications that in premodern times were given to tribe, people, religion and region came gradually, in Western societies, to be transferred to the national culture”. Outside of some scholarly proclamations about the irrelevance of nation and nationalism in the late twentieth century as discourses of a “global community” and “borderless world” attempted to relegate nationalism as a sentiment of the past, many writers have insisted that nation and race remain central to “hierarchical conceptions of communitarian belonging” (Valluvan, 2020, p. 243). How the nation is constructed has in many ways relied on ideas of race and practices of racism. And so, while the heuristic value of the nation was abandoned by some theorists in the advent of globalisation-oriented analysis, others continued to engage with the idea of nation because of its persistent resonance with race. Hall (2001), for example, grappling with the violent intermingling of distinctions around race and national belonging in Britain, reminded us of the nation’s historical ties with colonisation and processes of racialised domination and **Othering** both in the spaces of conquest in the non-West and in the migratory spaces of the West itself. Hage’s (2002) work on Australian nationalism, meanwhile, examined how the uptake of culture or ethnicity as alternative discourse to race in a postcolonial, settler, immigrant-receiving society, underpinned nationalist logics of bounded “national cultures” which, ultimately, reinforced racial logics of whiteness as the hegemonic core of the nation. For Hage, the nation is a social field where non-White migrants such as Muslim-Arabic migrants and Asian migrants are located, managed, and ordered along a spectrum of otherness determining levels of belonging to the national community. Thus, as Valluvan (2020, p. 249) argues, “nationalist agitations are very seldom strictly ‘xenophobic’ in character—xenophobia as the ‘undiscriminating’ aversion to all outsiders”, but instead, “**nationalist alarms**” are “tightly knotted by the racial categories of non-belonging [...] It is namely the racialised outsider who acts as the Western nation’s most resonant and fetid constitutive outsider.”

The discourse of nation and practices of nationalism that intersect with racial formations have considerably risen back to prominence in the twenty-first century in an era marked by a ‘backlash against globalisation’. These have manifested in violent White nationalist protests in American cities such as Charlottesville and Washington that were anti-Semitic, anti-Black, and anti-Muslim and the decisive ‘Leave’ outcome of the Brexit vote which was also fuelled by anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism sentiment. While this racism is rooted in intersections between

racial and class divides outlined earlier, both contexts were inflamed by the state, reminding us that racial categories have been crucial for the nation-state to highlight collective identity and community (Valluvan, 2020). This nationalist resurgence might validate some scholarship positing that nationalism is a more useful explanatory concept than race, however, Hughey and Rosino (2020, p. 259) have proposed a synthesising of race and nationalism—a “**racial nationalism**”—to describe these articulations of power and order, wherein, racial nationalism “is a doctrine in which the nation, as an imagined community, is composed of a supposedly homogenous or pure racial or ethnic group” and “imagines and endeavours to realise an intensely racialised image of the national character”. According to Hughey and Rosino (2020, p. 259), “race interacts with nationalism in various forms and magnitude”. Race is entrenched ideologically in nation-state policies that utilise racial classifications to embolden both cohesion and division. Racial identities that determine us/them remain tied to histories of colonialism and empire and establish who is regarded as a national-racial subject. Racial interests are also pursued *qua* the national interest and so group mobilisations of nationalism often draw on racial distinctions. Institutions are as well racialised especially those that deal with national border security and immigration and the according of legal rights and status. Lastly, through racialised interactions, ordinary people engage in bordering and boundary-making practices that see nationalism play out in banal ways in everyday life. Hughey and Rosino (2020, p. 259), however, urge caution in conflating race and nationalism entirely and instead encourage carefully “illuminating what each term explains and under what contexts each term might be better fit for predicting or explaining the same phenomena”.

### ***17.1.4 Conviviality and Super-Diversity***

In the last two decades, a large body of work in migration and diversity studies have notably focused on two interrelated phenomena—how we ‘live together’ across difference and how we do this labour particularly in the context of newly complex social configurations arising from more varied patterns of migration. The first focus takes inspiration from Gilroy’s (2002) notion of “**conviviality**” that emphasises the “practice, effort, negotiation and achievement” required for “shared life” across difference (Wise & Noble, 2016, p. 425). It has underpinned a burgeoning field of research, particularly integrating urban and place studies with the sociology of everyday life, that investigate the significance of encounter and interactions across cultural and ethnic difference. This includes work on “everyday multiculturalism” (Wise & Velayutham, 2009), “lived multiculturalism” (Neal et al., 2017), “everyday cosmopolitanism” (Noble, 2009), and “rubbing along” (Watson, 2006) which spotlight how collective civic cultures are forged in shared spaces that require “prosaic negotiations” (Amin, 2008, p. 969) across difference. While highlighting the



important kinds of cooperation and connection that can occur amid social and cultural differences in societies marked by migrant-led diversity, these works have been criticised for displacing the focus on the reproduction of racism with its focus on diversity, mixity, and fluidity, concepts that at times do not grapple adequately with the weights of race (Back & Sinha, 2016).

Similarly, the second focus on the concept of “super-diversity”, coined by Vertovec (2007), has become a preoccupation in recent studies of migration and diversity, attempting to account for the increasingly complex and diversified character of migration-driven diversity, and moreover, trying to unsettle the primacy of race and ethnicity as an over-determining influence in the experience of migrants. Proponents of the super-diversity lens argue that racio-ethnic group affiliation no-longer holds the same explanatory power; experiences are differentiated by “the dynamic interplay of variables”, including migration channels and immigration status, language, gender, age, country of origin (see Berg and Sigona (2013, p. 348) for an overview). Super-diversity is distinguished from other concepts that foreground multiple variables—particularly intersectionality—in that, while intersectional theories are predominantly concerned with race, gender, and class as dominant social divisions, super-diversity “is concerned with different categories altogether, most importantly nationality/country of origin/ethnicity, migration channel/legal status and age as well as gender” (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015, p. 545). While speaking to realities of increasingly complex migrations and resultant variegated social divisions, work on super-diversity has been challenged for the way in which it focuses on the expansion of differences but not enough on the broader social, political, and economic contexts in which differences matter and the methods and means through which they are made to matter (Hall, 2017a; Back & Sinha, 2016; Alexander et al., 2012). Critiques of the sub-field point to the lack of focus on power and inequality even within the scale of the “everyday” and “fleeting” (Aptekar, 2019).

The debates in this area of migration and diversity studies signal attention to how new or emergent patterns of differentiation map onto more established social divisions and take root in earlier debates about the significance or insignificance of race as a theoretical and empirical tool in analysing inequalities in heterogeneous societies. But just as these earlier discussions, while protracted at times, have been essential to expanding knowledge about the contours of racism and racial systems, these recent arguments have further elaborated the ever-changing complexity of race as ideology, practice, and structure, and re-emphasise the enduring race-migration nexus (see Erel et al. (2016) for a review). They have further opened up the ways in which race needs to be conceptualised in terms of divergent levels of scope and scale and as well aspects of continuity and change.

## 17.2 Race Outside of the ‘West’

Studies of race and diversity have generally been dominated by scholarship from and about North American and Western European contexts. However, there is a large emerging literature on race and diversity outside the “West” that engages with notions of (super)diversity, cosmopolitanism, and conviviality in ways that acknowledge the intersectional and multi-dimensional aspects of migration-led diversity, utilising the frames of race together with other axes of difference to understand issues of [immigrant integration](#), [discrimination](#), and [xenophobia](#). With South-South migration now the largest strand of migration globally, and within that, migrations within Asia the most numerically significant, it is imperative to understand how race, diversity and migration interact in these spaces.

### 17.2.1 *Pre-colonial Mobilities and the (Re)configuration of Race and Ethnicity*

Particularly in postcolonial contexts in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, migration-led diversity cannot be disentangled from colonial influences, both in shaping mobilities of people as well as in how they were subsequently classified. However, notions of ethnic and racialised difference based on descent and ancestral occupation have long existed in non-Western societies prior to the advent of colonialism. While not explicitly utilising the language of race, pre-colonial hierarchies in North Asia, the Persian Gulf, and West Africa, for example, point to ways in which racial and ethnic discrimination had existed before the legitimisation of a racialised understanding of the world through missionary and colonial discourses (Takezawa, 2005). For example, in what is today Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in the Persian Gulf, the transnational migration of Black African slaves created a tiered system of rights and entitlements, although they were also often seen as part of the larger familial structure.

With colonial expansion, new imported notions of race further legitimated older notions of superiority and inferiority. In particular, it prompted practices of establishing material difference as a means of cementing and simultaneously reinventing racial classifications. Japanese, who were formerly seen as “white”, became progressively “yellow” as the increasing refusal to participate in trade, and isolationism in the eighteenth century were read as indications of “backwardness” (Kowner, 2014). Colonial rule also instituted race in the form of census exercises in much of colonial South and Southeast Asia (Hirschman, 1987). These classifications did not just establish European dominance in terms of privileging Whiteness, but also served to augment native, “tribal” and indigenous communities as peripheral to the economy of the colony (Alatas, 1977). Many of these raced inflections still have implications for how ethnic minoritised communities are socially and economically marginalised today (Rahim, 2001). These historical continuities are also key in

understanding preferences for “White” migrants and expatriates in many cities outside Europe and North America. There is, however, a growing backlash against what is perceived as unearned privilege, fuelled by perceptions of structural discrimination in jobs, housing, and schools.

### ***17.2.2 Co-ethnic Migration, Xenophobia and Shifting Hierarchies***

Contemporary migration is generating new complex forms of differentiation that further diversify historically multiethnic societies outside the ‘West’. Socio-economic status, period of migration, and country of birth are emerging as increasingly salient in generating new divisions even within communities that are typically seen to be of the same ‘race’. New waves of migration that complicate existing diasporic formations point to the ways in which ethnicity is being reconfigured through migration, particularly for middle class, [highly skilled migrants](#) (Kathiravelu, 2020). This does not imply that race is no longer salient as a variable, but that the landscape of migrant-led diversity is complicated by other factors. Racial ideology then continues to exist in mutated and masked ways. The continued racism against [second-generation immigrants](#) in fact points to continued relevance of race (conceived in more biologically-deterministic terms), in engendering nationalistic exclusions. Migrants and children of migrants in Japan, for example, are perceived as not legitimate or full citizens. Hafus, or children of mixed race also face this form of discrimination, within a context where the myth of a homogeneous ethno-racial polity is widely believed.

Race also continues to be significant in conjuring stereotypes of the dirty dark-skinned Indian or loud and uncouth Chinese, in reference to low-waged [temporary migrants](#), shadowing older colonial racial stereotypes (Velayutham, 2017; Velayutham & Somaiah, 2021). These migrants who typically labour in dangerous and difficult conditions in construction, shipyard, and manufacturing industries are tainted by their class positions and concurrent lack of status as neither conspicuous consumers nor citizens. The powerful intersection of socio-economic status and nationality give rise to forms of racism and discrimination that are perpetuated and reinforced by bifurcated and temporary migration regimes in Asia and the Middle East. These regimes bestow differential rights in terms of residency and access to citizenship based on the ability to accumulate cultural, social and economic capital.

In highly diverse migrant-receiving cities like Singapore and South Africa, nationality and nationalised forms of racial differentiation become key vectors of difference and discrimination. In these contexts, perceived differences based on country of birth often generate bigger divides than racial affinities. In Singapore, where a large proportion of immigrants come from countries of India and China, they form a second wave of already existing diasporas. In a situation where locals and immigrants share the same language, religious practices, and phenotype

characteristics, hierarchies emerge based on place of birth and length of stay. These markers, in addition to a localised sense of cultural capital, shape boundaries between insider and outsider (Ho & Kathiravelu, 2021). Racism and xenophobia overlap, generating complex intersectionalities, where race is articulated through the nationalised belonging and through classed identities. In these reconfigurations, context-specific cultural—rather than biological—notions of superiority are salient.

In settler colonial contexts such as Israel or South Africa, material and structural violence and the ongoing failure to integrate define raced relations between indigenous and settler peoples. However, this bifurcation often makes latent intra-community divisions. In Israel, an assimilationist and essentialist nation-building discourse has augmented racism *within* settler communities, and fragmented ethno-national identities along racial and colour lines (Ben-Eliezer, 2008). In postcolonial migrant-receiving societies such as South Africa, xenophobia directed against co-ethnics is often downplayed, as acknowledging racism between people within a community that is considered a homogeneous ‘race’, is seen to destabilise solidarity against a White oppressor. This masks xenophobia against migrants, but also ways in which similarly “raced” communities are complicit in violence, oppression, and persecution (Landau, 2017). This points to the importance of intersectional perspectives and the fallacies of assuming innate similarities based on ideas of ‘race’, descent, or ancestry. Analytically, it points to the need to see these differences not in terms of diversity within a racial group, but as separate ethno-racial communities (Brubaker, 2004), informed by shifting boundaries between perceptions of local or foreign; of who belongs and who doesn’t. Viewing contemporary migration in *ethno-racial* terms acknowledges the continued salience of racism within contemporary societies where migration-led diversity is significant. It also understands discrimination and violence as products of opposition that is configured around complex social fields where race, ethnicity, nationality, and other vectors of difference coalesce.

### 17.3 Conclusion and Further Questions

We have demonstrated that race remains important to understanding the systems of inequality and domination in contemporary contexts of migration-led diversity. After a discussion of the genealogy of race discourse, we interrogated significant ways in which race is employed in understanding diversity in the ‘West’, pointing to the continued structures of racialised domination that exist and shape contemporary migration patterns. Balancing this with considerations of migration outside the ‘Global North’, we have shown how race is articulated in contexts outside of histories of European colonisation and regimes of white supremacy where it has also been used as a technology to manage difference. In certain ‘non-Western’ contexts, race is generative of cultural hierarchies within co-ethnic, similarly “raced” immigrant populations. Lentin reminds us that race is an “articulation” (Hall, 2002); “a series of linkages between different structures of dominance”

(Lentin, 2020, p. 6). In understanding migration flows, systems, and regimes as complicit within structures of dominance and in reproducing inequality, we should be cognisant of how “...capitalism, gender, sexuality, class, ability”, nationality, and citizenship status, among others, “work through race and vice versa” (Lentin, 2020, p. 6). With critical race theory and its proponents being attacked in many Western liberal democratic contexts, it is imperative in this moment to reinstate the significance of race to contemporary migration and diversity.

In tracing how race has been understood and applied (and as well erased) in migration and diversity studies, this chapter raises a few important questions that students in these fields of study will hopefully consider when grasping inequalities and forms of domination and exploitation related to immigrant diversity:

- How do we account for complex differences produced by migration that are attached to race but may also operate in relationally different ways?
- How do we do this without disconnecting from the struggle against racism and downplaying the reach of racial systems in producing varied forms of inequality?
- How do ideas and theories we use shape the ways we imagine and understand migration?
- Is it possible to talk about the reality of race in experiences and process of migration without perpetuating racial categories?
- In what ways does race intersect with other forms of difference in contexts of immigrant-led diversity?
- How do theoretical differences add value to understanding racial systems and inequalities but how might they also vacate the explanatory power of race?
- When does race consume other forms of difference and how can this obstruct achieving productive outcomes for integration and social justice?

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**Kristine Aquino** is Lecturer in Global Studies at the University of Technology Sydney. Her research is broadly concerned with race and racism in everyday life, diversity in Australian and Asian cities, and migrant practices of transnationalism.

**Laavanya Kathiravelu** is an assistant professor at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Her work spans areas of migration, race and ethnicity, and urban studies, particularly in Asia and the Persian Gulf.

**Emma Mitchell** has a PhD in sociology from Macquarie University, Sydney. Her research focuses on social policy and the sociology of everyday life, with an emphasis on cultural diversity in social security, community welfare and housing.

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