

**RACIAL INDIANIZATION: AN ANALYSIS OF CIVIC DISCOURSES  
OF RACISM DENIAL**

By

PURBA DAS

A dissertation-submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
Department of Communication

AUGUST 2009

© Copyright by PURBA DAS, 2009  
All Rights Reserved

© Copyright by PURBA DAS, 2009  
All Rights Reserved

To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of  
PURBA DAS find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

---

Jolanta Drzewiecka, Ph.D., Chair

---

Susan D. Ross, Ph.D.

---

Joan Burbick, Ph.D.

---

Jeffery Peterson, Ph.D.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is with deep gratitude and appreciation that I wish to acknowledge the following people:

My parents, Pranati and Pabitra Bhusan Das and my sister Parna Das who have supported me through the entire process. Without them this would not have been possible.

Jolanta Drzewiecka, who has guided and supported me through the entire process. Jola has been a mentor, and I have been deeply indebted to her for her encouragement and confidence in what I was undertaking.

My friends who wanted me to see this dissertation reach completion.

## Abstract

by Purba Das, Ph.D.  
Washington State University  
AUGUST 2009

Chair: Jolanta Drzewiecka

This dissertation seeks to understand the civic discourses of racism denial that represent the views of the government officials, Dalits, academicians in the mainstream media, and how the logics of the discourses might potentially re-constitute or re-define the Indian nation. Specifically, this project aims to understand the changing dynamics of the constitution of the Indian nation vis-à-vis the internal “Other” through the discourses about race, caste and racism denial in the civic mainstream domain. This project identified two discourses of denial of race and racism in the media representation of the government officials, Dalits, and academicians’ responses to the Dalit accusation that casteism is racism. The dominant discourse *Caste is Not Race* denied racism directly. The other discourse, *Caste is Race* only *apparently* supported the charge that casteism is racism, albeit with deep ambivalence, and circumvented the racism charge and shifted the focus to broader caste issues. Based on the analyses, I argue that the two discourses of denial and *apparent* support of the Dalits interacted with each other in the same discursive domain, and reworked, reconstituted and reified the extant cultural logics of race, caste and nation to deny racism in the postcolonial Indian context.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. METHODOLOGY.....	73
3. NATION AND ITS DISCOURSES IN POSTCOLONIAL INDIA.....	103
4. DISCOURSE OF RACISM DENIAL: DOMINANT CIVIC DISCOURSE...	138
5. CASTEISM IS RACISM: CIVIC DISCOURSE OF AMBIVALENCE.....	200
6. CONCLUSION.....	254
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	275

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

For the first time in the history of India, Dalit activists and scholars charged that the caste system was racist when they argued that casteism as a form of racism should be included at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Xenophobia (WCAR) to be held in August, 2001 in Durban. In February 2001, the UN decided to include and discuss the issues of caste discrimination at the WCAR. The goal of the WCAR conference was to examine effective mechanisms for combating racial discrimination and promoting understanding and awareness. The decision to include caste on the conference agenda was met with very strong reactions in the Indian media. The mainstream newspapers presented statements and arguments of the Indian government, social activists, academicians, the press, and the Dalits scholars, activists and their supporters. These different groups voiced intense disagreements about whether caste was race and whether casteism is racism, and demonstrated that the charge struck a raw nerve in how the Indian nation was imagined. For example, the Indian government officials countered that caste oppression is not the same as racism and caste should not be discussed at an international racism conference.<sup>1</sup> As cited in the newspapers, officials further stressed that caste discrimination was constitutionally prohibited in India, and such a discussion should not be included in an inter-governmental forum. On the other hand, the Dalit contributors, scholars and activists held the view that discrimination based on casteism amounted to racism, and therefore, caste should be included on the

---

<sup>1</sup> “India shuns calls to talk caste with U.N,” *The Times of India*, August, 17, 2001.  
<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/south/08/17/india.caste> retrieved January, 20, 2008.

conference agenda.<sup>2</sup> Dalit scholars Thorat and Umakant (2004) wrote, “never in our view has so much been written by various sections of the Indian society on the issue of caste and the problem of the Dalits in such a narrow span of time in recent history” (p. xiv). Further, they asserted, this debate gave voice to “all those who are engaged in the struggle against caste discrimination, and who are likely to fall prey to generational distortion of the history” (p. ix). Ruth Manorama, national co-convenor of the Campaign for Dalit Human Rights and leader of the National Federation of Dalit Women said, “this is the first time that Dalit groups have thought of drawing international attention to their situation.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, there was not one monolithic view expressed in the dominant media.

Since the time of independence, race and racism have been denied and caste has been suppressed from the imagination of the Indian nation, which, under the leadership of political elites, projected race and racism onto the colonial powers, and naturalized caste discrimination even though it was ostensibly banned constitutionally. The Dalit voices challenged openly the denial of racism for the first time, and thus challenged the meanings and forms through which the nation was imagined. The charge of racism created a crisis in how the nation had been constituted and exposed the constitutive power of race and caste in the Indian conceptions of the nation. Up to this point, the debate surrounding the relationship between race and caste had been restricted to academia, particularly, to Indian Sociology scholars. The reaction in the mainstream newspapers demonstrates different attempts to reconstitute the nation in response to the crisis. Since

---

<sup>2</sup> “India shuns calls to talk caste with U.N.,” *The Times of India*, August, 17, 2001.

<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/south/08/17/india.caste> retrieved January, 20, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Jayapal, P. Low caste women to protest at UN racism meeting. Retrieved from Internet on May, 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. <http://www.adventuredivas.com/dispatches/india/tackling-caste-oppression/>



then, the discussion of the issue of race and racism has continued. Most significantly, in 2007, the Australian cricket team, while touring in India, accused Indian audiences and players of being racist. The Cricket Control Board of India opposed and vehemently rejected the accusation, asserting that Indians cannot be racists. The debates surrounding this accusation have been widely circulated in both the Indian and Australian media. These incidences of accusations of racism and invoking of the category of race in the mainstream discourses propel me to look more closely at how race is drawn into the wider discourses of caste and the Indian nation and the role and significance of race denial in the constitution of the Indian nation.

I examine how the different constituents (such as the political elites, academicians, Dalit leaders) in the civic mainstream discourse deny or assert that casteism is racism, and/or associate or reject the relationship between caste and race, and thus, potentially re-constitute or challenge the definition of “the people” of the Indian nation. This project responds to the current arguments that the internal contradictions within postcolonial nations are revealed by the current global restructuring which forces on-going reconstruction of the nation (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1997, 2001, 2004; Chatterjee, 1993a, 1993b, 2005, 2006). I build on these claims and add that the combination of the external pressures and the *internal* social, economic, and political transformations have provided a platform for marginalized groups to voice their concerns and challenge the dominant elite discourses. Chatterjee (1993a, 1993b, 2006) argues that marginalization of the internal “Other” of the post-colony by the political elites is likely to propel them to seek national and global acknowledgement of their plight by invoking the logic of Enlightenment (i.e. equality for all) on which the postcolonial nation is supposedly

created. Following Chatterjee's thesis, this project aims to understand the changing dynamics of the constitution of the Indian nation vis-à-vis the internal "Other" through the opposing national discourses about race and caste. Although there have been studies on how national discourses constitute national subjects (McGee, 1975, 1980; Charland, 1987; Morus, 2007a, 2007b), these studies have largely ignored the specificity of postcolonial national discourses, the discursive struggles of various groups within the "nation," and the role of the discourses of international organizations in such internal struggles. Hence, this study contributes to postcolonial theories of the nation by asking how the contestation over the meanings of caste and race is contained and possibilities it opens up.

I utilize Ono and Sloop's (2002) concepts of civic, dominant, and outlaw discourses to understand how discourses work within and reinforce dominant logics of what makes common sense and how they challenge those logics. The civic discourse is defined as a "discourse that is meant to provide information (entertain, persuade, etc.) for a large population of people, regardless of the demographics of actual consumption patterns" (Ono & Sloop, 2002, p. 12). According to Ono and Sloop (2002), dominant discourse is concerned with political, social, and cultural norms and maintains "the commonly accepted (and institutionally supported) understanding of what is just, good or bad," and the outlaw discourse is one whose logic is incommensurable with the logic of dominant discourse (p. 14). In other words, outlaw discourse counterposed with dominant discourse signifies any position incommensurable with dominant or normative positions and it is not necessarily just a disagreement or conflict or inversion of dominant discourse (Sloop & Ono, 1997, 1999). These concepts provide a language for describing and critiquing the

position of a discourse in relationship to other discourses in terms of the dominant ideologies and social hierarchies, and within media structures. However, the position of any discourse may change, and thus the concepts are not means of categorization but rather of understanding the dynamic and shifting relations among discourses.

Following this framework, I examine the major English language newspapers in India, which functions as civic discourse, to gain insight into how different groups (Government of India, Dalit activists, academicians) constitute the meanings of nation, race, and caste. I chose to analyze newspapers because news discourse is the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies, both of other elites and of ordinary citizens (van Dijk, 1988a). Both Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1988a) argue for critically examining newspaper language because the ideology of the news writer is not always apparent, but is hidden in the subtle choice of linguistic forms. I chose English language newspapers because of the crucial agenda-setting role they play in influencing public opinion within the English speaking Indian populace (which is estimated to be 350 million). In addition, newspapers are the "sources of record" for other media outlets (Rajagopal, 2001). My analysis aims to examine the logics of the diverse discourses to determine whether and how the meanings of nation, race, and caste are rearticulated or redefined.

My analysis of the contestation over the meaning of race and caste in national discourses is informed by Goldberg's (2006) notion of racial regionalism. Goldberg (2006) conceptualizes racial regionalization as a specific mapping of race and its enactment in different geographical regions. His work suggests that race takes on different meanings and manifests itself differently in different cultural-political-

economic-historical-geographic regions. Goldberg observes that by denying the existence of race in Europe, white privileged Europeans also deny the various discriminations based on racism. His work leads me to question the initial denial of caste racism by the government of India as, in Goldberg's terms, a mechanism for maintaining the privilege of the dominant castes. Following Goldberg, I contend that a particular form of racial Indianization might be at work in the Indian national discourses as expressed by the elites. The government of India clearly denied that race is associated with caste or that racism exists in India. This propels me to question what strategic goals are achieved through this denial of race. The notions of racial regionalization and the denial of racism offer useful lenses with which to address the current debate over racism and, in particular, to examine strategic denials of racism in India by the dominant elites.

To address the above concerns, I develop a method of multiperspectival analysis as described by Philips and Jorgenson (2002). I combine Ono and Sloop's (2002) framework, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, and van Dijk's analysis of elite racism denial. Ono and Sloop's framework provides a way of analyzing how civic discourses are related through the concept of the "logics of discourse," which refers to the reasons, meanings, and arguments that guide the competing discourses. Fairclough's CDA framework will enable me to question the meanings of the texts, how they are constructed, and how they are connected to the existing social and political assumptions about the issues discussed. Van Dijk's forms of denials of racism will enable me to analyze the meanings and arguments in the strategies that the elites employ to deny charges of racism in the mainstream media; these strategies may or may not mirror familiar patterns of caste and race ideologies.

I collected data from the top three national English language newspapers in India: *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, and *The Indian Express*. I chose newspapers to access the government discourse because government documents are classified and are inaccessible to the public. Data was collected from the period of August 2000 to February 2002 - six months before the UN Preparatory Meeting and six months after the UN conference in Durban. This time period begins six months prior to the UN decision to include the issue of caste on their agenda in order to determine whether there are any discussions or arguments in the media on caste and race leading up to the UN Preparatory meeting. I also searched whether there are any discussions or arguments on the UN conference six months after it ended in August 2001. This timeline (August 2000 to February 2002) was chosen because of the increase in media coverage surrounding the caste and race controversy during this time. This study employs an “event-driven” analysis of news waves as explained by Lawrence (2000); I pay attention to the racism charge that is instrumental in triggering the race and caste controversy. News waves are defined as “sudden and significant changes in political environment that are characterized by a substantial increase in the amount of public attention centered on a political issue or event” (Wolfsfeld, 2001, 2004, p. 335). The event of UN conference where racism charge is made, does not necessarily change the structure or cultural forms of the nation, but is meaningful and consequential in that it might potentially redefine and challenge the established category of nation through social contestation between the elites and the Dalits. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) assert, the nation is thought of as a work in progress, which is constituted through an event like the controversy over caste and race.

In this contestation, the elites and the Dalits reconstitute the meaning of nation and work toward their political objectives.

In the following section, I discuss the theories of nation, postcolonial nation, race, caste and media discourses that inform my dissertation.

## **THEORETICAL POSITIONING**

In this section, first, I discuss the theorization of nation in communication. Second, I give an overview of Ono and Sloop's conceptual framework of dominant, outlaw and civic discourses. Then I discuss the theories of race, and caste. Finally, I situate the project within the theoretical perspectives.

### **Nation and Indian National Discourse**

First, I discuss how nation has been conceptualized in communication and other fields and show how different theories of nation inform each other. I explain the constitutive function of the national discourses that create a fiction of "the people." Then, I explain the crisis in postcolonial nations and elaborate on the dominant discourse of nation that has been normalized in India since the time of independence. Using Chatterjee's (1993a) theory of nationalism, I elaborate how the political elites constituted the "unity in diversity" national discourse around the time of Independence.

### *Conceptualization of Nation*

Ono (1998) argues that the concept of nation has not been adequately theorized in communication and that research in intercultural communication has been limited to making general and sweeping claims about nationally defined cultures and then “extrapolating those speculations to apply to the people who live in the geographical spaces those nations circumscribe” (p. 197). This approach has been criticized in scholarly works (Moon, 1996; Nakayama, 1997; Ono, 1998; Yep, 1998) for its tendency to normalize and perpetuate the hegemony of the privileged cultural perspectives and homogenize the diversity within the nation. Ono (1998) is particularly critical of the US-centric model of cultural relations that encourages a constricted reading of nation. Since the critical turn in the field, scholars have questioned the analyses that represent the nation as a solitary construct, and encouraged research on nation consisting of multiple forces and enactments located within the broader historical and social structures. Scholars have argued for viewing national discourses as constitutive (Flores & Hasian, 1997; Hasian & Flores, 1997; Halualani, 1997; Drzewiecka, 2002). They examined the role of nationalist discourses in inciting people to engage in political action.

Critical intercultural communication scholars have begun to engage theories of nation developed by scholars from outside the communication field such as Connor (1978), Gellner (1983), Anderson (1983, 1991), Giddens (1985), Hobsbawn (1990), Bhabha (1990), and Hall (1996). These scholars (Gellner, 1983; Giddens 1985; Hobsbawn, 1990; Anderson, 1991) argue that nations are distinctly modern<sup>4</sup> creations

---

<sup>4</sup> “Modern, as it was used in this literature, signified that the phenomenon was relatively recent, not ancient, with those doing the research marking the beginning of nations and nationalism at the time of the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century or, in some cases, in the middle of the nineteenth century” (Croucher, 2003, p. 8).

and not ancient, primordial, seamless wholes. They also posit that nation is socially constructed by elites who impose national identity on the masses in the pursuit of both political and economic goals (Croucher, 2003). In the field of communication, Anderson's notion of imagined community has been enormously influential due to the role he assigns to newspapers in engendering identification with the nation. Gellner (1983), who focused on the functionality of the nation in the context of industrialization, theorized the educational system and mass media as forerunners in informing people about the idea of nationhood. It is through school and mass media that people are taught to identify with an abstract, mythically rooted community of people "of the same kind" (p. 32). Though Gellner's conceptualization of nationalism through the mediated role of educational and mass media institutions gives a clear understanding of how a sense of binding is constructed among individuals on a broader political level by the sovereign nation-state, his idea of identity-conferring cultures does not take into account the problem of their persistence through time (Schlesinger, 1991). In other words, his explanation is inadequate to account for the change or transformation in cultural values that a nation undergoes over time. For Anderson (1991), nations are cultural artifacts created as a result of "spontaneous distillation of a complex crossing of discrete historical forces," which are the decline of sacred communities and fundamental changes in the conception of time (p. 4). To Anderson, nations are mental constructs, or "imagined political communities and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). Moreover, the symbolic formation of nation produces an "idea" of the nation as an "imagined community" with whose meanings individuals can identify and which, in turn, through this imaginary identification, constitute them as citizen subjects (Anderson,



1983, 1991, Hall, 1994). Anderson (1983) theorizes some of the major institutional forms through which a nationally imagined community comes to acquire concrete forms, especially the institutions of what he called print-capitalism. Anderson contends, “print language is what invents nationalism, not *a* particular language per se” (p. 122). The print capitalism that developed in Europe standardized and disseminated vernaculars through markets, providing the conditions for the creation of national consciousness.

The modernist scholars of nation emphasize the recentness and constructedness of nations as social creations of the elites in pursuit of political and economic goals. They recognize, however, national subjects also participate in this construction by either buying into the discourse of the elites, by opposing it, or by constructing themselves as subjects independent of the elite construction. There are tensions among multiple groups competing to define the nation according to their own interests. Moving beyond the political functions of nation, Hall (1994), who works within the constructionist perspective, describes nations not only as political constructs, but also as “systems of cultural representations” (p. 200) by means of which an imagined community may be interpreted. To Hall, “national cultures construct identities by creating meanings of the nation with which we can identify; these are contained in stories that are told about the nation, in memories which link its present to its past and in the perceptions of it that are constructed” (1994, p. 201). Though Anderson and Hall have provided a range of insights into how and why the nation emerges as a salient cultural and political formation, the globalizing contingencies are not explicitly addressed in their theories. Communication via various media plays an integral role in disseminating national imagery, but understanding the role of mass media in the reproduction of national culture and identity

also needs to take into account the increasing internationalization tendencies and increasing interactions among nations. In order to understand how national discourses (produced by elites or otherwise) function constitutively by creating the national subjects, I now discuss the rhetorical scholars and their influence on critical communication scholars.

### ***Constitutive National Discourses***

The works of McGee (1975; 1980) and Charland (1987) on constitutive rhetoric have had a great impact on studies in intercultural communication focusing on national discourse. To McGee (1975; 1980), national discourses are myths that create a fiction of “the people.” However, national discourses enable groups to establish links with the broader political goals, collective identities, and histories (Charland, 1987). National discourse obtains its constitutive power as it is very much a part of rhetoric of socialization, therefore inviting audiences to accept the extant subject positions (Charland, 1987). Moreover, Charland (1987) further argues that people are interpellated as “political subjects through a process of identification in rhetorical narratives” (p. 134). In other words, individuals identify with their subject positions which are already made for them. In effect, constitutive discourse creates a particular collective identity to legitimate particular ways of collective life by transcending individual differences. National discourses function constitutively by producing ideological effects which create specific collective identities and spurring the collectivities into action (Charland, 1987). Therefore, national discourses have the power to enact, create, institute or determine subjects and enable people to engage in political action.

Intercultural scholars Hasian and Flores (1997) argue that groups' identities and sense of belonging are expressed in national discourses. They make an important argument here, which suggests that it is not just the elites who constitute subjects via national discourses. As Hasian and Flores affirm, national discourses constitute subjects by reassembling "traditions, collective memories and histories of a 'people'" (1997, p. 92). Groups articulate new, temporary, or contradictory discourses by forging elements from existing discourses, or from previous constitutive rhetorics (Charland, 1987, p. 142). Therefore, the agency of the communities is reflected when they repeatedly recreate and imagine nationalities rhetorically, which is not bounded by geography and historical time (Flores and Hasian, 1997; Hasian and Flores, 1997; Halualani, 1997; Kluver, 1997). Delgado (1995; 1998) illustrates this in his analysis of how Chicano cultural nationalism constitutively created a people by combining Mexican cultural forms with Chicano ideology and discourse of North American settlers and pioneers. Consequently, this encouraged them to become political, vocal, and effective agents of collective action. Drzewiecka (2002) has furthered the understanding of constitutive function of discourse by exploring how the collective identity of Polish diaspora is constituted in discourses that aim "to legitimate certain forms of collective power and action *in between* national and cultural formations." (emphasis in the original, p. 1). Specifically, she analyzes how the identity of Polish diaspora has been constituted and contested in relationship to its "significant others, 'Jews,' 'the West,' and 'the communist'" (Drzewiecka, 2002, p. 2). Therefore, the study reveals how complex identifications are constituted in American and Polish American contexts of the diasporic groups.

Halualani (2002) demonstrates in her analysis of Hawaiian identity how the *Aloha* spirit is codified into the civil discourse and ideology of multiculturalism by the state apparatus. This state discourse of multiculturalism creates and influences a shared local culture and identity based on commonality and embodies “an illustration of Hawaiianess itself” which help in overriding the differences among peoples (Halualani, 2002, p., xiv). Halualani (2002) further contends that identity discourses are created within specific historical moments and specifically by powerful structures like national powers, government agencies, and legal and economic apparatus. Her study specifically demonstrates how the dominant groups’ power interests articulate identities of groups which place them within already existing dominant discourses.

Several scholars analyze how myths from history are invoked to redefine nations and refocus national history when there is external threat (Roy & Rowland, 2003; Banerji, 2006; Morus, 2007a; 2007b). These studies specifically highlight the power of mythic allusion whereby a mythic past is invoked by powerful elites to reconstitute a people to refocus national history. This consequently propels the unification of diverse peoples. Invoking nation’s mythic history becomes a primary mechanism by which elites try to further their vested interests. Roy and Rowland (2003) and Banerji (2006) analyze the narrative of mythic return to a time and place of origin that fostered constitutive discourses to construct an exclusive, nationalist Hindu “people.” By constituting the Hindu people through the revival of Hindu glorious past, the editorials in Indian newspapers incited Hindus to engage in assertive action that could protect them from the evils of the Muslims (Roy and Rowland, 2003). Banerji (2006) explains that the Hindu right wing party BJP with the help of everyday cultural-religious discourses interpellated

many ordinary Hindu believers by creating the pristine, mythic past of the dominant Hindu castes. The party leaders “invoked a Hindu crisis, a deviation from the path of high caste conduct, and lavishly used language of purity in order to save India from Muslim degeneracy” (Banerji, 2006, p. 383-4). In other words, the goal of such nationalist rhetoric is radically purifying and transforming the feeble Indian nation into vibrant, resurgent modern India that is marked by Hindu identity.

Morus’s (2007a) work demonstrates how the political leaders utilize past hatred to constitute disparate people. Morus’s (2007a) work extends the theorizing of constitution of the people by contending that in adverse material conditions, constitutive rhetoric reconstitutes peoples’ identity through a “series of teleological narratives of victimization, providing both a scapegoat for the people’s problems and offering a better future for the people, often through the elimination of the scapegoat (s)” (p. 144). Examining SANU Memorandum, which is viewed as the founding document of modern Serb nationalism, Morus (2007a) shows how discourses of historic victimization, the fear of the others, and the reconstitution of modern identities are rooted in mythic past. Utilizing these discourses, the leaders incite disputes among various political players. These leaders use claims and hatred from past to form collectivities or unite disparate people. In another study, Morus’s (2007b) explores the mythic dimension, which is entrenched in the constitutive discourses of Slobodan Milosevic that masks the intensity of violence for the audiences directly addressed and the international community, which could have intervened during the beginning of violence in the country. The above studies explain the importance and power of history and mythic nationalist discourses that act as

useful mechanisms for the elites and leaders to refocus national history and unify diverse peoples to the leaders' political advantage.

The studies mentioned above provide an insight into the constitutive function of national discourses that creates a "fiction" of national subjects. The national discourses create a particular collective identity to legitimate particular ways of collective life by transcending individual differences as the subjects accept the extant identity positions. Therefore, discourse is constitutive of social relations where all knowledge, talk, and argument takes place within a discursive context through which meanings are shaped for its participants. Powerful groups define who makes up a nation, and those who are outside of it. At the same time, not all political subjects "buy into" the fiction of "the people" created by the powerful groups. This creates tension between the elites and the political subjects and potentially provides opportunities for conflict between groups within the nation. Though communication scholars have worked on constitutiveness of national discourses in various contexts, they have not addressed the specificity of the postcolonial national projects. According to Chatterjee (1993a; 1993b; 2001; 2006), as postcolonial nations attempt to bring all masses under its fold, a considerable population remains distanced from the evolving ideals of nation. These marginalized citizens are not, therefore, proper members of civil society and are not regarded as such by the institutions of the state (Chatterjee, 2006). Therefore, the exclusion initiates the constant struggles between the political elites and the marginalized citizens.

### ***The Postcolonial Nation and the Indian National Discourse***

The postcolonial approach provides a crucial lens with which to understand the unequal relations of power and, as Shome and Hegde (2002) argue, open up the possibility of “geopoliticizing the nation and locating it in larger (unequal) histories and geographies of global power and culture” (p. 253). Chatterjee (1993a, 1993b, 2001, 2006) and Comaroff and Comaroff (1999, 2001, 2004), prominent postcolonial scholars, argue that postcolonial nations are always undergoing some internal crises. Referring specifically to the context of postcolonial South Africa, Comaroff (2004) contends, “in fact, *the* postcolonial state refers to a class of polities-in-motion that is quite diverse” considering the different groups that were put together to create postcolonial nations after prolonged colonial rule (p. 5). The postcolonial subjects constantly confront their contested histories (the history of colonization and the postcolonial national formation) and simultaneously make sense of how new configurations are changing that history (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2004). For example, in explaining dynamic politics in Botswana, Comaroff (1999) explains how the traditional way of governing has persisted and remained a cultural site, a crucial element in the political imagination of Botswana, and a set of discursive practices that are very much of the continuing present. Moreover, national politicians continue to be drawn back to the traditional forms of governance even in the course of distinctly non-parochial political processes. This creates a tension between the secular liberal nation-state, based on European ideals of civil society with broad political principles of moderation and social justice, and traditional forms of governance. Hence, the internal contradictions that emanate from the tension between traditional ways and postcolonial governance continue to exist in terms of a political

dilemma that confronts the postcolonial subjects. Citing an Indian example, Chatterjee (2006) argues that tensions and contradictions are part of postcolonial nations. He explains that since the early experiences of the imbrication of political elites in the context of the anticolonial movements, the democratic process in India has come a long way in bringing citizens under its influence. In its attempt to bring all masses into the fold of the postcolonial nation-state, a considerable number of the population has remained distanced from the evolving ideals of nation. These marginalized citizens are not, therefore, proper members of civil society and are not regarded as such by the institutions of the state (Chatterjee, 2006). The exclusion has resulted in the ongoing struggles between the political elites and the marginalized citizens and the excluded groups who are considered as “Others.”

The notion of the “Other” is inherent in the nationalist doctrine of the postcolonial nation-state. Bhabha (1990) argues that any nation’s “Other” is already an internal question; the “Other” is at the heart of any attempt to constitute sameness. Bhabha (1990) argues that heterogeneous histories of nations create internal differences and a “gap” in the nation’s self-definition (p. 299). This “gap,” or the exclusion of the internal “Other,” becomes a privileged site from which marginalized groups resist the elites’ attempt at their subversion. Triandafyllidou (1998) develops this notion further and argues that a nation, for its own existence, presupposes the existence of “Others” who are internal or external; the nation, in this sense, is double-edged, that is, it is inclusive-exclusive in nature. Therefore, nation is constantly defined and/or re-defined through the “Others,” namely, other nations or ethnic groups. In these terms, the marginalized Dalits are the



internal other who is perceived by the elites to threaten the nation, its distinctiveness, authenticity, and stability.

This study responds to the need to address the constant internal contradictions that make postcolonial nations the sites of ongoing conflict (between the elites and marginalized groups in the context of political transformations within and outside the nation (Chatterjee, 2001, 2006; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001). In spite of the globalizing tendencies and internal contradictions, postcolonial nations still persist and are constantly challenged by different groups from within regarding what constitutes the nation. This makes nationhood malleable, both conceptually and in practice, and there is no reason to believe that “nations will not be perpetually imagined, even though such imaginings will change in content and form” (Croucher, 2003, p. 2).

In the next section, I lay out Chatterjee’s (1993a, 1993b) reading of nationalism to explain nationalist projects in India -- both colonial and post-colonial -- and the deeper psychological needs they served. Chatterjee offers an explanation of cultural nationalism by teasing out its complexities and thus highlighting the potential for resistance by marginalized groups, particularly in the Indian context. His theory helps me to interpret the material and political outcomes of nationalist projects in India and to identify the inner dynamics in relations among political elites and marginalized citizens.

Chatterjee (1993) criticizes Anderson’s conception of imagined community because of its inherently Eurocentric bias. Unlike Anderson, Chatterjee (1993a) does not consider nation as something that is “thought out” or “created” in a universal scheme in relation to a set of objective facts and social relations in a particular social formation. Chatterjee (1993a) remarks, “contrary to the largely uninformed exoticization of the

nationalism in the popular media in the West, the theoretical tendency represented by Anderson certainly attempts to treat the phenomenon as part of the universal history of the modern world” (p. 15). For example, what transpired in the West in creating nationalistic sentiments cannot be applicable in other parts of the world, and certainly not in India. The conditions giving rise to nationalism in India were very different from those of western nations. Chatterjee (1993a) further argues that the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa are not necessarily posited on identity but on being different from the West. He shows how anticolonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society even when the state is still in the hands of the imperial power.

Chatterjee’s (1993a, 1993b, 2006) framework of anticolonial nationalist discourse posits that nationalism moves through three distinct but related ideological “moments” in the historical emergence of the postcolonial state. The first, is characterized by a cultural consciousness enabled by European Enlightenment thought; the second is the mobilization of the nonpassive “Oriental” population, and the final, the hegemonic imposition of liberal state form on the non-Western nation-state, and the postcolonial state’s entry into “Western modernity.” The fundamental component of Chatterjee’s argument rests on the question of cultural identity. According to Chatterjee (1993a), cultural consciousness first arises in the nationalist ideology in colonized countries and becomes the discursive basis for anticolonial nationalist leaders to mobilize the population against continued colonial rule. The anticolonial nationalist struggle is characterized in the negative by objections to the imposition of Western domination on the non-West. Nationalist ideology in this moment offers a positive re-articulation of identity, one that denies colonial characteristics of stagnation and backwardness of the

colonized, even as it maintains the cultural dichotomies of the discourse of Orientalism through mythic discourses of origins and reifications of tradition (Chatterjee, 1993a; 1993b). Significantly, it draws upon Enlightenment notions of (national) identity and (political) autonomy. The “elitist” attitude constitutes the positive articulation that takes the form of a cultural synthesis that safeguards Eastern spirituality (Eastern culture) through Western materialism, that is, the state (Western culture). Chatterjee (1993a) offers a reading of “anticolonial nationalism” that moves beyond a political interpretation of its function. He focuses on the inner spiritual significance and “creating its own domain of sovereignty within the colonial society well before it begins its battle with colonial power” (p. 6). In the experience of the colonized people, western colonization’s tactic had been the total domination in material and economic domains. Chatterjee (1993a) argues that the “inner” spiritual domain, which bears the essential markers of identity, is the one place where groups assert their rights to remain free of such domination. However, this very acceptance of a rational/spiritual dichotomy as historical fact is, for Chatterjee, indicative of the failure to escape from the colonial markers of difference. It is also derivative of Orientalism in so far as it retains the assumptions about fundamental cultural differences between East and West, which, in turn constrains difference within the parameters of Western conceptions. Further, the derivative nature of nationalist discourse explains the subjectivity of the colonized on the basis that that subjectivity is already teleologically destined to be politically configured by Western modernity. For India, cultural consciousness started in the years preceding independence and made its appearance in the nationalist thought of anti-British sentiments. Yet, this

nationalist thought embodied an idea of “nation” which was itself borrowed from Western ideology.

One of the central concerns that Chatterjee (1993a; 1993b) puts forward is that while nationalism is the complete opposite of colonialism, it in fact absorbs much of the value system of colonialism, and acts to benefit a middle class elite. Anticolonial nationalism achieves what Chatterjee terms a passive revolution, a term he adopts from Gramsci. It describes the means by which a dominant group maintains hegemony by incorporating the very forces that potentially threaten its dominance. The state is modernized “without undergoing a political revolution” and those who are disempowered, remain so (Chatterjee, 1993a, p. 57). Thus, for Chatterjee, the rise of anti-colonial nationalism results in the nationalist bourgeoisie establishing hegemony to speak on behalf of the entire nation’s citizens, but it does not result in profound social or political change. The middle class elites take over the apparatus of the colonial state, and much of the space which was occupied by civil society institutions in the colonial era comes to be occupied by institutions of political society with a close affiliation with the state. Supporting Chatterjee’s arguments, Guha (2000), an eminent Indian historian, explains that the Indian elite bourgeois nationalists, who were nurtured by colonialism itself, led a passive nationalist movement in order to ascend to the ruling power in the borrowed ideals of their colonial mentors.

The political elites in post-independence India tried to define the Indian nation by constituting the “unity in diversity” discourse to bind disparate peoples together (Shield & Muppidi, 1996). After demarcating the political territory, the then Congress government set up by the Congress Party in independent India, began the task of nation

building. The Congress Party created the National Integration Council (NIC) in 1962. The council's main task was to review all matters pertaining to national integration and to make recommendations thereon (Shields & Muppidi, 1996). The core purpose of the national integration project was to create an "official" national discourse based on unity in diversity, a political ideology that ties together different identities like caste, race, religion, and ethnicity into a "unity of polity and plurality of society" (Khan, 1991, p.13). As Kothari (1989) sums it up, the political system run by the Congress "produced and permeated a tempo of nationalism and national identity that, without steamrolling any significant constituency, provided a new framework of discourse and deliberation" (p. 2225). Hence, the focus of the government has been on creating a seamless unity in diversity as the nation's dominant discourse and in doing so, glossing over the differences (but not necessarily integrating them) and discrimination (one major task of the new government was to ban all caste based discrimination), and conjuring up the national body with unity of disparate ethnic and linguistic groups. In this way, the processes of conscious articulation and awareness of an emerging Indian nation based on cultural pluralism and national unity are strengthened in the national discourse (Muppidi, 2000). As Parekh (1995) has argued, Gandhi, Nehru (Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Indian Prime Minister) and other elites were not engaged in an attempt to make India into a variant of the modern European nation-state. They chose instead, as the basis for the new order, the "politically more relevant and, to them, morally more acceptable concept of civilization, and argued that not race, ethnicity, language, religion or customs, but the diffused, plural and relatively heterogeneous traditional Indian civilization best suited the Indians" (Parekh, 1995, p. 4). The new India was designed in ways that sought to foster that

heterogeneity in the guise of the “unity in diversity” discourse of nationhood. This dominant ideological discourse of unity in diversity has been well circulated in the mass media (till late 80s in the state-run only television network in India, *Doordarshan*) with images and narratives that imply that all Indians are part of one nation which overrides all differences and heterogeneity across religious, linguistic, and caste lines (Muppidi, 2001). What emerged out of this mish mash - the “unity in diversity” dominant civic discourse -- is the upper and upper-middle caste Hindu national identity of India (Muppidi, 2001; Roy, 2001).

Evidently, the ideals of “unity in diversity” could not be sustained for long just as Chatterjee has theorized. Manor (1996) posits that social conflicts were easier to manage in Nehru’s time (1947-64) than in recent years. In Nehru’s day, Indian society was more self-regulating and less prone to conflict than it has been since the late 1960s. Caste and class hierarchies were challenged less often than of late. Scholars (Gupta, 1995; Manor, 1996) cite two main political trends, which have unfolded gradually but have progressed quite considerably and changed this situation. The first was a political awakening within all sections of Indian society. Individuals in disadvantaged groups became more aware of their rights and of the egalitarian implications of a political system in which each person has just one vote. They grew more assertive and more inclined to apply pressure on politicians to give them equality and benefits. The second was the decay of political institutions; both the formal institutions of state and the crucial informal institutions like the Congress Party due to oppositions from innumerable parties in India (Manor, 1996). The effect was to damage the instruments politicians had once used to gather information, distribute goods and services, and mediate social conflict at a time when political

awakening was making those instruments more, not less necessary (Gupta, 1995).

Moreover, since the nationalist leaders of independent India created national discourse by invoking sameness to override the heterogeneity and inequality of caste, race, religion, and linguistic differences, the construction of nationhood in India has been primarily based on the marginalization of the “Others,” who did not form the upper caste or middle caste elites. Particularly, the categories of race and caste have been dissociated from the imagination of the new nation because the leaders did not want to be reminded of colonial rule, which was primarily based on racial differences. This process illustrates Chatterjee’s (2006) claims that elite nationalism can never absorb and appropriate its “Other” (marginalized groups within the nation) within a “single homogeneous unity” or the “unity in diversity” discourse of nationhood in India (p.156). Therefore, the discourse of “unity in diversity” ignores the major dynamics and friction between different races and castes, the material inequality among different groups, and the plight of “Untouchables” like the Dalits. The bourgeoisie elites constituted the Indian subject via the “unity in diversity” discourses to unify diverse peoples and gain political advantage. The structural changes created by the political elites in independent India have been merely cosmetic and have ignored the marginalized “Others,” just as the colonial powers did. The political awakening of the internal “Other” has been a crucial indicator of the shifting struggles and contradictions within the postcolonial nation; such contestations between political elites and “Others” create a crisis surrounding the questions of what constitutes a nation, who defines it toward what end, and with what strategies. In the midst of various disadvantaged groups that started awakening and claiming their political and social right, and challenging the seamless “unity in diversity” and equality discourses

of the nation, the Dalits were the most prominent. Moreover, the waves of global connectivity and awareness of forms of discrimination provided the crucial impetus to the Dalits to take up their claims to national and international levels.

### ***The Rise of the Dalit Discourse***

The Dalits belong to the “Scheduled Caste” category in India, which comprises the people belonging to the lowest caste groups. The categories of “Scheduled Castes” and “Scheduled Tribes,” form about 20 percent of India’s population, i.e. roughly 150 million (Census of India, 2006). The Dalits’ status derives its strength and justification from religious texts. In the *Manusmriti*,<sup>5</sup> the Dalits are described as “polluted,” and are considered the “Untouchables.” Today the other Untouchable castes prefer to use the term “Dalit” as an identity of assertion. Dalits’ freedom operates in designated enclaves: in politics and in the administrative posts, which they acquire because of state reservation policy. The constitution of India has certain arrangements for the backward classes to allow them to enjoy a humane lifestyle and for their upliftment (Chalam, 1990). The reservations for Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe (SC and ST) are of three broad categories: political, educational and employment. For the first, the Constitution provides for reservation of seats in proportion to their numbers for the SC and the ST in the Lok Sabha (The Lower House) in its Article 330, and in the Vidhan Sabha (The Upper House) in Article 332 (Chalam, 1990). However, in areas of contemporary social exchange and culture, the “untouchability” status becomes a Dalit’s only definition (Ghose, 2003). The right to pray to a Hindu god has always been a high caste privilege. Intricacy of religious ritual is directly proportionate to social status. The Dalits have been formally excluded

---

<sup>5</sup> The *Manusmriti* or Laws of Manu is the book of Hindu law and dates from the seventh century A.D.



from Hindu religion and education, and are an outsider in the entire sanctified universe of the “*dvija*.”<sup>6</sup> Today, wide-ranging policies on affirmative action have opened up government services and state education to the Dalits. However, areas of freedom are limited, largely to sectors that are under the aegis of the state, such as the civil service or state-owned enterprises. Exclusion from cultural and social networks emerges from the Dalits’ crucial exclusion from the system of castes (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998, p. 39).

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had been the most significant and prominent leader of the Dalit movement, which did not align itself to the elite nationalist cause that occupied political center stage at the time of independence. As Moon (1979) explains, Ambedkar provided a searing critique of the “enlightened high caste social reformers who did not have the courage to agitate against caste” (p. 37). Before independence, Ambedkar’s insistence on separate electorates for the “Untouchables” had been unacceptable to Gandhi. Ambedkar’s demand was interpreted as Dalit antipatriotism. For Gandhi, Hinduism and the caste system were not negotiable, while Ambedkar rejected Hinduism and the caste system as well as the claims of any upper caste to represent the Dalits (Moon, 1979). Further, for Gandhi, the question of “untouchability” was an evil within Hinduism, to be reformed by Hindus. For Ambedkar, upper-caste domination of Dalits was abhorrent. Ambedkar categorically stated that he would reject Hinduism unless “caste was purged from it completely” (Keer, 1990, p. 231). This has formed the basis of much contemporary antagonism between Dalits and the upper castes. For the upper

---

<sup>6</sup> *Dvija* translates as “twice born” or upper caste. Those born into the upper castes are usually invested with a “sacred thread at investiture ceremonies held for boys about to enter their teens.” The investiture ceremony is considered to be the “second birth” into the caste hierarchy.

castes, the Dalits hostility to Gandhi—the “father of the nation” was almost an act of treason. However, for the Dalits, patriotism for India itself came to be seen as an upper-caste activity (Ghose, 2003). Ambedkar has fought for aggressive separatist politics and fierce demands for reserved seats in educational institutions (Keer, 1990). Some politicians have criticized these demands as divisive and fractious, while others have seen them as the only means of deepening the democratization process in India (Jaffrelot, 1993). It would not be inaccurate to say that without Ambedkar, the present-day aggressively articulated Dalit protest would not have been possible (Ghose, 2003). Therefore, the Dalit discourse in the Indian social and political situation has challenged the dominant discourse.

As mentioned earlier, this study aims to understand the logics, meanings, and arguments that are operative behind the discourses of the Indian elites and the Dalits. There is also a need in the discourse of the postcolonial nation to consider the discourse of the “Other” to understand how different subjects discursively constitute nations. To do that, I utilize Ono and Sloop’s (2002) framework of discourse to conceptualize the relations between various discourses and their logics.

### ***The Logic of Discourse: Framework of Dominant, Outlaw and Civic Discourses***

Ono and Sloop (2002) articulate a framework, which positions discourses relationally according to who produced, and whether they reinforce or challenge dominant cultural logics. This dimensions form a “grid of intelligibility” which guides decisions concerning which discourses to investigate, and how to interpret them as well as what are the goals of these investigations. Ono and Sloop (2002) define the logics of discourse as the meanings, reasoning, and arguments that drive the competing discourses

of various media texts. Further, they suggest that these concepts should be seen as tools of criticism rather than objective categories into which given discourses fit snugly. The purpose is not to simply categorize a discourse but instead to understand the position of a media discourse in relationship to other discourses in terms of the dominant ideologies and social hierarchy. As Ono and Sloop (2002) suggest, these intersections help me to analyze the different discourses, how they change, and what are the implications of those changes.

Dominant discourses are those meanings and understandings that work within “the commonly accepted (and institutionally supported) understanding of what is just, good or bad” (Ono and Sloop, 2002, p. 14). Dominant discourses circulate in mass mediated outlets that fit with the ideological logic of “governmental” discourses and are implicitly endorsed by the governing bodies. Moreover, if there are any differences of meaning or understanding, they are often filtered by terms, meanings, and logics of dominant discourse. Consequently, dominant discourses pervade most educational, entertainment as well as political institutions taking the form of common sense, “both at a civic and at the level of the individual” (p. 14). On the other hand, the outlaw discourse is incommensurate with the logic of dominant discourse. Ono and Sloop (2002) define civic discourses as “those discourses that are meant to provide information (entertain, persuasion, etc.) for a large population of people (regardless of the demographics of actual consumption patterns” (p. 12). A civic discourse is meant to be considered universally, i.e. communication available to people in general. Civic discourse includes any sources that disseminate information to all consumers like newspaper articles, and

television shows on any major networks. Dominant discourse mostly becomes dominant civic discourse because of it is widely circulated and culturally accepted.

In an influential study, Ono and Sloop (2002) analyze the passage of Proposition 187, a 1994 California voting initiative, and examine the media representations of the rhetoric of migration in the US. Specifically, the authors study the discourse surrounding the Proposition 187, the public discussion about immigration and US citizenship and the consequent role of rhetoric in shaping social borders, constructing immigrant identities and international relationships. The dominant discourse that emerges distinguishes “illegal” immigrants from “legal” immigrants as well as citizens, situating them in a manner, which puts material and social constraints on immigrants and restricts equality. The authors further argue that the dominant discourses liken “illegal immigrants” with Mexicanos and Mexicanas and hence construct ambivalent attitudes concerning immigrants along racial and gendered lines. Further, the dominant discourse on the rhetoric of immigration in news media reflects the rhetoric of mainstream media, which represent the “hegemonic” or dominant ideological themes.

Outlaw discourse, as Ono and Sloop (2002) define it, refers to “those materials and vernacular discourses that emerge from marginalized communities and work on the basis of *differend* rather than litigation” (p. 139). In other words, outlaw discourse, counterposed with dominant discourse, signifies any position incommensurable with dominant or normative positions and it is not necessarily just a disagreement or conflict or inversion of dominant discourse (Sloop & Ono, 1997, 1999). To illustrate outlaw discourse, Ono and Sloop borrow from Lyotard’s (1988) notion of *differend*, which is used in language games. Language games base their judgments regarding discourses

contingent upon the situational factors. Lyotard defines *differend* as a “conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments” (p. xi). Lyotard argues that *differend* depends on the contingency of all judgments and the incommensurability of various logics takes precedence over the importance or validity of one claim. Ono and Sloop (2002) argue that particular outlaw logic is championed “as if it was universally valid.” (p. 141). They also contend that dominant logics (which are already prevalent) act as precedence and hence, the outlaw logics attempt to challenge those dominant ones. Moreover, outlaw logics act as an improvement on current logic as if this outlaw discourse was the “Truth” (Ono & Sloop, 2002, p. 141). Therefore, Ono and Sloop (2002) argue that the role of outlaw discourse is to invoke questions and encourage an alternative way of thinking about justice. This is a significant role considering that along with dominant discourse, outlaw discourse occupies a crucial position in “constructing the public” by residing outside the domain of dominant discourse and challenging the way dominant ideas shape thinking and acting. Hence, outlaw discourse carries with it the potential to bring about substantive change in the alternative ways of thinking and acting. In doing so, it depicts variedly different cultural and social experiences of peoples or groups (Ono & Sloop, 2002).

As mentioned earlier, these categories of discourse (dominant, outlaw, and civic) are necessarily fluid. An outlaw discourse could also be civic discourse when it becomes universally viewed or it can remain outlaw vernacular if it does not gain universal appeal. Any discourse that is outlaw civic does not remain so for long. Ono and Sloop (2002) argue that there are two possibilities with an outlaw civic discourse. First, the outlaw

discourse can move out of the localized context, become part of the general culture, and eventually become popular, which leads to possibilities of social change. It can also become a part of the dominant discourse and lose its resistant potential to the prevalent discourse. On the other hand, the outlaw discourse can also continue to remain marginalized without assimilating within the dominant discourse. In either case, by analyzing the outlaw discourse, scholars identify the logics that are at odds with the logics of dominant discourses. Moreover, as Chambers (1994) points out, such discourses do not just reflect culture, history, and differences but also produce them. Therefore, Ono and Sloop (2002) explain, “outlaw logic becomes civic through the process by which they either are rejected and hence, remain an outlaw logic, or become ideologically disciplined so that they no longer challenge dominant logic and hence become dominant” (p. 22) and eventually widely accepted. In doing so, such discourses also bring in changes in the previous dominant discourse and “redefine what is dominant” (p. 22). As the outlaw logic is brought to the public domain to a large degree, it is expressed in a language that is disjunctive with the dominant discourse. Therefore, outlaw discourse has the potential to bring in slow, discursive change. It is the role of the critics to highlight the outlaw discourse that is resistant and in opposition to the dominant discourse and whose excluded positions have the potential to challenge “the structuring of ideological and material principles and realities of people” (Ono & Sloop, 2002, p. 167).

This project examines the logics of race and caste in Indian media discourses. The next section lays out the theoretical strands of race and caste and addresses the extant academic debates surrounding the relationship between caste and race in India.

## **Race and Caste**

### ***Race***

Race, a prominent sociological concept is used extensively and conceptualized variedly in western literature (Banton 1987; Appiah, 1995). In the early twentieth century race was conceptualized as a biological trait which was assumed to be natural and given and this idea was used to justify various forms of exploitation. Although the concept of race appeals to biologically based human characteristics (phenotypes), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process. As Winant (2000) points out, the meaning of race is embedded in the sociopolitically inclined “conflict and interests in reference to different types of human bodies” (p. 172). A scholar of nationalism, Eitenne Balibar (1991) explains that race and nation are fused together in the national formation relational terms, which are interdependent and inseparable in nationalist thought and practice. Both nation and race are constructed political terms. Balibar (1991) further argues that racism is constantly emerging out of nationalism directed both towards the exterior and the interior of the nation to create the boundaries between the sacred kin and the “alien” kind. This is significant because the inclusion or exclusion of “races” in the constitution of nation is determined by who is creating the nation.

Communication scholars have theorized race as demographic group category, social construction, politicized discourse, macro-structure, or a private narrative (Halualani, 2006). In intercultural communication studies, while underscoring interracial communication behaviors and patterns, scholars have mostly analyzed the broader concepts of culture and ethnicity rather than race, preferring the notion of culture defined

as nation and communities of speaking (Hecht, Collier, Ribeau, 1989). These earlier scholars have conceptualized race as an identity marker and group category as opposed to a socio-political construct. Particularly, as Halualani (2006) argues, the studies have ignored how the constructions of “race” and “diversity” can be viewed as constructed between structural formations and contextualized individual sense-makings. To fill this gap in research, critical intercultural communication scholars highlight culture and race as ideological struggles of vested interests, and explain how through these struggles meanings are constructed (Ono, 1998; Martin & Nakayama, 1999; Collier, et. al. 2001; Mendoza, et. al., 2002; Flores, et. al., 2004). Thus, through this perspective, as Flores et. al (2004) argue, diversity and race are re-framed as power-vested significations that position certain cultural groups over others. Further, critical intercultural scholars have concentrated on how whiteness has become normalized in the discourse of race (Shome, 1996; Dyer, 1997; Lipsitz, 1998; Nakayama & Martin, 1998; Jackson, 1999; Jackson & Heckman, 2002). Nakayama and Krizek (1995) argue that because whiteness is privileged as the cultural norm, it goes unmarked. Nakayama and Krizek (1995) note, “the invisibility of whiteness has been manifested through its universality” (p. 293). As a result, “in addressing race, in the law, in literature, in popular culture, in communication studies, in religion or other areas of our lives, whiteness is privileged, normalized, deified and raceless” (Johnson, 1999, p. 1). Furthermore, when whiteness goes unmarked, anyone not white subsequently is defined as the “Other” and becomes “raced” (Dyer, 1997, p. 1). Moreover, rhetoric about whiteness has been examined as strategic or tactical. Such strategic rhetorics emerge from more powerful structural positions than tactical rhetorics, which focus on rearranging structures of power. While the tactical



always responds to the strategic, the strategic responds to the tactical as well (Flores, 2002). This endless dialogue has implications for understanding the arrangements of power and suggests that discourse about race emanates from differential positions in society, reflecting social structures of power. Moreover, the research on whiteness does not essentialize whiteness (as in only white people do racism) and has implications for enacting racial privilege by other groups in different contexts.

The works of cultural studies and critical studies scholars (Omi, & Winant, 1994; 1997, 2000; Hall, 1997; Goldberg, 2002, 2006) have informed the understanding of race as discursively produced. These scholars have theorized race as both a structural formation and lived social identity. Omi and Winant (1994) recognize that as a complex issue, race is not just tied to skin color but entails a wide repertoire of cultural meanings and significations attached to it. Further, the sociohistorical categories employed to differentiate among groups reveal, upon serious examination, to be imprecise if not completely arbitrary (Omi & Winant, 1994). Drawing upon the work of Frantz Fanon, Hall (1997) explains that the meaning of racial signifiers such as skin color, are not fixed, and are discursive constructs, or “floating signifiers” that depend upon cultural contexts. To Goldberg (2006), race is a way of meaning making, an *enactment* in our daily life. This way of meaning making is determined externally by political, economic, and cultural circumstances that position people in a certain way in the society. These scholars further theorize that race is not a fixed category but, it is institutionalized in a structural apparatus known as the “racial state” which is composed of local, state, and federal governmental structures. It is backed by the courts of law, military power, public policy, public and educational institutions, and, local and national media (Omi & Winant, 1994;

Goldberg, 2002). Moreover, Comaroff (1998) contends that through administrative policies, race as a structural formation lays down official procedures and conditions for identification, which permeate private, everyday experiences of social subjects. To Goldberg (2002), the racial state is an unseen space “between lived conditions and the more formal mode of governance” (p. 108). Individuals living within the state perform, reiterate, and invest in structural constructions of diversity and race such as equal rights, fair access and use, census counts, and the equitable proceduralism of state agencies. However, Comaroff (1998) and Goldberg (2002) theorize the racial state as both a fixed and unstable social structure that is invariably tied to governance, regulation, and economic modes of power, although it is not necessary that the subjects agree or interpret the policies of the government in the same manner. Thus the state, which organizes the racial politics of social identity and everyday life, cannot fully homogenize, determine, or suppress how identities are privately practiced (Goldberg, 2002). The situated experiences, individual or groups performances, private memories, and personal narratives of the everyday actors who live and practice “diversity and “race” expose the instability of the racial state.

Extending the research on the dialectic between structural and personal dimensions of diversity and race constructions, a study done by Halualani et al. (2006) reveals that individuals strategically articulate and understand race via raceless diversity encodings whereby race is seemingly stripped of its power inequalities. The scholars show that race is meaningfully encoded and acts as an important cultural resource that is re-signified to speak to shifting needs, identity positions, and experiences. Specifically, the scholars explain that through situated personal experience, individuals live out,

practice, and experientially deconstruct the terms of race in their own, unexpected and sometimes contradictory ways. Further, they argue that via raceless diversity encodings all racial/ethnic groups are made equal and by racial pivoting, participants both discursively pull away from and move toward race to suit their individual experiences. The study shows that the social actors may interrogate race as a structural construction while also rationalizing race and racism as racial/ethnic group behavior. The authors further argue that this “co-articulation of race, as both structure and group agency, problematically de-emphasizes the structural conditions of race and indicts specific racial/ethnic groups for racial exclusions, racist behavior, and racial/ethnic entrenchment” (p. 72). Likewise, Flores et.al. (2006) contends that the location of racism in individuals or groups rather than the system has paved the way to “discourse of tolerance and multiculturalism” (p. 183). Winant (2002) similarly notes that racism is narrowly defined in ways that reduce racism to overt and individual acts mirroring a past era, which locates racism in individuals, rather than in more systemic functions. Latent workings of race continue but are masked and harder to identify as racist. Halualani’s et. al (2004) study in the context of the US reveals how a diversity discourse that denies race can be used to affirm and maintain racial privilege and undermine claims of racism. There is a need to study the articulation of race and racism in different contexts (most of the studies are done in the context of Europe and the US) and how the denial of racism acts as a strategic foil to maintain power and privilege of the ruling group. Further, this denial also potentially subverts the dynamics and tensions between groups and the discrimination targeted at specific groups. To stress the use of context and how the denial of race and

racism by the elites functions in Indian context, I utilize Goldberg's concept of racial regionalization to argue that this denial is a form of racial Indianization.

### ***Racial Regionalization***

Goldberg's conceptualization of racial regionalization in reference to Europe's cultural politics provides a critical understanding of how the absence of race is created in the society to support Europe's image of racelessness, which is done by denial of race and racism. Goldberg (2006) opines that Europe's denial of race seems to be a case of the white privileged Europeans saying that racism does not happen in Europe, it happens elsewhere. According to Goldberg (2006), Whites construct their race positions via the discourse of racelessness and homogeneity in the European context. In other words, there is a denial of the category of race, which is still prevalent and entrenched within the social structure of multiethnic Europe. Through this very denial, the discourse of race in Europe denies the major dynamics, friction, and the material inequality among different groups, and evades the question of who has the power or privilege. Consequently, race, though being absent from the broader discourse, finds its way through the enactment of racism and manifests itself through class positions, religious groupings, constructions of Muslims and the "Others" who dwell on the periphery of mainstream European culture. In other words, race is institutionalized and kept alive through the categories of culture, color, body, and religion, but the category of race itself, which embodies all these elements, is kept mute. This denial has important political implications in Europe. By rendering race to be invisible, it subverts the "stigma from interracial sociality" (Goldberg, 2006, p. 359). Apart from this, perhaps the most crucial political significance attached to this is shifting the blame of institutional racism to the one who is charging it.

Goldberg notes that race as a category gains its power and validity from the context where it is embedded. Therefore, by outlining such region specific racism, one can link it to its dominant state formations and analyze the role of the state in giving meaning to race and racism. As Goldberg notes, the argument that we have transcended race is often based on social constructionist theories. That is, if race is just an invention, then it is one that we can do without. Since much of the dominant population no longer consciously experiences race as a daily reality, it must finally have become insignificant.

The critical intercultural scholars have provided crucial directions to the study of race and racism. The scholars agree that the discursive construction of race needs to be analyzed within contexts, as it is an inherently contestable social and political category. This conceptual framework enables me to question the naturalness of the racial denial in the Indian context, its relationship with caste, and how the logics of race and caste are associated with the constitution of the Indian nation. Further, I also question whether the denial of racism is indicative of racial Indianization. Since meaning and enactment of race change with time and context, communication research on race requires “constant attention and monitoring” (Winant, 1999, pp. 15). With the increasing globalization that is transforming important features of social existence, studying race and racism needs to be contextualized within this transformation to understand how the contexts are affecting the relationship between diverse groups of people living together. The Dalits charged that caste was racist and thus called attention to the relationship between caste and race. The next section lays out the theories of caste and debates surrounding the relationship with caste and race in India.

## *Caste*

Caste is a form of social stratification in India with elaborate rules and rituals and subsequent sanctions upon its violation (Gupta, 2005). In its most sophisticated exposition, caste as a system is hierarchical and is ranked on the purity/pollution principle of human nature that is unquestionably accepted by all. This position is found in Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (Dumont, 1988). The caste system has been mythologized in part to a verse from the *Rig Veda*, an ancient Hindu scripture, which describes the creation of the human race from the primal man, *Purusha* (Roy, 2003). From his head sprang the *Brahmins*, the priestly caste, and the highest on the totem pole; from his arms the *Kshatriyas*, the warrior castes; from his thighs the *Vaishyas*, or merchant castes; and from his feet the *Sudras*, the servant or laborer castes or the "Untouchables." Within each of these castes are thousands of sub-castes, called *jatis* based on occupational differences. Commonly acceptable explanation of the caste origin is found in the original word "varna," which means color and order. The Aryan race tried to protect their light skinned complexion from the darker Dravidian race. So, skin color is embedded in the meaning of caste. As early as in 1948, Cox posited that there had been a mixture of blood between upper and lower castes; especially with upper caste *Brahmins* marrying into lower caste *Sudras*. That makes upper caste *Brahmins* to be the most mixed groups in India. Srinivas (1998) concludes that color is not the determining factor in caste hierarchy. However, scholars who associate caste with race reject this notion by arguing that mixing of *Brahmins* with *Sudras* did not erase the association between upper caste and fair complexion.

Caste system in India has been primordially based on occupation. Caste order is characterized by contesting notions of hierarchy and caste identity is based on where one is placed in the hierarchical order (Gupta, 2005). Gupta (2005) further asserts that the issue of caste hierarchy is not devoid of problems. The element of caste competition is a characteristic of caste order and that is why there is competitive assertion of caste order (Gupta, 2000, 2005, Panini, 2001). The assertion draws symbolic sustenance from origin tales that are specific to each caste and often in direct confrontation with Brahminical hierarchy. Moreover, the status concerns in the multiple caste hierarchies are not always linked to purity and pollution issues. They may also be associated with power and wealth (Cort, 2004). Gupta (2005) notes that the general insensitivity toward this aspect of caste has led to the “overvaluation of Brahminical version of hierarchy” (p. 412). Caste as a system can also work primarily because it is enforced by people who have power and wealth (they could belong to merchant caste and not be a Brahmin) and not just by ideological acquiescence.

Current theories of caste posit that though caste as a category exists in India, the caste *system* is on the decline with increasing urbanization and social mobility. Caste is gradually shifting away from traditional patterns of interdependence and intra group activities to broader social engagement. Leach (1999) opines that endogamy, hierarchical rank and heredity are no longer signifiers of caste and these have been replaced by the “political faction” (p. 6) which competes with other groups to access economic and social status. Even though the contemporary discourse on caste and politics in India has been liberated from the straitjacket debate of hierarchy and the purity and pollution relations, the centrality of caste as an agent of politics and its dominant role in Indian socio-

political life has neither been removed nor firmly challenged (Varshney, 2003; Gupta, 2005; Pankaj, 2007). Rather, recognition of caste as an instrument of socio-political change by caste-centric socio-political movements of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Dalit and Backward Class movements, has not only enlivened new debates in India, but has reinforced a caste-centric public-political life, giving it a modern value and a secular purpose (Pankaj, 2007). Moreover, if the earlier theories of caste (the strict hierarchy) were conditioned by transition from a colonial political system to parliamentary democracy, political stability of the dominant party system based on consensus politics and social coalition, the contemporary discourse has been underpinned by the decline of the dominant party system, recurrent political instability, protest of the Dalits and lower castes, proliferation of caste-based political parties, frustration with caste politics and violent caste wars (Varshney, 2006; Pankaj, 2007). Whereas early discourses culminated in the development of functional perspectives on caste, present ones are equally concerned with dysfunctional roles of caste in Indian politics (Srinivas, 2006).

The contemporary academic discourse on caste in India appears unable to contest vigorously enough the complex rationalizations of caste. In particular, it has failed to challenge and interrogate how the caste politics of the upper caste elites maintain caste divisions and differences via the trope of equal opportunity for all in the political and social system. Specifically, by claiming that caste does not matter and everybody has equal opportunity, upper caste political elites deemphasize the structural and deep-seated ideological barriers that the lower castes confront in every sphere of life. While scholars have voiced apprehensions about the use of ascriptive institutions in politics, the behavior of castes in politics has been different from linguistic, religious, and tribal associations



(Kothari, 1997, Srinivas, 1998). In this complex political climate, political mobilization of lower caste groups often has specific purposes, aimed at distribution of status or resources, or securing representation in legislatures and services through reservations. The nature of their demands often indicates a willingness to become part of the mainstream. Kothari (1997) defends caste in politics as a natural phenomenon by arguing that democratic politics will essentially operate and articulate themselves through social organizations and institutions. Since the bulk of India's population is organized around caste, it is but natural that politics will be organized and articulated through caste and the tension between the upper caste elites and lower caste peoples are likely to increase. The increasing tension is a product of contemporary economic and political developments along with corresponding changes in social norms, standards of behavior and in the aspiration of all peoples. Further, Kothari (1997) and Pankaj (2007) argue that the rise of the Dalits and their socio-political assertion have re-entrenched caste identity and consciousness. He explains that upper castes (primarily the *Brahmins*) used to invoke consciousness of caste identities in socio-political life; today, it is the Dalits who do the same by virtue of their presence in the political system, which indicates the strengthening of the caste system rather than its erosion or weakening. This is indeed an important point to reckon with because invoking the caste status is a necessary prerequisite to be able to talk about discrimination that is associated with one's caste. Hence, the category of caste needs to be vigorously examined in order to closely look at, a) how it serves as a key metaphor for socio-political struggle for the Dalits or other lower castes; b) how caste is being redefined by drawing it into wider discourse of race; and c) how this association

with race might potentially challenge the upper caste political elites' constitution of the Indian nation.

Indian sociologists have debated the relationship between race and caste, and in the light of the UN controversy, it becomes exigent to pay attention to that debate.

### **Caste and Race Debate in India**

#### ***Caste is Not Race***

There have been numerous debates about the relationship between cast and race in India. Eminent Indian sociologist Beteille (2006) claims that an attempt to equate race and caste is incorrect because race has its roots in genetic identity, while caste is a result of a social system. His view pertains to the most basic and traditional interpretation of race, which is based on biological distinction and viewed as genetically natural. In this perspective, race is reified and considered as biologically given.

Chakrabarty (1994) explains that an attempt to distinguish caste from race is politically motivated. He writes, "racism is thought of as something the White people do to us. What Indians do to one another are variously described as "communalism," "regionalism" and "casteism" but never "racism"" (p. 1). Bhagat (2003) posits that in the first census of independent India, racial category is used only for the Anglo Indians (they are half Indians and half British and are included in the census as Anglo Indians only if the patrilineal line of the person is European) and the Europeans. The rest of the categorization is based on caste and tribes and on the lines of religion, especially Hindus and Muslims. Caste discrimination, which is still rampant in India, is treated as separate

from racial oppression by the government as well as by general public and hence, the inclusion of the caste issues in the UN racism conference elicited an indignant stance from the government of India.

Explicit references to race have been conspicuously absent from the official Indian national identity narratives ever since independence in 1947. Chatterjee (1993a) contends that during the time of independence, India built the nation on the opposition to the very idea of colonialism and in doing so, race as a social category was also denied and suppressed from public consciousness because of the pernicious connection between colonialism and racism. In spite of such attempts, identity politics in India are extremely complex and are played at levels of religion, language, caste, and ethnicity. Baber (2004) posits that caste demarcations can constantly be redefined and politicized and are drawn within the wider narratives concerning race but never acknowledged as racially inflicted differences.

### ***Caste is Race***

As early as 1948, Risley has been the most prominent scholar to foreground the racial theory of caste using European race science in anthropometric research. He concluded that race was the key to understanding caste. He firmly believed that caste and race were so deeply embedded in the Indian society that they would successfully prevent the formation of a national identity or consciousness and thus perpetuate British rule in India. Therefore, he strongly recommended British benevolent despotism because India was, in his view, fundamentally apolitical and that caste as a divisive force was a solid obstacle to change.

Some Indian scholars equate the political manifestation of caste with race (Robb, 1995; Prasad, 2001; Gupta, 2005; Reddy, 2005). Prasad (2001) writes that the commonality between the social categories of race and caste is in the realm of oppression experienced by marginalized population, particularly in the economic domain. Gupta (2005) equates this extreme form of stratification to racism, religious separation, and other forms of discrimination. He argues that both race and caste are social constructs, which discriminate individuals on the basis of certain “essences.” For example, race in the West has been often strategically equated with notions of biological distinctiveness (blood, skin color, stature, and presumed genetic traits) and treated as separate from historical and cultural constructions of nationhood (Anderson, 1991). Reddy (2005) argues that both caste and race have emerged as significant metaphors in understanding social and political struggles, particularly in India. She argues that like race, caste is based on the notion that socially defined groups of people have inherent, natural qualities or “essences” that assign them to social positions, make them fit for specific duties and occupations; it is their “*swadharma*” (Sanskrit word for one’s duty). Further, the mechanism of casteism and racism operates in the similar manner.

The project focuses on caste and race in civic media discourse. It is crucial to discuss how media produce information and provide specific sites where social and political issues are struggled over (in this case the meanings of caste and race) and subject positions are constituted. I first focus on the role of media in shaping issues of public concern, and then move to civic discourse.

## Media Discourse

Media scholars argue that contemporary media provide the sites where social problems collide, political issues are struggled over, and different positions are constituted (Gurevitch & Levy, 1985; Schlesinger, 1991; Gray, 1995). The words and images that circulate in the media help audiences shape their views and understand issues about their communities and politics. Gurevitch and Levy (1985) posit that media are sites on which “various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality” (p. 19). Schlesinger (1991) contends that media are both strategically and tactically utilized by political elites and various groups who oppose the political elites in constructing collective identities and “the media and the wider cultural fields are indeed to be conceived as *battlefields*” where different groups contest each other and identities are constructed and negotiated (emphasis in the original, p. 99). Critical scholars who engage in media analysis contend that discourses reproduce and sustain ideologies and provide people with knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies, both of the elites and of ordinary citizens (Hall, 1977, 1980; van Dijk, 1991, Fairclough, 1995). Kellner (2005) posits that media and society change and transform each other, and the field of media studies remains a contested domain where debates surrounding the “power” of media are quite engaging.

This project works under the premise that media provide the necessary sites for construction, contestation, and criticism of issues and problems. Moreover, news organizations play a leading role in establishing which issues will be selected for attention and how they will be inflected with meanings and made salient. In other words, news media play an active, rather than a simply reflective role, in issues of public

concern (Greenberg and Knight, 2004). Hence the major newspapers in India provide insight into the struggles over the meanings of nation, race, and caste in the civic domain which privileges dominant and elite views. Hence, the task of the media researcher is to engage in critical interrogations that challenge ideologies expressed in news content and to pay attention to how powerful groups attempt to gain consent via mainstream media. Following Fairclough (1995), I argue that it is important to understand the relationship between media, ideology, and discourse so that the analysis of texts can be connected to the larger social practices that produce them. My understanding of this relationship is based on the social constructionist perspective that views social reality as historically constituted as well as produced, and reproduced by social interactions and social institutions. However, although people can consciously act to change their social and economic circumstances, it is important to recognize that their ability to do so is constrained by various forms of social, cultural, and political domination. In the following section, I discuss critical perspectives on the role of ideology in shaping media representations, how ideology is rooted in relationships of power and subordination, and the role discourse plays in the enactment and reproduction of ethnic and racial inequality. I also discuss the foundational scholars of mass communication to illustrate the relationship between the social constructedness of news discourse, and the role media play in framing issues and setting the agenda for the public. I utilize the works of scholars from varied paradigmatic orientations who inform each other and thereby allow me to shape a richer understanding of how the “business” of news, the structure of news organizations, the ideologies of owners, the selection of what is “newsworthy,” the form

of news products all interplay to produce the discourses of the elites and opportunities for oppositional groups to gain access to media.

### ***Social Construction of Reality, Ideology, and Discourse***

Berger and Luckman (1967) posit that the everyday world is the paramount reality. The authors stress that the social institutions (government, family, religion, media, etc.) create social meanings, which constitute social interactions. These social interactions are then transformed into institutional and organizational rules, as well as procedures, which may be used to justify the actions of political elites. Therefore, knowledge and meaning are historically and culturally constructed through social processes and actions. In other words, knowledge is the product of our social practices and institutions or of the interactions and negotiations between relevant social groups. The social constructionist perspective has influenced both critical media and mass communication scholars in understanding the social constructedness of media.

The main task of critical research is seen as being one of social critique, whereby the restrictive and alienating conditions of the status quo are questioned and challenged. Critical research focuses on the oppositions, conflicts, and contradictions in contemporary society, and seeks to be emancipatory, that is, it should help to eliminate the causes of alienation and domination. The fact that all cultural representations are political is a significant idea that has become a part of critical media analysis. Studies on representation criticize the negative images of subordinate groups, throwing light on the nature and effects of culture and media. Hall (1997) argues that “mass media are more and more responsible for (a) providing the basis on which groups construct an “image” of the lives, meanings, practices, and values of *other* groups and classes; and (b) providing

the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality, composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces, can be coherently grasped as a ‘*whole*’” (p.340). Hall (1997) calls for more critical and discriminating responses to the products of media because culture and identity are regarded as constructed, artificial, and contested artifacts. Representations are interpreted not just as replications of the real reproductions of natural objects, but constructions of complex technical, narrative, and ideological apparatuses. Reading culture is seen as a political event, where one looks for negative or positive representations, learns how narratives are constructed, and discerns how ideology functions within media and culture to reproduce social domination and discrimination (Kellner, 2005). Consequently, cultural representations are perceived to be subject to political critique, and culture itself is conceived as contested terrain.

Hall (1980) recognizes that media messages are not transparent, but have a complex linguistic and ideological structure. Hall pays attention to the ideological nature of the media reconstruction of social reality as a reproduction of dominant forces and ideologies in the society. Media texts are sites for ideological battles. News discourses act as claim-making arenas in which a powerful group attempts to establish hegemony but where oppositional groups also seek to resist or subvert the dominant group’s intention of defining contested issues. The works of Hall on ideology and representation have origins partly in the British tradition of literary criticism that is grounded in a cultural studies approach. Using Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, he provides the framework by which operations of mass media (how media are constructed, the relationship between media and ideology) in society can be understood as a series of articulated moments, where articulated has the double sense of expressed and joined



together (Hall, 1977, 1980). None of the moments can fully guarantee the next moment with which it is articulated, and each becomes the site of negotiation or cultural struggle over meaning (Hall, 1977, 1980). Dominant views are of course open to contestation, and open to those who wish to promote counter-hegemony. Arguably, the media are important sites of this battle to establish central and dominant ideas and ways of looking at the world. Hall (1984; 1987) is particularly concerned with dominant discourses that exclude alternative explanations. In Gramsci's terms, ideological domination is never complete; there is always a struggle over the media agenda as a means of influencing public thinking. Therefore, in the continuous struggle for hegemony, the media are crucial. Hall (1987) tends to see the New Right in Britain as having gained ideological hegemony in the eighties, mainly through dominance and control of the agenda by the tabloid press.

In terms of news production, the ethnomethodological approach of Tuchman (1978) explains how reality is reconstructed as news and as enactments of the institutional processes in which news making takes place. Tuchman (1978) and Parenti (1986) argue that news media operate primarily under the capitalist ideological mode where news editors and journalists are answerable to the owners of the newspapers and to the news organizations. Particularly, scholars have been critical of United States' commercial news media for constructing accounts of political events that produce corporate profit and strengthen corporate capitalist ideology (Varis 1975; Schiller, 1976; Parenti, 1986; Bagdikian, 1992; Herman & McChesney, 1997). Parenti (1986) argues that media are neither completely objective nor do they distort events and issues systematically. Such distortion is "a product of not only deliberate manipulation but of

the ideological and economic conditions under which the media operate” (Parenti, 1986, p. ix). The social institutions, (which includes the media, political and economic institutions, etc.) of capitalist society are the purveyors of cultural myths, values, and legitimating viewpoints. Since reporters and news producers are the products of social institutions and of political socialization, they report things as they see them. Hence, without supportive resources or information available to them, alternative or deviant news is not treated as news, while the dominant view is presented as an objective representation of reality. This reiterates Tuchman’s (1978) earlier claims that news is a social resource whose construction limits an analytic understanding of contemporary life. Along with other social, cultural, and educational institutions, media provide the publics with tunnel vision by conditioning them to perceive social problems as isolated incidents. This stunts the critical vision of the masses.

To understand how the complex processes of winning consent are accomplished, Hall (1982) stresses the importance of discourse. He argues that it is only possible to make sense of the world through the appropriation of language in discourse. Agreeing with Hall, Ferguson (1998) contends that “(ideological) issues are *constituted* in and through discourse” (p. 56). A considerable number of studies focus on the role of discourse in the enactment and reproduction of ethnic and racial inequality. Scholars focus on ethnocentric and racist representations in the mass media, literature, and film (Hartmann & Husband, 1974; Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985; van Dijk, 1991). One of the first studies in the new critical paradigm in linguistics and discourse studies is done by Fowler et. al. (1979). The study argues that events and actions may be described with syntactic variations that are a function of the underlying involvement of actors (for

example, their agency, responsibility, and perspective). Studies by Barker (1978) and Lauren (1988) point out that representations portray dominant images of the “Other” in the discourses of European travelers, explorers, merchants, soldiers, philosophers, and historians, among other forms of elite discourse. van Dijk (1984, 1987, 1991, 1993) examines how Surinamese, Turks and Moroccans, and ethnic relations generally, are represented in conversation, everyday stories, news reports, textbooks, parliamentary debates, corporate discourse, and scholarly text and talk. In a number of publications, van Dijk (1987, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995) focuses specifically upon the reproduction, communication, and maintenance of the discourse of racism in Western democracies, and the central role of the press in that social process. van Dijk attributes much of the responsibility for the perpetuation, reproduction, and justification of everyday racism to what he terms as *elite discourse*, whose forms include media, political, corporate, academic, and educational discourses. I will come back to this later in the methodology section. Further, in a series of studies, Wodak (1991; 1996) and Wodak, et al. (1990) combine detailed social and political discourse studies with a historical account of relevant contexts and examine past and current antisemitic discourse in Austria against the background of the Waldheim affair. These studies examine many genres, ranging from spontaneous street talk to press reports, TV talk shows, and political discourse. Fairclough’s (1995) analysis of language explains that it is socially shaped or socially constitutive; his theory of critical discourse analysis explores the tension between these two sides of language use, the socially shaped and socially constitutive. He contends that language or text that is constitutive helps to reproduce and maintain existing social relations and systems of knowledge and belief. The works of Wodak and Reisigl (1997)

probe deeper into the linguistics, semiotics, and other discursive properties of text and talk about minorities, immigrants and “Other” peoples. These studies show that media are not reflections of reality, but are products shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces and dominant ideologies.

Discourse analysis calls for specific attention to analysis of contexts in which the issues under study emerge. Wetherell and Potter (1992) argue that because discourses are sustained through the utilization of interpretive repertoires, they should be studied in context. For example, to analyze how concepts like race, caste, and nation are invoked, “paying attention to their specific construction, to their placement in a sequence of discourse, and to their rhetorical organization” is crucial in understanding how their meanings are fixed and who fixed them (p.93). In other words, the way the texts are produced by the dominant mode of production needs to be analyzed to understand what the media portray or represent (Hall, 1996). Moreover, understanding how class, race, gender, and other forms of power and domination are used to reproduce stereotypes requires in-depth contextual analysis. This includes interrogating the signification, representation, and discursive practices embedded within the context. Therefore, the study of context reveals the ways in which ideologies, discourses, and identities are manufactured and given meaning in society. In this study, I identify a range of contexts. They are the historical trajectories of nation-building and the constitution of the Indian nation after Independence, the institutional and structural forces that defined what constituted the national discourses at that time, the contemporary discourse of caste, race, and nation as articulated by the elites and the challenging of such hegemonic national discourses by the Dalits.

Critical intercultural scholars who work on the intersection of media analysis and intercultural contexts, pay attention to the historical, economic, and political contexts that reveal the ways in which metaphors can be hegemonically used by institutional media. Roy (2001) and Malhotra and Crabtree (2001) analyze the interaction of global and local contexts in Indian media. Roy (2001) addresses this by analyzing the situated contextual locations of global and local in which international forces and satellite televisions are demonized in the Indian press. The study reveals the dualistic contradictions and tensions of global and local forces, which characterize communicative forms and texts in India. Malhotra and Crabtree's (2001) study shows the way in which Indian audiences (in their various sociopolitical locations) construct localized interpretations of some satellite television programming in counter-hegemonic ways in the context of global and local forces working together. In their study, they foreground hybridity that is generated by the intersections of gender, nation, and culture in satellite television programming and reveals the ambivalence reflected in appropriation of western programming by Indian television. Further, the analysis reveals that the process of Indianization of the programs is actually a mechanism of hegemony through which consent is manufactured. This supported the argument that media act as sites where consents are manufactured.

The explanation above suggests that media sites are those where the powerful attempt to establish hegemony, but their claims and positions are contested or resisted. It is true that media culture overwhelmingly supports capitalist values, but media is also a site of intense conflict between different race, class, gender, and social groups. Abercrombie et. al (1980) notes that dominant ideology is seldom internally unified or coherent as ideologies attempt to create coherence out of competing and contradictory

interests. Particularly, ideology does not erase the contradictions, but rather it simply tries to manage them by naturalizing the social and historical, universalizing the particular, and representing contradiction and division as difference. Therefore, Ferguson (1998) argues that since ideology cannot be directly visible, it is experienced or comprehended through “a range of social and representational manifestations which are rooted in the relationships of power and subordination” (p. 43). Further, Greenberg and Knight (2004) contend that news discourse articulates “a range of social and symbolic elements that cannot be ideologically closed or rendered invulnerable to contradiction and contestation” (p. 156). News reports do not reflect all contestations and national discourses as if it were a fully formed reality that exists exclusively and independent of its representation (Greenberg & Knight, 2004). As one example, Ono and Sloop (2002) show in their study that popular television news programs, articles, magazines, and the *Los Angeles Times* reveal that dominant civic discourses both favored and opposed Proposition 187. Therefore, alternative viewpoints have the potential to emerge and develop. The oppositional groups move to resist or subvert the dominant discourse, which attempts to define and control the claims. However, it is important to note that though there are opportunities for alternative viewpoints to arise out of the contradictions within the dominant ideology, the dissemination of issues and viewpoints of the oppressed depends largely on the opportunities and resources available to these critics. As Carroll (1992) cautions, although the oppositional groups develop a counter-hegemonic strategy, that does not suggest that news organizations deny institutional elites a privileged over accessing to channels of mass communication. This is an important issue to reckon with because it helps to explain how dominant groups more easily put their views and agenda

on the news. In order to understand how the news structures can be explicitly linked to social practices and ideologies of news making and, indirectly, to the institutional and macrosociological contexts of the news media, it is important to understand how the business of news operates (van Dijk, 1988).

### *Construction of News Discourse*

Social scientific scholars like McCombs and Shaw (1993) argue that the news media have the power to set a nation's agenda and focus public attention on a few key public issues. Further, they contend that the news media have a powerful ability to guide readers to contemplate issues in a certain way. The way an issue or other object is covered in the media (the attributes emphasized in the news) affects the way the public thinks about that object and the salience of that object on the public agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). Research has shown the ability of powerful individuals and groups to act as "primary definer" of the news agenda (Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995). Since news media are the primary sources of information to the public, citizens rely on the dissemination of claims and images about the world to form their understanding of it. When news events or issues are contentious and become problematic, news media make readers aware of the events and make the events "socially available to 'experience' in media pictures and reports" (Beck, 1995, p. 100). This is not to say that news media have the power to supersede individual's direct experiences of the world at home, with friends, or in workplace, but that in the sorting of issues of public concern, news media play an active role. This is particularly important in the context of issues and events that occur outside the newsreaders' immediate field of vision and experience. In other words, individuals experience events not in the actual context of the events per se,

but indirectly through the discourse of media. News media not only set the agenda for the public, but they also frame issues for them. Framing can be considered an extension of agenda setting as it “is the selection of restricted number of thematically selected attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed” (McCombs, 1997, p. 6). Moreover, media or news frames serve as working routines for journalists, allowing them to quickly identify and classify information and “to package it for efficient relay to their audiences” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7).

Paletz and Entman (1981) note that the subjects, sources, and interpreters of the news are usually politicians and government officials whose activities can influence citizens. As Parenti (1986) puts it, the “established *establishment* view” is given the highest media visibility, usually to the exclusion of views held by the large dissident sectors of the populace (emphasis in the original, p. 241). In order to cite some examples, I will discuss very briefly in the next few paragraphs some of the studies that have explained how race and the nation have been portrayed in the media by the elites or by political leaders. I will discuss these both from positivist and critical perspectives.

There has been considerable research on nation and nationality within the field of media and mass communication from positivist as well as critical paradigms. Because one of the purposes of this study is to elucidate how the competing logics of the elite regarding caste and race guide the constitution of the Indian nation through newspapers, I will focus only on the elites’ role in shaping what constitutes “national” in media.

Most early theories conceptualized nation as the container of society, within which social interactions occur or as an organization that mediates between the local and the global. Early scholars (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Campbell, Converse, Miller, Stokes



1960) position nation at the center of their analysis while media scholars like Siebert et.al. (1963) analyze relations between the national press, the state, and the national public. These theories work under the assumption that either the nation itself constitutes the conceptual understanding of research, or it serves as the fundamental point of reference against which other structures and processes are defined (for example, “local,” “global,” “subnational,” “international”). Further, scholars (Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1993) have used framing analysis to interrogate the relationship between national media and nationally defined research subjects. Agenda setting scholars like McCombs and Shaw (1972) and Eaton (1989) have examined the content of national news, news magazines, and television networks, as well as the public perception of national agendas. Framing and agenda setting approaches were criticized for predefining the universe of the respondents as national. The biggest criticism leveled against the approach of agenda setting is that it defines the universe of respondents as national and thus affirms rather than interrogates the concept of nation and its discursivity.

Several studies in critical mass communication deal with the role of media in disseminating nationalist sentiments or in the construction of national identity. Current critical research has shown that newspapers have been used to articulate discourses of national identity. The potential correlation between national identity and newspaper content arises from two analytically distinct, but empirically interconnected, forms. Newspapers might help instill, reproduce, or reinforce a sense of national identity on the part of their readers through nationally specific news agendas. In addition, this may be done using nationalist rhetoric, ranging from violently explicit xenophobia to implicit assumptions about who (and where) “the readers” are, what news might concern them,

and what view they might take of it (Schlesinger, 1991). Most of the critical studies on nation and national identity in media have concentrated on the discursive nature of identity formation. Wodak et al. (1999) argue that the study of the discursive construction of national identities is a multidimensional phenomenon. Their study on what constitutes Austrian nation combines ethnographic research to complement the study of elite discourse in order to grasp the tensions and interdiscursive relationships within and between official, semi-official, and quasi-private discourse. The study shows that different ideas about the Austrian nation are formed in different contexts, and that discursive national identities are context specific. This discursivity of nation is reflected in several other studies. Brookes (1999) analyzes the role of the news media in encouraging commonsense identification with the nation in representations of the nation in British press coverage of the crisis over “mad cow disease” in March 1996. Brookes (1999) shows that the British press continually reproduces and reinforces the commonsense boundaries of nation and national identity. Ricento (2003) illustrates the techniques of “persuasion” that were used to promote a sense of national collective consciousness of American identity focusing on a period of U.S. history, roughly 1914–1924. During this period, government, industry, education, and civic organizations participated in an Americanization campaign to characterize national identity and to ‘educate’ the population about the reasons the U.S. was fighting in a European war. The study shows how the leaders engaged in developing the necessary language themes, metaphors, and other rhetorical tropes to express American identity and to justify and promote particular social, economic, and political policies of those times. The study reiterates the fact that socio-historical context(s) of the discursive construction of national

identity by political leaders need to be questioned and analyzed in order to understand how a nation is constructed and conveyed in discourse.

In a study of “unity in diversity” construction in India calendar art, Uberoi (2002) shows that a persuasive strategy of a coherent India is constructed to express “denial or transcendence of contradictions” in the “idea” of nationhood (p. 199). In doing so, the development in India is constructed in the calendar art as coherent, synergistic, and positive, creating a “mythic” articulation of nationhood devoid of any conflicting values and positions. This is in line with the government of India’s mantra of “unity and diversity” that aims to bind disparate peoples together into a cohesive whole. Further, in another study, Bishop and Jarworski (2003) demonstrate that in constructing the “nation,” the press resorts to a number of discursive strategies constructing and reinforcing national unity by invoking stereotypes, generic references, shared sporting and military history, and the timelessness of the nation-spanning mythical past and indefinite future. In a recent study, Housel (2007) examines how the Sydney Olympic Games’ opening ceremony presented images of a linear, multicultural, and chronological narrative of Australian history. In her study, Housel (2007) analyzes how newspaper coverage of the Olympics presents the ceremony’s narrative of a united Australian nation in response to the increasing disintegration of nation-states’ boundaries in the context of globalization. The research shows how the nationalistic rhetoric of multiculturalism in Australia reveals anxieties about national belonging. Media events are perfect sites for the reaffirmation (at times forceful) of the hegemony of national unity, togetherness, and homogeneity. These studies demonstrate that media are sites where narratives and discourses surrounding nations are constructed and contested as well. These studies further reveal that the nation

is consciously deployed in different ways, in different contexts, and according to the socio-political needs of the time.

Though studies on nation and national identity have paid attention to the discursive nature of national identity constructions, there has been a dearth of studies in critical media and mass communication on the specificity of postcolonial nations and how discourses surrounding nation are contested and battled out in media between the elites and a marginalized group. Hall (1997) points out that nations have always been constructed in relation to an exterior on which their coherence depends, in terms of culture, economy, and politics. Further, nations are constructed in relation to the internal “Other.” Hence, critical studies on nation need to concentrate on how the postcolonial internal “Other” challenges the constitution of nation by the elites with support from outside. Since global flows and interconnectedness have repositioned nations within the larger context, marginalized “Others” are likely to seek support from the international humanitarian organizations to have their voices heard on a global platform. This challenges the notion of nation as being constructed by the elites and makes the notion of nation constantly “in motion.” The task is to analyze nations within contexts and map how the network of forces both inside and outside nations interact, influence, and potentially transform the constitution of postcolonial nations.

The role of the media is critical, it has been well argued, to framing and thinking about race relations (Gandy, 1998). In other words, media representation plays a very important role in informing the ways in which individuals understand cultural, ethnic, and racial differences (Davis & Gandy, 1999). Mass communication research on racial identity has delved into understanding the relationship between media and racial identity

and orientation of certain racial groups towards media (Davis & Gandy, 1999).

Communication scholars in general have been more interested in differences between media forms than in differences between media consumers. For example, studies by Gandy and Matabane (1989) and Armstrong et al. (1992) indicating an increase in the portrayal of African Americans in integrated settings argue that the greater one's exposure to fictional television, the higher black socioeconomic outcomes would be perceived relative to those of whites. The opposite relationship is hypothesized for exposure to television news. As predicted, exposure to TV entertainment was associated with a more sanguine view of black socioeconomic outcomes, with exposure to TV news contributing to less positive views. The strength of these relationships is greater among white students who had only limited opportunity for direct interaction with African Americans. Beyond noting this, there is no effort to explain the differences in the perceptions between blacks and whites. The authors' primary concern is with the media's construction of a broadly held negative view of blacks that may lead toward increased opposition to affirmative action.

Entman's (1990, 1994) efforts to explore the concept of modern racism through an examination of television news move in a similar direction. His analysis of network news suggests that nearly 60 percent of network news stories centered on negative news about blacks. He found that "the third most common topic was blacks as victims of social misfortunes other than crime, such as fires, poverty, bad schools, and racial discrimination" (Entman, 1994, p. 511). While others have observed the tendency for the news to emphasize the negative, Entman also notes that the ways in which the news media cover the misfortune of blacks may have an impact on whites that is different from

the impact it may have on blacks. The fact that there are relatively few blacks in the news, and the fact that whites have relatively few contacts with blacks, may lead whites to treat those few blacks as representative of the entire population. This is thought to operate in part as a mechanism of out-group classification (McAdams, 1995). Entman suggests that the “essence of racial prejudice is homogenizing and generalizing about the disliked outgroup: a tendency to lump most individual members of the outgroup together as sharing similar undesirable traits, while seeing one’s own group as a diverse collection of clearly differentiated individuals” (Entman 1994, p. 517). From this research, one can say that it is important to recognize that important differences in perception do occur and that they are influenced by the ways in which stories are framed. In essence, who is shaping the news and how groups are portrayed affect how people perceive certain groups. In a recent study, Hochschild et al. (2008) traces the American political discourse around multiracialism, race-mixing, and mixed-race people from the end of the Civil War through the civil rights era. The article is significant in two ways. First, it reveals that the press’s treatment of racial mixture enables us to understand how “racial meaning” is defined variedly, and the ways in which Americans construe, practice, and judge group-based identities and identifications. Second, the study reveals changes in ideas about racial meaning over different time periods, which in turn explains how racial meanings are codified by institutions at different points in time. Specifically, this points to the discursivity of race and how the people who are in power codify the notion of race. This study is significant for my project because it tells us that not only the meanings of race change over time, but the way meanings of race are framed in the media are determined by how the elites want them to be construed by the public.

However, Paletz and Entman (1981) argue that power is understood in a limited sense in the media. Entman (1978) contends that power redistribution through the media is restricted and elites cannot fully contain how people will use the media and how they will react to their content. This sentiment is reflected in Parenti's (1986) view as he notes limitations in the power of news. When an issue becomes important, segments of the public are mobilized around it and the news takes into account the dissident views (Parenti, 1986). In so doing, the press acknowledges and publicizes public or popular sentiments. It is also true that everyone does not share the established views, even though in matters of public concern, most political elites may share common views. Paletz and Entman (1981) concede that media messages interact with each other, taking into consideration the social and historical aspects and previous attitudes about events or issues. As Paletz and Entman (1981) write, "the final political consequences of media coverage of an event, official, or action may never be precisely isolated -- they exist in a continuing stream of developments that constantly alter their meaning and implications for the distribution of power" (p. 254). When there are heterodox arguments portrayed in media that challenge the previous messages or views, and the opposing views provide the opportunity to compare, question and engage in views that the mainstream or dominant media have otherwise suppressed (Parenti, 1986). However, this suppression is intentional as the political power provides elites with the ability to create newsworthy events, access to important and interesting information, and easy access to reporters (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991; Hess, 1996; Wolfsfeld, 1997). It is to be kept in mind that the power of the elites goes beyond their "actions" to the power of their discourse to the construction of the "taken-for-granted" that is the foundation of news and the

construction of social reality. Moreover, whether these opposing groups can avail the opportunity to express their dissident views has been questioned by some scholars (Semetko et al., 1991; Semetko 1996; Blumler & Gurevitch 2001; Sheafer & Wolfsfeld, 2004). The issue of news opportunity has received considerable attention in the scholarship. Sheafer and Wolfsfeld (2004) refer to news opportunities as the improvements in media access that are granted to certain types of actors because of changes in the political environment, media environment, or both. Further, they argue that the relative importance of news opportunity varies in different environments. For example, changes in the political environment lead to changes in the news environment, which in turn can change the ways in which actors compete for media attention. Studies (Semetko et al. 1991; Semetko 1996; and Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001) demonstrate that media coverage of legislators is influenced by more “macro” variables, such as the political and media cultures in which the competition over publicity is taking place and changes in the political environment. The best example of such a process is an election campaign. News organizations allocate more time and space to cover such campaigns, which provide more opportunities for lesser-known candidates to gain access to the media (Arian, et.al., 1999). These studies show that the logic of the changing political environment is embedded in the way journalists construct news stories. As the political environment changes, so does journalists’ focus of attention, and this refocusing has a direct impact on political actors’ chances of being noticed. However, the question remains, how much attention does a marginalized group get, and does the group (for example, the Dalits in my study) oppose claims by the political elites and their supporters. In a culture where the discourse of elites is dominant and most visible, one



can speculate that even if the Dalits' views get media coverage, the dominant views will have more importance, and subvert the views of the Dalits. Yet, these oppositional voices may provide the basis for social and political transformations for marginalized groups.

This critical study, therefore, aims to show that the struggle for social justice is never completely smothered by political propaganda or institutional apparatus, and opposing voices have the opportunity to be heard and articulated in the mainstream media domain. Since social reality is contradictory and contested and subject to continual construction, media become contested and contestable fields of representation. This critical interrogation also questions the underlying ideologies that operate to shape languages used in media and the relationship of the texts with the larger social practices (Fairclough, 1995). To analyze the ideological embeddedness in the texts, critical interrogation requires drawing out the implications of texts, exploring the underlying assumptions, examining inferences, and making visible the values, and beliefs that have shaped the discursive choices of the writers, particularly in constructing the ideologically opposed out-group. Because newspapers, films, television, and other forms of media provide the sites for struggle in which representations transcode the discourses of conflicting positions and ideologies, it is the job of the researcher to examine how text, image, and ideology function within media and society to reproduce social domination and discrimination (Ferguson, 1998).

### ***Situating the Project and Research Questions***

This project seeks to understand the civic discourses of racism denial that represent the views of the government officials, Dalits, academicians in the mainstream

media, and how the logics of the discourses might potentially re-constitute or re-define Indian nation.

From the point of view of poststructural and postcolonial critical inquiries, national projects are looked at with considerable suspicion. The ideology of nationalism has been a vehicle for movements by decolonized peoples, but today, the category “nation” has lost its earlier significance in many ways due to increasing global interconnectedness (Appadurai, 1990). However, one must not be so quick to minimize the significance of nationalist projects in the global era. Instead, we must be attentive to the changing conditions and meanings, which are invoked in the on-going construction and contingencies of nations (Croucher, 2004; Wiley, 2004). There is no bypassing the continual formation of national imagination and discourses surrounding it, until nation is completely superseded by other political configuration. I argue that discourses, which constituted the national body up to and during the moment of post-colonial independence in India, or any postcolonial nation-state, may be reworked to deny caste racism. Facing discrimination, the internal “Other” of the postcolony is more likely to seek national and global acknowledgement of its plight by invoking the very logic of Enlightenment (i.e. equality for all). The nation-state once deemed to be the defender of postcolonial subjects is now conceived by these subjects as a major threat to their well being. Hence, the crisis is within the postcolony itself (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001; Chatterjee, 2006). The conflict within the postcolonial Indian nation over what constitutes the national body and what logics of race and caste are utilized in that constitution provides a fruitful site for analyzing the internal dynamics and malleability of postcolonial nations. The meaning of nation, in this sense, then becomes indeterminate and contested, and this social

contestation is deeply ideological, in the sense that competing groups work toward different political objectives. This project adds to the understanding of how national discourse is constitutive vis-à-vis the internal “Other” through contestations over the relationship between race and caste and casteism and racism.

This project responds to the call by Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) to address the shifting struggles through which the nation is re-constituted in the context of cultural, social, economic, and political transformations and the pressures, which they put on the nation. Chatterjee’s (1993a, 1993b) framework of nationalism explains that the nation was created in India to resist the colonial powers through a constitutive opposition between the East and the West. He argues that nationalist feelings were invoked via spiritual domain to spur Indians into action against the British. Chatterjee’s thesis also accounts for the creation of the bourgeoisie class, which became the political elite after independence and created the Indian nation on behalf of its citizens. He further argues that the elite nationalism can never be able to absorb and appropriate its “Other” (marginalized groups *within* the nation) within a “single homogeneous unity” or the “unity in diversity” discourse of nationhood in India (p.156). The nationalist leaders of independent India created national discourse by invoking sameness to override the heterogeneity and inequality of caste, race, religion, and linguistic differences. Particularly, the categories of race and caste have been dissociated from the imagination of the new nation because the leaders did not want to be reminded of the colonial rule which was primarily based on racial differences (Chatterjee, 1993a, 1993b). However, the notion of the “Other” is inherent in the nationalist doctrine of the postcolonial nation-state. Bhabha (1990) argues that the nation’s “Other” is already an internal question; the

“Other” is at the heart of any attempt to constitute sameness. To Bhabha (1990), “nation is internally marked by cultural differences and heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities” and any attempt at homogeneity creates a “gap” in the nation’s self-definition (p. 299). This “gap” or the exclusion of the internal “Other” becomes a privileged site for locating internal resistance of the marginalized group. Since nation for its own existence presupposes the existence of “Others” internal or external, the nation, in this sense is double-edged, that is, it is inclusive-exclusive in nature (Triandafyllidou, 1998). Therefore, nation is constantly re-constituted or redefined through the “Others,” namely other nations or ethnic groups and in this particular case, the internal marginalized Dalit group that are perceived to threaten the nation, its distinctiveness, authenticity and stability.

Race has been central to the definition of the nation, its “people,” and its “Others.” Balibar (1991) argues that race serves as a structuring principle for national processes, defining the boundaries of the nation, and the constituents of national identity. However, race itself is a malleable category, which is invoked and enacted differently in different regions and contexts. Goldberg’s (2006) notions of racial regionalism and denial of race as principal mechanisms, which maintain racism, offer useful lenses to address the current accusations of racism and in particular denials of racism in India. This study examines the competing discourses of race and racism denial and addresses how they re-constitute or challenge the definition “the people” of the Indian nation. My goal is not to determine the primacy of race or caste in the constitution of Indian nation, but to figure out and identify the ways in which and under what conditions these concepts are related or rejected in various discourses of the nation.

The dissertation addresses the following question.

**RQ.** What are the discursive strategies and logics, which constitute the Indian nation in the civic discourse?

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

This chapter provides the theoretical underpinning for the competing discourses about the relationship between caste and race and re-constitution of the Indian nation in diverse media and texts. It has given an overview of the literature on nation, Ono and Sloop's discourse conceptual framework, race, caste and media discourse. Further, the chapter positions the research within these diverse theories, and explains the research question. The next chapter provides a detailed account of the methodological approach that informs this work. Chapter 2 deals with the methodological issues that apply a multiperspectival analysis. This multiperspectival analysis includes Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, van Dijk's strategies of racism denial, and Ono and Sloop's conceptual framework as approaches to research. Chapter 3 maps out the logics of caste and race, which constituted the "imagined" postcolonial Indian nation in two competing national discourses; the "unity in diversity" created by the Congress party and the *Hindutva* evoked by the BJP party. The analysis of the dominant logics of unity in diversity and *Hindutva* in the chapter provides starting points for the investigation of how the newspaper discourses reconstitute the Indian nation in response to the Dalit accusation. Chapters 4 and 5 provide critical analyses based on domains of discourse set out in the introduction. Chapter 4 analyses the dominant civic discourse that denies racism in response to Dalits' accusation that casteism is racism in the main newspapers, *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express* and *The Hindu*. Chapter 5 focuses on the

discourse that asserts casteism is racism. The logics of caste and race in this chapter are analyzed to understand whether they work within or outside the dominant logics of caste, race and nation. Finally Chapter 6 reflects on the implications of the analyses in the Indian context.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, I delineate the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is appropriate to answer the proposed research question. The research question addresses the contestation between the discourses of the elites and the Dalits regarding the issue of caste and race and their role in the reconstitution of the Indian nation. CDA is the most appropriate method to use because it helped me to uncover how discursive practices maintain unequal power relations (for example, in this case, between the government officials and the Dalits) with the overall goal of harnessing the results of critical discourse analysis to the Dalits' struggle for social change. It will also help me to engage in a critical analysis of how meanings are constituted in the texts and interrogate the ideology that influences intergroup relations. Specifically, it will enable me to analyze structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control manifested in the language of the media texts.

In the most general sense, Critical Discourse Analysis, like other forms of discourse analysis, involves deconstruction of the meanings in the text. As Philips and Jorgensen (2002) explain, "discourse analysis aims at the deconstruction of the structures that we take for granted; it tries to show that the given organization of the world is the result of political processes with social consequences" (p. 48). Discourse can be defined as patterns of meaning that organize the worlds we inhabit. Extending the work of Foucault (1972, 1977, 1980), Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 2003) defines discourse as an important form of social practice that constitutes knowledge about a particular topic at a historical moment through language in speech and text or images

and sounds, which shape, and are shaped, by institutions, situations, and structures. In essence, discourse both reproduces and changes knowledge, identities, and social relations, including power relations. Discourse perspectives vary first, in the degree to which they retain a measure of insistence on non-discursive, structural “givens” in social organization or see discourse as explaining social reality in its entirety. Second, discourse perspectives differ in the degree to which human agency is theorized and prioritized. And third, in respect to the role that situated language plays in research and in the methods used to get at the meaning in the texts (see in Titscher, Wodak, Vetter, 2000; Weiss & Wodak, 2002). Due to the diversity of approaches to discourse, Weiss and Wodak (2002) explain that discourse studies are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds, and oriented toward very different data and methodologies.

Because, in any research, the ontology, epistemology, and methodology need to be congruent, Philips and Jørgensen (2002) argue that it is necessary for a researcher to situate himself/herself clearly within the terrain of the research paradigm. However, this does not exclude the possibility of using concepts or analytical tools from various schools of discourse analysis, or even from outside the field. They assert that, “such *multiperspectival* work is not only permissible but positively valued in most forms of discourse analysis” (emphasis in the original, p. 4). The view is that different perspectives provide different forms of knowledge about a phenomenon so that, together, they produce a broader understanding. This connecting of different perspectives requires working consciously with the discursive analytical frameworks and the research material. First, I discuss the analytical framework and concepts that I employ and reasons for “appropriating” different perspectives. Then, I explain the data collection method.



## Discourse Analytical Frameworks

I utilize Ono and Sloop's (2002) framework, which positions discourses relationally according to who produced, and whether they reinforce or challenge dominant cultural logics. This dimensions form a "grid of intelligibility" through which to make decisions concerning which discourses to investigate, to make meanings of discourses, and to establish ends for these investigations. Following Ono and Sloop, I use the notions of the logics of discourse referring to the meanings, reasoning, and arguments that drive both the dominant (institutionally supported) nation-state and elite discourse, on one hand, and the oppositional discourse of the Dalits, on the other. Ono and Sloop (2002) see their work as a "*purposeful poststructural critical rhetoric*" that engages politics of cultural discourse where their concepts are tools of criticism rather than objective categories into which given discourses fit perfectly. Specifically, their rhetorical analysis seeks to understand how the border functions in relation to the nation. In my study, their framework provides the grounds for understanding the positioning and functioning of competing logics of caste and race that guide the logics of various discourses of the government officials, academicians, and the Dalits. I use the tools of CDA to analyze competing discourses rather than the rhetorical criticism that Ono and Sloop employ. CDA is compatible with Ono and Sloop's rhetorical paradigmatic orientation. Both CDA and critical rhetoric aim to pick up fragments from ongoing struggle over meanings and deconstruct them, thereby bringing different sets of issues and identities to bear in the study of discourses. The only difference between CDA and rhetorical criticism lies in the fact that the rhetorical criticism utilizes the critique to *persuade* policy or social change. Although CDA aims to bring social transformation by

targeting the power elites that sustain inequality and injustice, its aim is not necessarily to persuade.

There are different ways of doing CDA, and they may be theoretically and analytically diverse. Fairclough and van Dijk have been most prominent among CDA scholars who apply CDA to media discourse. I will use Fairclough's CDA as developed by Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2003) and other scholars (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Weiss & Wodak, 2002). I will also borrow from van Dijk's theorization of elite discourse and forms of racist discourse to construct a method capable of addressing discourse on race, caste, and nation. I chose Fairclough's CDA because it provides "a theory-method linkage that is absent in many sociological discussions of everyday life and language use and in many linguistic discussions of social dynamics" (Bloome & Talwalkar, 1997, p. 105). Bell and Garrett (1998) note that Fairclough's approach "covers a broader range of media texts" (p. 11). CDA provides a systematic method of analyzing media texts that assumes that the discourse logics are connected to the existing social, historical, and cultural assumptions about "caste," "race," and "nation." CDA also helps to uncover the implicit arguments and meanings in texts, which tend to marginalize non-dominant groups (in this case, the Dalits), while justifying the values, beliefs, and ideologies of dominant groups.

My commitment to the critical intercultural communication also guided me to choose Fairclough's CDA. In addition to the influences of Foucault, Fairclough's CDA model builds on the works of other social theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Jürgen Habermas as well as literary theorists such as Michael Halliday, Michel Pecheux, Gunther Kress, and Mikhail Bakhtin, (Fairclough, 1992; Chouliaraki

and Fairclough, 1999). According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), the approach emerged from critical theory as a method for accomplishing the critical agenda. This is an aspect of Fairclough's CDA which sets it apart from other approaches to the analysis of discourse. Fairclough's CDA extends critical theory by connecting it to an understanding of the ways in which people are unequally positioned through an analysis of discourse and how people socially construct the meanings of objects and subjects (and the influences behind these constructions) by producing and consuming language in spoken and written form. In other words, a critical analysis of discourse explores the connections between the use of language and the social, historical, and political contexts in which it occurs, and how language is used in social interactions and influences social relations and practices. CDA also extends Foucault's (1972, 1977, 1980) project in unraveling power relations through the analysis of "competing power interests between groups and individuals" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 437). This is done by analyzing the dialectical relationships between "discourse ...and other elements of social practice" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 205) and locating power in discourse and power over discourse in a historical, socio-cultural, and political context). This makes CDA politically committed to social change. This commitment to be political is congruent with the need in intercultural communication research to be more politically charged and engaged in "contextualized scholarship acknowledging interests served and limits/exclusions practices" (Lee, 2001, p. 227). Next, I will explain the Fairclough CDA in detail and then discuss van Dijk' theorization of forms of racism denials.

According to Fairclough (1995a), CDA treats language as one type of social practice among many, used for representation and signification (including visual images,

music, gestures, etc.). Socially situated speakers and writers produce these texts. Specifically, Fairclough employs detailed text analysis to gain insight into how discursive processes operate linguistically in specific texts. For Fairclough, text analysis is not sufficient for discourse analysis, as it does not shed light on the link between texts and societal and cultural processes and structures. Therefore, Fairclough's (1989, 1992) approach to CDA focuses on the position of language and discourse in sociopolitical power and the processes of social change. Further, CDA emphasizes analysis of meanings because it views language as constitutive of the social reality in which it is being used and informs us of the ways meanings depend on the structure of connections and disconnections between social relations that discourses establish (Fairclough, 1995a). Fairclough (1992) insists that discourse is one of the many aspects of any social practice and distinguishes between discursive and non-discursive practices (also see Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002). A non-discursive practice, as Fairclough (1992) explains, includes, for example, the actual physical construction of a bridge. Discursive practices include action and interaction, social relations, as well as the rituals, beliefs, attitudes, values, and desires of people and institutions (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 28).

In Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) overview, CDA has several major features. They are illustrated as follows.

First, texts are produced or created and consumed (received and interpreted) through discursive practices. Such discursive practices are significant social practices that ultimately contribute to the social world. Further, through these practices, social and cultural reproduction and change take place. Texts provide us with insights into language, and according to Fairclough, (2003), "language is an irreducible part of social life,

dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take into account language” (p. 2). Language constructs and is constructed by social relations, events, structure, action, and agency. Language also provides a description of structures, events, social practices, social networks, and relations between and among people, between and among institutions, between institutions and people. Thus, language provides us insights into discourse.

Second, social practices both constitute the social world we live in and are constituted by other social practices. Therefore, discourse not only shapes and reshapes social structures, but also reflects them. In other words, discourse can thus be viewed as socially constitutive of, as well as socially constituted by objects, subjects, processes, events and phenomena– “it is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). As Phillips and Jørgensen (2002) observe, “discourse is in a dialectical relationship with other social dimensions” (p. 61).

Third, the production of ideology is a crucial part of CDA. Ideology, for Fairclough (1995a), is “meanings in the service of power” (p. 14). Specifically, ideology is the construction of meaning that contributes to the production, reproduction, and transformation of relations of domination (Fairclough, 1992; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). According to Fairclough’s definition of ideology, discourses can be more or less ideological; ideological discourses being those that contribute to the maintenance and transformation of power relations. Further, Fairclough argues that texts have several meanings that may contradict each other, and are open to several different interpretations. In other words, people can be positioned within different and competing ideologies and

this can lead to a sense of uncertainty. In effect, this creates ideological awareness (Fairclough, 1992). This awareness brings to the fore how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies and discourse's constructive effects upon social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and beliefs. This has implications for understanding ideology and how meanings are negotiated because the existence of competing meanings bears the seeds of resistance. In other words, meanings that challenge the dominant meanings equip people with resources for resistance.

Fairclough theorizes two dimensions of discourse. They are the communicative event and the order of discourse. According to Fairclough, (1995b) the communicative event is an instance of language use such as a newspaper article, a film, a video, an interview, or a political speech. The order of discourse is the configuration of all the discourse types, which are used within a social institution or a social field. Discourse types consist of discourses and genres (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 66). A genre is a particular use of language, which participates in and constitutes part of a particular social practice -- for example a newspaper genre, or an Internet genre (Fairclough, 1995b). Within an order of discourse there are specific discursive practices through which text and talk are produced and consumed or interpreted (Fairclough, 1998). An example of an order of discourse is an order of discourse of media (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 156). For instance, within media's order of discourse, the discursive practices, which take place, include the discourse of different groups, the discourses of the elites, (in my study) or the discourses of the Dalits. In every discursive practice, that is, in the production and consumption of text and talk, discourse types (discourse and genres) are used in particular ways. What this all suggests then is that discourses are considered as a combination of text, event, the

wider physical and social world, and “the persons involved in the event” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 27). This relationship between ways of representing, ways of acting, and ways of being, within the context of social practices is a dialectical one.

Fairclough (1992) explains a three dimensional model which serves as an analytical framework for research on communication and society. The three dimensions include: a) the text; b) the discursive practices, that is, the processes involved in the production and consumption of the text; c) the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs.

The text analysis focuses on the formal features of the text from which discourses are created. At the text level, there is a focus on describing the contents of text and the language in the text. The discursive content of the text is described as well as how these texts are linked to other discourses, genres, and styles. Fairclough (1995a) refers to this process as intertextuality. The analysis here can be described as a form of linguistic analysis of texts whereby the researcher looks at vocabularies, semantics, utterances, and grammar (transitivity, modality) to identify “representations, categories of participant, constructions of participant identity or participant relations” of subjects, objects, social positions, how subjects and objects are positioned, and instances of relations of power in the use of language (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 58). At this level of the research, I identify broader themes in the civic discourses, language usage (inclusion and exclusion of words) in those themes, word choices, which words are highlighted and which ones are put in the background.

The second dimension of Fairclough’s model is the analysis of the discursive practice level where my role is to analyze the factors that influence how social actors

interpret an event and how this process influences the production, distribution, transformation, and consumption of texts. At this level, an interpretation of discursive practices in relation to events, inter-discursivity (how different discourses are related), orders of discourse (a network of a socially ordered set of genres, social practices and discourses associated with a particular social field), and the power relations among people in an event are undertaken. At this level, I examine the relationship between caste and race and casteism and racism as articulated in the civic discourses. I will also analyze the genre of discourse. For example, I also look into whether the counter discourse by the Dalits in the civic media operates within the logic of the dominant discourse of the government officials, or whether it works outside of the dominant logics to become outlaw discourse.

The third and the final dimension is the analysis of social practices. This level includes understanding the wider socio-cultural, political, ideological, and institutional contexts, and structures surrounding the text and their associated discourses. Analyzing the sociocultural practices enables me to consider the underlying power relations, which might be reproduced, and how they facilitate the exploitation and marginalization of groups as well as the possibilities of change and resistance. The analysis helps me identify, understand, and explain how and why powerful discourses and forces “shape beliefs, fantasies and desires so as to regulate practices of institution building that set the stage for material production and reproduction activities that in turn construct social relations that finally return to ensure the perpetuation of power” (Harvey, 1996, p. 82). At this level of analysis I question and challenge the assumptions behind the ways Dalit subjects are perceived, conceived, and positioned within the narratives of the government



officials and the news media institution, and how the diverse discourses are positioning the linkages between race and caste and racism and casteism in the constitution of the Indian nation and what strategic purposes are being used in such constitution. Previous research and literatures on the association between caste and race in India, the position of the Dalits in the Indian social structure, and the constitution of Indian nation through the national discourses will help me to interpret the role of caste and race in the constitution of Indian nation. Specifically, at this level, I seek to understand and explain how the social injustices against the Dalits are initiated, hidden, transformed, reproduced, and legitimized. I also interpret the agencies (nation and its elite supporters) that generate, normalize, alter, or change them, by linking the texts that I analyze, to wider socio-cultural, political, historical, ideological, and institutional contexts that produce them. This part of the analysis includes interpreting all the media texts such as newspaper articles, the Dalit website, and articles by Dalit scholars.

Now I briefly explain van Dijk's CDA, his theorization of the forms of racism denial.

### ***van Dijk's CDA***

Like Fairclough, van Dijk's (1988) CDA is concerned with studying and analyzing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias. Further, it is concerned with how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts. van Dijk (1988a) has devised a theoretical framework that critically relates discourse, cognition, and society. Social interaction takes place within social structures and is presented in the form of text/discourse, which is then

internalized according to a cognitive system/memory. This system/memory consists of short-term memory in which strategic process, or decoding and interpretation, take place. Long-term memory, however, serves as a holder of socio-cultural knowledge, which consists of knowledge of language, discourse, communication, persons, groups, and events existing in the form of scripts. The three main components of van Dijk's theory therefore, are social functions, cognitive structures, and discursive expression and production (1988a), which bridge the gap between macro and micro levels of analysis. Although the van Dijk and Fairclough's forms of CDA have these three components in common, they are different in how they view the nature of the importance of mediation. For van Dijk, cognitive structures and mental models are mediated between discourse and society. For Fairclough, it is through discourse practices that the texts are produced and received (Bell & Garrett, 1998). Specifically, from van Dijk's framework, I utilize the forms of denial of racism to analyze discourses of government officials in the newspapers.

### ***van Dijk's Denial of Racism Strategies***

van Dijk (1995) argues that the denials to accusations of racism is a part of racist discourse. To van Dijk, racist ideologies are based in the group of racists. Racist ideologies govern other shared social representations, and especially racist attitudes, prejudices, etc. These attitudes are negative opinions on (the role of) minorities in various social domains, such as immigration, welfare, work etc. Further, these racist ideologies and ideologically controlled ethnic/racial prejudices may finally be expressed in text and talk. The effects of the ideologically based strategies of positive self-presentation and negative representation of the "Other" may be observed at all levels of discourse

structures in text and talk (van Dijk, 1995b). Further, the elites who are producing racism tend to deny it. According to van Dijk (1995b), “denials have the function of blocking negative inferences of the recipients about the attitudes of the speaker or writer” (p. 308). In elite discourse, the denials often pertain to talking about minorities where White people speak as dominant group.

To van Dijk, (1995b) a denial “presupposes a real or potential accusation, reproach, or suspicion of others about one’s present or past actions or attitudes and asserts that such attacks against one’s moral integrity are not warranted” (p. 308). Such denials are not just individual but institutional as well as in media, parliamentary discourse and the government officials. Hence, denials can be expressed in many forms. Firstly, it can be a strategy of *defense*. Defensive denial can be expressed as a strategy of positive self-presentation. This way, the speaker denies not only the verbal or other incriminated act, but also denies “the underlying intentions, purposes, or attitudes, or its non-controlled consequences” (p. 308). This act of denial diminishes responsibility of the speaker or the writer considerably. Besides, using positive self-presentation, another way to use denial is to play down and trivialize the situation in order to mitigate the extent of seriousness or consequences of one’s negative actions by using euphemisms in the description of such actions. Secondly, denial can be expressed using *justifications*, which also play the role of excuses. In an extreme case of justification, the denial blames the victims. In doing so, via denial the charge of being a racist is transferred to others. The transference of accusation helps in reversing the charges and accuses the accuser for having intentionally misunderstood the speaker thus blames the accuser of being a racist.

Denials not only serve discursive functions at the level of interpersonal communication, but most importantly, the denials of racism have a “*sociopolitical function*” (p. 310). Through these denials, the legitimacy of the antiracist analysis is questioned. The denials make the critic’s position marginalized and open to ridicule. Hence, the resistance efforts against racist discourse are debilitated and the need for official measures to combat discrimination does not arise. I utilize these forms of denials to examine if the Indian dominant civic discourse engages in denials of racism or if it simply rejects unwarranted accusations.

The theorization of the denials of racism fit with the Fairclough’s three-dimensional model. However, as mentioned earlier, the major difference between van Dijk’ CDA and Fairclough’s CDA is that van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach understands cognitive structures as mediating social practices (which I do not employ in my study). In spite of this basic difference, the CDAs of Fairclough and van Dijk are text oriented, that is, they systematically analyze language use as social practice, in relation to the wider social practice of which the discursive practice is a part. Here lies the significance of utilizing Fairclough’s CDA model and van Dijk’s specific theorization of denial of racism as both tremendously add to the understanding of discourse as constitutive of knowledge, subjects, and social relations. Now that I have explained in details the discourse framework, I lay out the data collection procedures.

### **Data Collection**

The research aims to analyze the competing discourses of the government officials, the academicians, and the Dalits in the mainstream media regarding the

meanings of caste, race, and nation in response to the Dalit accusation of racism at the UN conference in Durban, 2001. The data is collected from several sources. This section lays out a detailed explanation of the data collection method. The sources of civic discourse are three, high-circulation, English language newspapers published in India: *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, and *The Indian Express*. Data will be collected for the publication period of August 2000 to February 2002.

### ***Civic Discourse***

To analyze how government officials, academicians, and the Dalits activists, scholars and the media have argued caste, race and racism in the re-constitution of the Indian nation, I will look at three mainstream English language national newspapers in India: *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, and *The Indian Express* from August 2000 to February 2002.

I chose to analyze newspapers because news discourse is the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies, both of elites and of ordinary citizens (van Dijk, 1988). Both Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1988a) argue for critically examining the role of newspaper language because the ideology of the news writer is not always apparent but hidden in the subtle choice of linguistic forms. I chose English language newspapers because of the crucial agenda-setting role they play in influencing public opinion in the English speaking Indian populace which is estimated to be 350 million. In addition, they are "sources of record" for other media outlets (Rajagopal, 2001). Several scholars (Shridhar, 1977; Joshi, 1991; Raina, 1991; Sunder Rajan, 1992, Parameswaran, 1999) have noted and discussed the strong association between the English language and British colonialism in India and its intimate links with the upper class, upper middle

class, and the middle class in postcolonial India. The British introduced English in the nineteenth century so that the upper class elites could acquire “Western” education. They hoped that, eventually, English education “would act as a filter for the percolation of English to the masses” (Sridhar, 1977, p.18). Since independence, the use of English has continued to grow not only in education, but also in commerce and in the mass media. In government works, English is the associate official language along with Hindi (Annamalai, 2004). The middle and upper classes send their children to schools whose medium of instruction is English and most public universities continue to offer instruction in English (Parameswaran, 1999). Annamalai (2004) further argues that newspaper publication in English and its readership have increased since independence. Tharoor (1997) rightfully expresses the mood of the upper and middle classes in India as, “we have grown up in the cities of India, secure in national identity rather than a local one, which we express in English better than any Indian language.” Hence, I chose English language newspapers because of their broad reach and the status they enjoy among Indian readers.

Now, I’ll briefly discuss the newspapers that I have chosen for my study.

### ***The Times of India***

*The Times of India* was founded on November 3, 1938 as *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* and served the British colonists (Annamalai, 2004). It adopted its present name in 1861. Originally British-owned and controlled, its last British editor was Ivor S. Jehu, who resigned the editorship in 1950. It was after India’s independence that the ownership of the paper passed on to the then famous industrial family of Dalmiyas and was later taken over by Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain of the Sahu Jain group. Currently, it

is owned and managed by Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd. (which operates under the names The Times Group) of the Sahu Jain family. It also has the widest circulation among all English-language broadsheets in the world.<sup>7</sup> According to the Registrar of Newspapers in India, which operates under the aegis of the Government of India, *The Times of India* has the largest circulation among English language dailies in India with 7.4 million readers.<sup>8</sup> *The Times of India* is not affiliated with any political parties in India and it does not claim to be aligned to any political party.

### ***The Hindu***

*The Hindu* was established in 1878, and was founded on the principles of fairness and justice (Annamalai, 2004). The first issue of *The Hindu* was published on September 20, 1878 by a group of six young men, led by G. Subramania Aiyer, a radical social reformer and school teacher from South India. *The Hindu*, like many other Indian publishing houses, is family-run. It was headed by G. Kasturi from 1965 to 1991, N. Ravi from 1991 to 2003. Currently it is headed by N. Ravi's brother, N. Ram. Wordpress.org<sup>9</sup> lists *The Hindu* as a left-leaning independent newspaper. *The Hindu* is ranked second in terms of circulation in India with 4.05 million readers (The Registrar of Indian Newspapers in India, 2006).

### ***The Indian Express***

*The Indian Express* was started in 1931 by Chennai-based Veradharajulu Naidu. It is also a family run newspaper and is currently owned by Ramnath Goenka who is the head of the Indian Express Group. *The Indian Express* has a daily circulation of 3.1

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://rni.nic.in/pii.htm> Registrar of Newspapers in India, Government of India.

<sup>8</sup> <https://rni.nic.in/pii.htm> Registrar of Newspapers in India, Government of India

<sup>9</sup> Wordpress.org, the directory of online Indian newspapers and magazines lists *The Hindu* as "Left-leaning, independent."

million and it is ranked third in terms of readership (The Registrar of Indian Newspapers in India, 2006). *The Indian Express* is not affiliated with any political parties in India.

The articles were selected as follows. In order to make the search of articles as extensive as possible, I used several combinations of searches. I used LexisNexis as my search engine because it provides access to full-text news, business, and legal publications. It also offers a variety of flexible search options and is one of the most heavily used databases in higher education.<sup>10</sup> I used several search terms to find articles pertaining to the caste and race controversy. For example, I used “Dalits” and/or “untouchable,” and I used “wild card searches,” in other words a search for rac\*\* or cast\*\*.” Additionally, I used “UN conference” and “UN” to see whether caste or race issues were discussed in the UN in general. Each of these searches found 10 to 15 articles pertaining to caste and race issues in 2001, and the rest of the articles were unrelated to the problem being studied. These 10 to 15 articles were published in 2001, and also appeared in the following search that I conducted. Finally, I limited my search to specific key words such as “race,” “caste,” “racism,” “casteism” “Durban,” “India” “UN conference” within the time frame from August 2000 to May 2008 (six months before the UN Preparatory Meeting in February 2001 leading to the Durban conference till the present). I considered all articles that came up in the sample with these words. A total of 183 articles were in this sample. Within this broader sample, the bulk of the coverage on the Durban issue (53 articles) fell within 2001, the year the conference took place. The following chart shows all of the articles that appeared in *The Times of India*, *The Hindu* and *The Indian Express* between from August 2000 and May 2008 containing the search words “race,” “caste,” “racism,” “casteism,” “Durban,” “India,” and “UN conference.”

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://academic.lexisnexis.com/online-services/academic-overview.aspx>



The search shows that the highest clusters of articles on caste and race were in 3 different years: a) 2001, b) between March and May 2006, and c) between March and May 2008. The fact that the race and caste controversy took place in 2001 explains the increase in the number of articles on caste and race in 2001. But one will notice increases in the number of articles between March and May 2006, and between March and May 2008. I went through all of these articles and concluded that this shift in the media spotlight is due to two significant events during this time (not directly implicating the UN conference on racism). In March 2006, the government's decision to increase the caste reservation quota for the Other Backward Castes (OBC, a specified groups of castes) in elite Indian institutions (the Indian institution of Technology and the Indian Institute of Management) sparked widespread controversy in India, which explains the increase in articles between March and May 2006. Second, an officially recognized Other Backward Castes (OBC) group called the *Gujjars* staged a protest in March 2008 demanding more reservations and a privilege status on par with other lower caste groups. This explains the increase in the number of articles on caste between March and May 2008. After examining all of the articles from August 2000 to May 2008, I found that out of 183 articles, 130 articles, which fell after February 2002 - were unrelated to issues discussed at the Durban conference. These articles were mainly concerned with caste reservation in India, caste related incidences of rape and murder, an increase in the caste quota system, the plight of lower caste people, and caste wars in politics.

For the purposes of the analysis, I will concentrate only on the sample of 53 articles of Durban-focused coverage. I chose 53 articles that fell within the time frame from August 2000 (six months before the UN Preparatory Meeting in February 2001

leading to the Durban conference in August 2001) to February 2002 (six months after the conference at Durban). I chose this time period because in the UN Preparatory meeting for the conference in February, 2001, the Committee agreed to include the issue of caste in their agenda. I wanted to observe whether there were any discussions or arguments in the media on caste and race prior to the UN Preparatory meeting in February. Hence, I arbitrarily considered six months before the UN Preparatory meeting for any news on caste and race controversy. I also wanted to observe whether there were any discussions or arguments on the UN conference after the conference was over in August 2001. As mentioned earlier, the discussion on the caste and race controversy at Durban faded away after February 2002. Hence, I chose six months after the conference.

I want to analyze this particular time frame because my analysis of the contesting discourses is based on an “event driven” political wave where media give attention to an issue or event for a period of time. Scholars in political communication (Lawrence, 2000; Bennett & Livingston, 2003; Wolfsfeld & Shearer, 2006) discuss the issue of “who” drives the news. Bennett (1990) places importance on the dependence of the news media on the government (institution driven) for setting the public agenda, while Lawrence (2000) argues that “event driven news” originates in unexpected events where the authorities have less control over shaping the news. The political process undergoes a series of cycles or political waves in which some political issues and events are in focus for a limited period of time. Lawrence (2000) further contends that the media provide an arena in which social construction of the news occurs, a process that is “part and parcel of larger political competitions to designate and define public problems” (p. 3). Journalists are the “managers” of this arena, determining the winners of these competitions by

identifying issues that are “newsworthy” and choosing who participates in the discussion of these issues. I contend that both the powerful elites and the institution of media drive the waves and the attention to and disappearance of issues/events from the news has significance in terms of elite meaning making.

Scholars further note that such issues or events are accompanied by an increase in the media coverage and debates surrounding the issue or event (Downs, 1972, Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988, Linsky, 1991, Mathes & Pfetsch, 1991, McCombs & Zhu, 1995). Wolfsfeld (2001, 2004) define news waves as “sudden and significant changes in political environment that are characterized by a substantial increase in the amount of public attention centered on a political issue or event” (p. 335). These sudden issues or events reach a peak in public attention and then fade or new news waves replace them. This time frame gives me considerable materials for charting out and interpreting the ideological struggle of the elites and allows me to capture the discursive contestation at its peak.

The advantages of studying such news waves are manifold. Wolfsfeld and Shearer (2006) argue that because news waves take place within a short period of time, it is relatively easy to analyze the intensity of arguments, the competing discourses, and the interactions between the various political actors such as the government, the oppositional groups, the public, etc. Moreover, major events that question strongly held attitudes, such as association with race and caste, might allow for significant reconceptualizations of nation, the government, and communities within the nation. A study by Ross and Bantimaroudis (2006) of a US newspaper shows how the major event of the September 11 attacks influenced frames used in editorials, and news coverage of Yasser Arafat and

Ariel Sharon. Moreover, as Ross and Bantimaroudis (2006) argue, major events may “empower groups whose voices and ideas were previously jugged or marginalized;” this may potentially lead to solutions to problems and issues. When the news wave is at its peak, journalists looking for news sources are likely to seek information from oppositional groups. Hence, during a news wave, the oppositional groups have a chance to appear on the news. Therefore, as Gamson and Meyer (1996) argue, political waves provide news opportunities, in terms of providing advantages to certain types of political actors due to change in political as well as media environments. The sheer amount of news space available provides the actors an opportunity to express their views (Wolfsfeld & Shearer, 2006). Wolfsfeld and Shearer (2006) further posit that political controversy and ideological and cultural conflict that the surround the news also contributes by giving importance and significance to the issue and by providing media access. However, the authors note that non-elites or social movement leaders may find it difficult to participate in public debates and news unless they can be directly linked to the issue at hand. From this, one can infer that the voice of the marginalized group opposing the government (the Dalits in this case) may find it even more difficult to express their views in the news. The research by Wolfsfeld and Shearer (2006) further reveals that governments benefit from the advantages they enjoy more generally with regard to the press. The news media are interested in those actors and institutions that have the greatest impact on society. The more political power an actor has, the easier it is for them to control news and major events. Having said this, the research also shows that a large number of waves are rooted in accidents, which indicate that news waves could be “event driven.” More studies on

news waves need to be done. Therefore, my analysis is based on the “event driven” political wave.

### **Self Reflexivity**

While analyzing data, it is important to explain my social position, as I am the human instrument in this research. Discourse analytical position which underpins the methodology used in this study, and the critical inquiry that I engage in, emphasize the importance of self-reflexivity.

### ***My Socio-Economic Status and Being Bengali***

I am a Bengali woman, born and raised in Calcutta, (a bustling cosmopolitan city in eastern part of India, in the “communist” state of West Bengal with a population of nearly 14 million people) in a middle class, educated family. My parents hold master’s degrees (and so does my sister) and are quite established in their chosen careers. A good education from reputed school and college has always been a priority for my parents. Being a girl has never been an issue with my parents, though a lot of Indian parents would prefer a boy child. In fact, my parents have always encouraged my sister and me to succeed in our respective careers.

India is a highly status based society and there are tremendous disparities between classes and caste groups. My privileged middle class background came with various advantages. Predominantly in urban areas, peoples’ socioeconomic and educational status puts them in “respectable positions” and provides them with relatively easy access to housing, education, healthcare, and jobs. I was educated in a private, non-religious, non-caste or non-race based English school where the medium of instruction was English. However, the majority of students was Bengalis, and belonged to similar socio-economic

backgrounds. It is almost a “norm” in most middle class families to send their children to English medium schools since knowing English is a huge advantage in India, particularly in getting jobs both in corporate (an absolute necessity), and government sectors. Moreover, a person’s social status is often appreciated by his or her fluency in speaking the Queen’s language. Besides education, I have had easy access to healthcare, job in private sector, and other aspects of social life.

At school, I interacted mostly with Bengalis (Hindus, Muslims and Christians) of similar backgrounds but in my neighborhood (highly variegated) I interacted with people from all ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. My identity as a Bengali became predominant when I interacted with non Bengali Indians, as each ethnicity and linguistic group has its “unique” stereotypical characteristics. For example, while interacting with non Bengali Indians, I have often encountered questions like, “So you must be very good in studies? What do you want to become, a doctor or an engineer? (These two professions are highly regarded among Bengalis and a lot of them follow this path). Again, I would be asked, “What are you good at, dancing or singing?” (This stereotype stems from the fact that Bengalis are regarded as very “cultured” people with a rich heritage of literature, music, dance, theatre and films). Ironically, I neither became a doctor nor an engineer nor a singer (though I learned Indian classical dancing for 18 years).

### ***My Caste and Racial Identity***

I am a Hindu, and belong to Kayastha caste group. In Hinduism, everyone is assigned a caste, which becomes his or her ascribed status. I was not aware of my caste before the start of this project nor have I ever contemplated my caste status. I had to call

my mother and ask her what my caste is. I do not know any other details about the Kayastha (but remember reading somewhere that though Kayastha is not as high caste as Brahmin, yet, it is not a “low” caste because I never used any “quota” for admission in school or colleges), since my parents never told me anything about it, nor did I learn anything at school or college. This project compelled me to find out more about Kayastha caste. As I google searched, I came across a website called “kayasthaparivar.org” (*parivar* means family). According to the website, “Kayasthas are accorded a dual caste status, namely Kshatriya (warrior) and Brahmin (the learned).” I found the site very interesting and analyzing it would be another project in itself and I concluded that Kayasthas are a high caste and mostly engaged in knowledge gain and professional services. This has been a very interesting revelation, and fits in with my social background and my status within the Indian society. However, certain features on the websites, like words, pictures of rituals, dresses look essentially “non Bengali” and my interpretation is that it is predominantly created by North Indian Kayastha caste group. There is no reason to believe that Bengali Kayasthas and North Indian or South Indian Kayasthas share same rituals, beliefs, and customs. In fact, it is true for all castes and subcaste groups in India; they vary in their cultural values, beliefs, and performances across regions, linguistic and ethnic groups and many subcaste groups are regionally or locally concentrated and not found elsewhere. However, the four main caste groups, (*Brahmin*, the highest, learned caste; *Vaishyas*, the trader; *Kshatriyas*, the warrior; and *Sudras*, the lowest, Untouchable caste) are maintained across all ethnic or linguistic groups.

I must confess that my interaction with any disadvantaged groups (such as the lower castes and tribes) has been minimal and limited to daily interactions in shops, streets, restaurants etc. In any case, I would not know their exact caste, unless they mentioned it. In urban areas, the occupational fluidity has somewhat blurred the caste distinctions. However, certain occupations are caste-based, and people belonging to a particular caste still engage in occupations assigned to that caste. For example, a janitor belongs to janitor subcaste group; a shopkeeper belongs to the trader subcaste group. Nowadays in urban areas, though it is possible for a person from a backward caste to become a doctor, but it is impossible to find a Brahmin (high caste) who works as a bathroom attendant at the airport. Such jobs are still reserved for people of the low castes. Similarly, it is very unlikely for me to take up a job of washing dishes at a restaurant in India, given my social status within the Indian society and I would automatically have “better” options. Therefore, though there is no way to know what a person’s caste is unless he or she mentions it, especially in urban areas (in rural areas the caste groups are highly distinctive and occupational fluidity is seldom possible), often, in traditional family-based occupations, people stick to their caste-based occupations simply because it is easily available to them.

I never had to mention my caste affiliation at school, college, social gathering, or jobs. In the government forms along with educational and parental information, a person’s religious affiliation is asked, and there is no mention of caste or race. I have always written Hindu while in India, though now, I do not affiliate myself with any organized religious form. I also am non-partisan to any political beliefs prevalent in India. I am fully aware that for people from lower socioeconomic status or predominantly



rural areas, their caste identities are the predominant identity marker. I'm also very aware of the socioeconomic disparities in my surroundings which I witnessed in India on a daily basis. Because of the diversity of mass media outlets and opportunities for alternative voices, movies, television shows, newspapers depict and write about discriminations and oppressions which are endemic within the society on the basis of caste, religion, ethnic and linguistic groups. However, often, such depictions end up glorifying the "good" over "evil" (the good being "poor" person and the evil most often is the landowner) and seldom address institutional responsibilities in perpetuating such discriminations.

I have never encountered anyone asking me about my racial identity in India, nor have I actively sought out to find my racial identity while in India. In school, the only time race was mentioned was in my history class when we studied about different racial types in India. From what I remember, generally, Bengalis are a mixture of Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, and Austro-Asiatic races. This implies that Bengalis are a heterogeneous and considerably diverse ethnic group who speak Bengali, a language of the eastern Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European languages. The color of the skin, the facial features, and height reflect to which racial group individuals have close affinity toward.

Having narrated my socioeconomic and cultural background, I must comment on the attitude toward dark skinned people, especially women, in India. I am a dark skinned woman who grew up in India and I know as a fact, how my skin color is perceived among majority of Indians. I am considered "dark" or "*kalo*" in Bengali, literally translated means "black," and not "brown". From the very childhood, friends and relatives have commented on my skin color, mostly jokingly, but such jibes reflect the status of the dark skinned person in India. I have often compared myself with my mostly

fair skinned friends and my sister (my sister, mother, maternal grandmother and mother's side of the family are lighter skinned). In mass media outlets like films, tv shows, there is a tendency to fetishize the white skin and almost all the models (particularly female) and movie actresses in India are very fair skinned. Almost all creams and lotions in India claim to lighten one's skin and have for years comprised an industry worth many millions. Predominantly, North Indians (who consider themselves to be the real Indo-Aryans), upper class Muslims, high caste Hindus are fair skinned, taller, and well built peoples. Hence, that "look" has been a standard for beauty in India for centuries. As Bhattacharya rightly sums it up, "In India, fair still equates to pretty, handsome, attractive. And the opposite? Well..."<sup>11</sup> Only of late, one can see a few "duskier" skinned models and actresses in India who are highly regarded since they have managed to "break" the status quo.

This reaction to skin color has its roots in the caste system and the degree to which it has insinuated itself into Hindu culture. The caste system can be attributed in part to a verse from the Rig Veda, an ancient Hindu scripture, which describes the creation of the human race from the primal man, *Purusha*. From his head sprang the Brahmins, the priestly caste, and the highest on the totem pole; from his arms the *Kshatriyas*, the warrior castes; from his thighs the *Vaishyas*, or merchant castes; and from his feet the *Sudras*, the servant or laborer castes. Within each of these castes are thousands of sub-castes, or *jatis*. Given both the historical context and modern practices, the notion that dark skin is unattractive seems to follow directly from the caste system. Dark skin calls to mind low-caste people, people who lack the education and opportunity

---

<sup>11</sup> <http://content-usa.cricinfo.com/magazine/content/current/story/334413.html>

to work in air-conditioned offices, shielded from the sun. It is a culture that not only prizes fair skin and demeans dark skin, but that also associates dark-skinned people with lowly occupations. Moreover, with the invasion of lighter skinned Islamic groups like Pathans, Arabs, Mughals, Persians, and later the European groups such as the Dutch, French, Portuguese and the English, glorification of light skin has intensified in India.

Being in the US, I have once in a while been called “brown” by my white skinned friends, (very jokingly again) and it made me realize that skin color is indeed a primary dividing factor among peoples. I have often been asked why some Indians are lighter skinned, which made me realize that predominantly brown skin is associated with Indians in the perception of Indians by the westerners. This also raises the question whether a lighter skinned Indian be still called brown by whites?

As a dark skinned Bengali privileged woman, who is conscious of the tremendous hierarchy and inequality in the Indian society, I concur that it will be a challenge to analyze the conflicting discourses regarding the issue of caste and race. This project has enabled me to question, and confront my caste and race identity, which was never part of my salient identities in India. I must confess that my initial reaction to the race and caste controversy was that of confusion. I found it difficult to comprehend how caste could be equated with race. But the more I delved into the literature and confronted my social status and identity in the Indian context, the more I realized the similarities between these social constructs and their functions within specific social contexts. Moreover, the awareness of power inequality between the elites and the Dalits that I have developed by being brought up in India, will help me to promote more democratic social understandings against the grains of race, caste and nation in social discourses. This

consciousness will help me to find the subject positions in competing discourses that provide the alternative voices to challenge the ongoing attempts to block new possibilities, and fight for rights for all underprivileged groups, particularly the Dalits.

In the next chapter, I analyze the larger historical and political contingencies of colonial and postcolonial India that shaped the national discourses of “unity in diversity” and Hindutva. These national discourses help me to understand how the logics of race, caste and racism operate to deny, suppress or elide race and caste discrimination and exclusions in India.

## CHAPTER THREE

### NATION AND ITS DISCOURSES IN POSTCOLONIAL INDIA

This chapter maps out the logics of race denial and caste suppression, which are embedded within two dominant competing postcolonial Indian national discourses; the “unity in diversity” discourse constituted by the Congress party and the *Hindutva* as evoked by the *Bharatiya Janata Party*’s (hereafter BJP) right wing political ideology. I analyze the construction of inclusive, homogenized diversity discourse of “unity in diversity” and the exclusive Hindu nationalist discourse of *Hindutva*, and how these national discourses denied, suppressed or elided the logics of race and caste to achieve their specific political goals. These discourses were shaped by larger historical and political contingencies of colonial domination and postcolonial transition. A critical review of how meanings of caste were suppressed and race was denied, and how, simultaneously, these meanings worked to constitute the nation is necessary to understand the media response to the Dalits’ accusation of racism at the UN racism conference (WCAR, World Conference Against Racism). Dalits’ accusation that casteism is racism made the dominant logics of caste and race, otherwise embedded and/or suppressed, visible. To understand the response to this accusation, it is crucial to know how these logics operate to deny, suppress or elide race and caste discrimination and exclusions.

Several discursive logics emerge from this analysis of national discourses, and I explain these logics in the two sections. The first section explains the colonial beginnings of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS, a Hindu cultural organization), which first coined the term *Hindutva* and was later appropriated and reshaped by the BJP in the 80s.

In this section, I also map out the discursive logics of Hindu “race” and “nation” that constituted the *Hindutva* discourse of the RSS. The second section delineates two national discourses in postcolonial India: the “unity in diversity” national discourse of the Congress party, which formed the first independent government of postcolonial India, and the BJP’s *Hindutva* discourse. The analysis identifies several logics which work, in tandem and in contradictions, within these discourses. These two discourses developed and functioned based on several logics. They are Brahminical hegemony, meanings of race as a tool of Western domination of India, denial of race as relevant to exclusions in India and simultaneous racist distinctions, rearticulation of race as culture, caste distinctions. Further, the logics include simultaneous silencing of caste oppression, homogenized diversity and incorporation of the Dalits through their subjugation.

### **Colonial India: The RSS, its Influences and *Hindutva* Discourse**

The discourse of *Hindutva* is premised on an argument that equates authentic Indianness with Hindu cultural origins. The RSS, a cultural organization in colonial India, was founded by Veer Savarkar, a nationalist leader of the Indian anti-colonial freedom struggle. According to Savarkar, who formulated the term *Hindutva* in the early 1920s, “a Hindu means a person who regards this land from Indus to the Seas as his fatherland as well as his Holyland” (cited in Baber, 2004, p. 110). The definition implied three concepts: territoriality (“land from Indus to the Seas”), genealogy (“fatherland”), and religion (“holyland”). In other words, it asserted that the Hindus are the original inhabitants of the land that we now know as India, and this land is the birthplace of Hindu philosophy and religious ideas. *Hindutva*, as defined by the RSS ideology, also

constituted the boundaries of the Hindu “race” that included the people who are originally the inhabitants of India, that is, the Hindus, and excluded the non Hindus (Muslims, Christians, Parsis) who are considered outsiders. The leaders of the RSS, Savarkar and his associate Guru Golwalkar, evoked these religious and cultural codes to create their own form of nationalism to fight against the British rule in India. Later on, in postcolonial India, the BJP selectively retrieved *Hindutva* discourse to create its own brand of Hindu nationalist project.

***Hindutva: The logics of Hindu “race” and “nation” by the RSS***

The antecedents to the logics of “race,” caste and “nation” that influenced the RSS ideology could be found in the Orientalist discourses by the British as well as the Indian writers who wrote about India during the British colonial rule (Baber, 2004). These Orientalist discourses were developed by the British scholars who wrote on India and Great Britain’s relationship with the colonies, particularly India. Writings aimed at demonstrating the superiority of the Hindu race and the Indo-Aryan language (spoken by majority of India’s population) proliferated during the colonial period in Orientalist narratives written by British scholars. British scholars such as William Jones and Prinsep, who wrote on India during the colonial times, and focused on the presumed common linguistic and racial origins of the European and Indian population in an effort to co-opt the upper castes Brahmins to accept British rules and laws in India (Baber, 2004). Varshney (1993) and Baber (2004) argue that from the British administrators’ point of view, a discourse of a once mighty Hindu “nation” and “race” in decline under the Muslim rule in the medieval times provided the much needed ideological justification for colonialism because it made it possible to represent the British as the indispensable

agency for Hindu eventual regeneration. Through these narratives, the British administrators aimed to rule by dividing the Hindus and the Muslims. The RSS Hindu nationalists selectively retrieved the elements of colonialist idea, such as the concept of the Aryan “race,” and incorporated them in the Hindutva to articulate a concept of a Hindu “race” superior to other groups in India in an effort to regain the status they lost under the colonial rule (Baber, 2004). However, the British administrators’ plan backfired because the Hindu nationalists also utilized this narrative to fight the British colonial rulers.

In addition to the colonial narratives, Savarkar and Golwalker’s ideology of *Hindutva* also drew from narratives of Indian scholars writing during the colonial period (Baber, 2004). These scholars (Saraswati 1860; Sarda, 1906; Mukherji, 1909) utilized the concept of an Aryan race and argued that the Golden Age of Hinduism was terminated by the Muslim invasions in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. As early as the 1860s, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Hindu revivalist organization, the *Arya Samaj*, drew on Max Muller’s translation of the *Vedas* (the Hindu scripture) to articulate the idea that the Hindus were clearly the descendants of the *Aryas* (Aryans) who themselves were an elect and primordial people. Inspired by the colonialist narratives, Dayananda concluded that the *Aryas* originating from Tibet settled in *Aryavarta* (land of the Aryans) or north India before dominating the world (Jaffrelot, 1996). Sarda (1906) sought to trace the Hindu “colonization of the world” and to demonstrate that in the past much of the world was dominated and eventually populated by members of the Hindu “race.” In 1909, Mukherji, who was a particularly influential voice of the period, stressed the imminent



demise of a once dominant Hindu “race” to ignite nationalistic feelings among the Indians to fight the British colonizers.

These discourses of the Indian scholars formed the basis of Savarkar and Guru Golwalker’s *Hindutva* ideology. The delineation of Hindu “race” figured prominently in the influential tract, *We or our nationhood defined*, penned in 1938 by Guru Golwalker (Baber, 2004). In the tract, Golwalker demanded that minorities of India (primarily the non Hindus, i.e. Parsis, Muslims, Christians) must either assimilate to the Hindu culture or be eliminated from the Indian land (Jaffrelot, 1996). Following the Orientalist discourses, Savarkar and Golwalker argued that the cause of the decline of a mythic Vedic Golden age of the Hindus was the invasion by the Muslims in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, among others, and consequently, the destruction of the Hindu culture and values (ibid.). Extending the colonial discourses, the *Hindutva* discourse of Savarkar and Golwalker equated Hindu “race” with the Indian “nation.” In defining India as a Hindu nation, Golwalker argued, “a nation is a union of masses of men of different conceptions and social states, in hereditary society of common spirit, feeling and race bound together especially by a language and customs in a common civilization which gives them a sense of unity and distinction from all foreigners, quite apart from the bond of the state” (Golwalker, 1947[1938], p.21). By this, Savarkar “imagined” that the Indian (Hindu) nation, rooted in the Aryan civilization of ancient India, stood for a cultural ethos that took Hinduism beyond its religious function. Moreover, the Hindus were members of a nation who shared a common “race,” (as drawn from earlier writings of Saraswati), and territorial origin. This “imagined community” of “nation,” “race,” and cultural community, did not encompass all the inhabitants and peoples of India with whom the

“Hindus” shared territory. Hence, those who did not belong to the common “race” or “culture” of the Aryans were not imagined to be a part of Indian (Hindu) nation. For Savarkar, Indian Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and Jews were outsiders; they could never be truly Indian since their faiths had originated outside the Indian subcontinent. By Savarkar’s logic of the Aryan race, the lower caste peoples were also not part of the Hindu “race” primarily because they were the non Aryans.

Savarkar insisted that “we are all Hindus and own a common blood” (1969, p.89). Savarkar’s (1969) views on Muslim converts in India are particularly revealing, he asserted, “in certain cases they do have pure Hindu blood; especially if he is the first convert to Mohammedanism he must be allowed to claim to inherit the blood of Hindu parents” (p. 101). The notion of race therefore, according to the *Hindutva* discourse was based on the notion of all persons with Hindu “blood.” The sociohistorical categories of blood and race were conflated with each other. Here the discourse focused on race to the exclusion of all other potentially relevant factors that could signify who a Hindu is. Nowhere in the articulation of the RSS’s *Hindutva* is there any “indigenous” population other than the Aryans, or any past participation or adoption of Indian cultures or languages which are all an amalgamation of various cultures of Hindus, Muslims, and indigenous people. So, by the logics of *Hindutva* ideology, Aryans are the ones with the Hindu blood. This implies that to become part of the “Hindu,” one must only prove direct lineage to an original Hindu, or Aryan. All you need is one drop of the right kind of blood! In other words, to be called a Hindu, one has to prove his/her Aryan lineage and the rest of the non Aryan population was excluded from the imagination of Hindu race

and nation. However, the RSS ideology does not explain how this “blood” of Hindu is measured or how the lineage could be proven.

To further demarcate between the Hindus and the Muslims, the *Hindutva* discourse attributed essential qualities to Hindus and Muslims on the basis of the invented notions of blood and appearance. For example, elaborating on the specific qualities of Muslims, Mukherji held them up as a community worthy of emulation because the “superiority of the Mohammedans is entirely due to their religious revival and systematic moral training” (Mukherji, 1909, cited in Datta, 1993, p.1307). This rhetorical strategy of what Jaffrelot (1996) describes as the simultaneous emulation and stigmatization of Muslims continues to be a staple element of contemporary *Hindutva* discourse. The identification of Muslims as the invaders and Hindus as the original people of India, aided in the racialization of communal identities of Hindus and Muslims. These discourses racialized the identities of Hindus and Muslims by constructing and deploying a discourse of quasi-biological and immutable differences (Miles, 1991; Wieviorka, 1995, and Wacquant, 1997). For example, Muslim males were constructed by skillfully deploying existing stereotypical images of the Muslim male as particularly lustful and sexually driven, a construction that can be traced to Renaissance Europe (Said, 1978). On the other hand, the colonial construction of the presumed effeminacy of Hindu males, their physical weakness and their “emasculatation,” became the dominant features of the Hindus. Influenced by the colonial imaginaries of the Hindus, a large proportion of the energies of the RSS was devoted to the male body and the cultivation of hyper-masculinity (Basu, 1994; Sinha, 1995). Further, the *Hindutva* discourse sought to

simultaneously create and tap into a reservoir of guilt among the presumably effete Hindu male who was accused of being unable to defend his motherland and his women.

The logic of “race” tends to commonly assume the conferment of social significance to distinctive phenotypical characteristics. However, distinctive phenotypical markers have never been essential for the task of racializing communities and ascribing fixed immutable attributes to them. Usually such essentializing of differences has quasi-biological overtones, even though this is not a precondition for the construction of racial difference in terms of superiority and inferiority (Appiah, 1990; Balibar, 1990; Goldberg, 1990; Miles, 1991; Brah, 1994; Omi and Winant, 1994; Wacquant, 1997). In the case of Hindus and Muslims however, there are no such phenotypical attributes that visibly demarcate one community from the other. However, Savarkar offered strategies for the regeneration of the nation that continued to essentialize and racialize the difference between the Hindus and Muslims. While Muslims were described as fierce, violent people without culture, the Hindus were considered as peace-loving and learned men incapable of violence. Apparently, according to Savarkar, specific characteristics of the Muslim “race,” that was incapable of imbuing culture or learning, could nevertheless be emulated for its proclivity for violence. The emulation of violent Muslims, he argued, could be used to produce a new “race” of non-effete Hindus for protecting and regenerating India from the British rule (Baber, 2004). The characteristics of Muslims were separated from the Hindus because the Hindu were considered the original inhabitants as historical evidence showed that the Persians invaded India in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and brought Islam with them spreading it in the subcontinent mostly through forcible conversion (Baber, 2004). Therefore, during the colonial period, the racialized

*Hindutva* discourse evolved around the logics of “race” and “nation” that disqualified the non Hindu “races” (particularly, the Muslims, but also the Christians and the lower castes) from being included in the constitution of the Indian “nation” because they were deemed to be not the original inhabitants of India.

However, during independence, a national discourse of “unity in diversity” based on obliterating all differences in race, caste, religion, language and norms of behavior constituted one nation for all. The Constitution of India adopted democratic and secular values which completely sidelined the *Hindutva* nationalist agenda. The Congress party, the first government in independent India ruled for several decades based on the same discursive policies of “unity and diversity” and it was not until the 1980s that the *Hindutva* discourse by the BJP started to re-emerge and question India’s religiously neutral Constitution (Malik & Singh, 1994). The BJP argued that the Constitution was not neutral but privileged religious minorities, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians (Burnell & Randall, 2005). Therefore, the 80s set the stage for the re-surfacing of *Hindutva* discourse, which found its full expression in the 90s as a result of crucial economic policy changes brought by the Congress government.

### **Postcolonial India: The National Discourses**

The first government in the independent India formed by the Congress Party consolidated the processes of democratization and secularization of polity and national integration through the “unity in diversity” discourse. The Indian “nation” imagined in this discourse included all peoples irrespective of their caste, religion or race as integral members of the newly formed postcolonial nation. The creation of democracy in India

was based on a secular nationalism committed to the recognition and accommodation of differences of religion, ethnicity, language and culture. Nevertheless, Indian scholars (Srinivas, 1975; Chatterjee, 1993; Aloysius, 1997) charged that the Indian political structure was steeped in Brahminical hegemony dating back to the colonial times. The first postcolonial government formed by the Congress party also had been predominantly upper caste party, dominated by Brahminical hegemony. In other words, the legacy of Brahminical consolidation in the Indian political and administrative system, which was aided by the British, was carried on by the Congress government. Before I explain the “unity in diversity” national discourse, I will first explain the consolidation of Brahminical hegemony in the Indian political system.

### ***Brahminical Hegemony in Indian Politics***

The consolidation of Brahminical hegemony on the Indian political scene is the result of several historical processes. Srinivas (1975) and Aloysius (1997) explain that in the century before the British rule, caste was an important issue in Indian society. During that time, Brahminical ideology faced widespread contestation both inside and outside the Hindu community. The lower castes were beginning to protest against the Brahmin’s oppressive rule in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century right before the British colonized India. Moreover, the Muslims rulers in India also dominated the Hindus and resented the Hindu upper caste superiority. Utilizing these contestations to their advantage, the colonial rulers upheld caste segregation, by guaranteeing the property rights of the mainly rural landowning upper-caste elites, permitting the monopolization of modern educational opportunities by Brahmins, and recruiting much of the bureaucratic personnel of the

colonial state from among the upper castes (Srinivas, 1975). As Aloysius (1997) writes, “the impact of the colonialism was to arrest the social progress, economic diversification and emergence of culture based polities and revert to an environment and climate of pan-Indian Brahminical feudal consolidation” (p. 51). With this consolidation, the essence of pan-Indianness found expression in a cultural nationalism, which identified the cultural core of the nation-to-be with the Vedic Brahminism (Aloysius, 1997, p. 133). Therefore, Vedic Brahminism as an ideology created a pan-Indian cultural nationalism, which was circulated through nationalistic press or public gatherings among Indians so that they could recognize its uniqueness, take collective cultural pride in its heritage, and unite and oppose the British that threatened its continuity and reassertion in modern times (Chatterjee, 1993). Immediately before and after independence, upper-caste elites legitimated their power with an ideology that fused both nationalistic and secular elements to mask their caste hegemony (Aloysius, 1997).

The Hindu nationalist sentiments receded to the background and the democratic secular values gained prominence under the leadership of the Congress government attempting to establish a code for the political, economic, and social structure of the newly formed nation. As a result, the Brahminic hegemony subsided under the veneer of secularism and many upper caste elite non-Hindus gained political eminence (Khan, 1991). The Constitution, established in 1950, reflected a nation of secular, democratic republic. The Constitution proclaims in its Article 46 that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, in particular, of the SCs and STs (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe), and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Malik & Singh, 1994).

Central to this directive and other related provisions, was the reservation system intended for the social advancement of the weaker sections of the Indian population. The framer of the constitution of India was Ambedkar who made certain arrangements for the backward classes to allow them to enjoy a humane lifestyle and for their upliftment. Ambedkar himself was a Dalit and was considered the father of the Dalit movement. The reservations for the backward classes are of three broad categories: political, educational and employment. Indian nation was constituted in principle as an egalitarian entity that safeguards the interests of the weaker sections of the society.

Secularism and liberal democracy were used as ideological tools to overwhelm the various regional nationalisms and populist movements that may have contested the upper castes' succession to state power. Illaiah (1998) contends that the nationalist agenda was given effect to by Nehru (the first Prime Minister who formed the Congress government), "who strengthened the tendency to recruit Brahminical and upper caste elite forces to control the state structures" (p. 272). Chatterjee (1993) and Aloysius (1998) argue that the mainstream Indian nationalism was employed to secure succession of state power from the British to upper-caste Indian elites who had been their collaborators under the colonial rule. Therefore, the independent Indian nation-state remained entrenched in a landscape dominated by upper castes and found new ways to effectively seal the Dalit and lower castes in a "democratic" prison (Nigam, 2000). This means that even though some jobs in the administration are comprised of diverse castes thanks to the reservation system, the ruling ideologies are still Brahminical and of upper castes (Reddy, 2005).



### *“Unity in Diversity” National Discourse*

To further consolidate the notion of an egalitarian nation at the time of independence, the apparently inclusive, modernist, Nehruvian secular nationalism of “unity in diversity” was created to deal with India’s divisive past. For some political leaders, formation of a postcolonial nation was an opportunity for unifying nation-building, while others viewed the very exercise as deepening the old cleavages, that is, caste differences and the trauma of racism perpetrated by 200 years of British rule. The nation-builders agreed that the vision of India as unified in “unity in diversity” made race or caste divisions irrelevant in the public and political realm (Shields & Muppidi, 1996). The “unity in diversity” recognized the cultural pluralism in India; however, it ignored but did not address or remove the internal differences and the exclusions they dictated.

To establish an imagined postcolonial nation, it was crucial to stake out geopolitical and cultural boundaries that became the spatial basis for forming a collective identity of peoplehood (Anderson, 1991). Further, just like any new national formation, the nation required an agreement about who can and cannot be considered legitimate members of the nation’s citizenry (Gilroy, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991; Wolfe, 1992). As scholars explain, ideas about inclusion in and exclusion from the nation are often based on conceptions of racial superiority and inferiority, derived from the perceived sociopolitical, economic, cultural, and other needs and passions of a nation at a given historical moment (Miles, 1986; Balibar, 1991; Anderson, 1991; Gilroy, 1991; Omi and Winant, 1994; Lowe, 1996; Goldberg, 1990, 1993, 2002). The socio-political need in a newly formed postcolonial India was a marriage of liberal ideals, where equality was sanctioned through the constitutional codification of laws. In other words, “unity in

diversity” was a desired goal and the basis for the project of nationhood to bind together India’s diverse population, and its histories and meanings were taken as constitutive of the national discourse (Shields & Muppidi, 1996). However, this discourse rendered India a raceless and casteless society where racial categories were overlooked and caste was “silenced” as both were considered anachronistic to the demands of a modern postcolonial nation. Sarkar (1998) suggests that the elision of the categories of caste and race from the national discourse was not merely an oversight, but a “silencing” of any oppression based on these constructs. As Nigam (2002) argues, the elision was due to the “*modernist discomfort with the category of caste and race*” (p. 7, emphasis in original).

### ***Elision of Caste and Race in “unity in diversity”***

The constitution of an apparently homogenous unified postcolonial national formation was strategically formulated to keep the divisive elements of race, caste and religion from disrupting the newly formed nation-state. Goldberg (2002) posits that the modern, particularly postcolonial, state’s insistence upon and reinforcement of homogeneity or racial homogenization articulates modern state as raceless but results in racial exclusion. Further, the racelessness codified through racial governance and exclusion is not a natural phenomenon, but a historical outcome that perpetuates the extant and established inequalities (Goldberg, 2002). Moreover, such racist exclusions and oppressions are authorized and legitimated by state commission, and often made possible by state omission (Goldberg, 2002). Modern states, as Omi and Winant (1994) and Goldberg (2002) explain, have assumed their modernity through racial elaboration, conception, and framing. Specifically, race marks the modern nation-state from the point

of conceptual and institutional emergence. In the case of India, the “silencing” of caste and the exclusion of racial difference are largely “grounded on the assumption that the entire meaningful world of political action and discourse can be comprehended through the categories of nationalism and anti-colonialism” (Sarkar, 1998, p. 24, emphasis added). What this means is that it is “illegitimate” to *speak* of caste as a category in the crafting of nationalist discourse, precisely because the only legitimate actors are the forces of nationalism, as propagated by upper-castes Brahmins, and the anti-colonial movement that the nationalists were fighting. In other words, in the world of Indian national political action, one can only be either a nationalist (the mantle of which is held by the Brahmins) or an imperialist stooge (for the British, or the West).

The Indian nationalist leaders created, legitimized, and reinforced their nationalist discourse, which has been drawn from both the arsenal of anti-colonial nationalism and that from their upper-caste position. The apparent homogenizing nationalist discourse embodied the process of Brahminization of state structures, ensuring that the so-called secular state became the private property of the Brahminical castes, and the Indian nation is fashioned along the lines of Brahminical norms and standards (Aloysius, 1997). As Goldberg (2002) argues in reference to Europe, the state is reduced to a uniraacial formation by homogenizing the nation whereby White standards and norms define state values and rationality, ways of knowing and being, thinking and doing. In the characterization of the racelessness of the state, whiteness is elevated as a desired standard, the norm of civilized life. In essence, racelessness has explicitly or implicitly dominated the public commitment to reshaping the state in the face of civil rights and the demographic challenges to “privilege and power” (Goldberg, 2002, p. 212). In the case of

India, pluralism was contained through appeals to homogenized diversity and exclusions in the construction of “unity in diversity” as the official national identity, while the power-holders remained the upper-caste Brahmins. Hence, Brahminization in political and social lives of India operated through social dominance, and the apparent homogenous, unified national discourse not only denied race, but caste, religious and linguistic differences that were integral part of multiethnic, multireligious, multiracial and multilingual India. In doing so, the discourse fails to affirm the context of power in which differences were produced, and the possibilities of dislodging power relations.

***The Re-surfacing of the BJP's Hindu Nationalism (Hindutva)***

One of the most significant political developments in India in the 90s was the rise of the BJP and its brand of right wing Hindu nationalism. The BJP, one of the largest political parties won the 13th election and came to power in 1999 and completed its term in 2004. Certain political and economic exigencies aided the rise of the BJP in the 90s. During the late eighties, the BJP started its political campaign arguing that India needed an alternative to the dynastic rule of the Congress party, which had been in power since the independence, and the BJP with a new political ideology, could provide an alternative (Hansen, 1999). Further, the BJP argued that the dynastic rule of Congress had accumulated enormous power that resulted in the distortion of political institutions and posed a threat to the independence of both the press and the judiciary, the cornerstones of liberal democracy. Though the BJP recognized the historic role of the Congress party in the freedom struggle and the establishment of a viable constitutional structure, it argued

that over the previous two decades, at the hands of the Congress party leaders, the political institutions had been either eroded or corrupted (Malik & Singh, 1994).

While the debate about an alternative political ideology was still on, the Indian economy was liberalized in 1991 by the then ruling Congress government that replaced the economic policies of socialism with neoliberalism. The Indian economy was opened to foreign investment and industrialized on a large scale. This transformation restricted the growth of indigenous industries as they were unable to compete with foreign owned industries (Sen, 1999). As a consequence, there developed a sense of marginalization of a larger section of the population consisting of smaller farmers and indigenous industry owners. A large number of economists and political analysts led public dissention against the unrelenting technology driven economic policy, and decried that unregulated liberalization was tremendously affecting the small scale industries and agricultural sectors (Hansen, 1999). At this crucial time of political, social and economic change in India, the BJP capitalized on this public dissention and started to build a national consensus around the centrality of indigenous Hindu culture in the Indian society. Projecting Gandhian socialism as its central creed, the BJP opposed the technology driven strategy and the unregulated policy of large-scale industrialization of the Congress government (Malik & Singh, 1994). Since Gandhian socialism is criticized for its anti-technology stance, and for its opposition of large scale industrialization, the BJP took pains to point out that Gandhian socialism was broad enough to accept large, medium, and small industries as long as industrialization did not dehumanize society (ibid.). Therefore, the BJP built its oppositional stance on the argument that the Western concept of liberalism adopted by the Congress led to monopolistic control of political and

economic power by a few and encouraged selfishness and greed. The BJP highlighted how the wealth was being accumulated by a small section of large industries that left the smaller industry and agricultural owners marginalized (Sen, 1996). It further argued that the Gandhian socialism, which was the right policy in the Indian context, provided the blending of humankind's quest to satisfy both material and spiritual needs (ibid.). A discourse of anti-West prevailed during their campaigns against the Congress in the late 90s. Ultimately, the discourse of centrality of the indigenous Hindu culture that embodied the *Hindutva*, won the BJP the 13<sup>th</sup> election in 1999.

***Hindutva: The BJP's logic of Hindu "nation" and Denial of "race"***

The political resurrection of the BJP began in the cultural field in the 1980s (Rajagopal, 2004). Since the late 1980s, Hindu images began to appear with higher frequency in advertising, television series and films. Hindu "values" gained prominence as an element of the rhetoric of the BJP, and the public functions of the secular Indian state were marked increasingly by the presence of Hindu rituals (Rajagopal, 2004). The ideas of Savarkar and Golwalkar, although formulated over sixty years ago, started to reverberate in the discourse of the BJP. Following the victory in the 1999 elections, the BJP led the coalition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government through its full term until the following election in 2004. The resurgent Hindu nationalist movement endorsed by the BJP continued with its argument that minorities should accept Hindu values as the historical and cultural ground of their identities. In the academic and educational fields, the BJP sought to correct what it called Leftist bias (some Leftist writings of Indian history questioned the Brahminical tyranny against the lower castes

and minorities) in the writing of Indian history (ibid). Questioning the Leftist bias, the BJP's *Hindutva*'s historical and historiographical endeavor typically described the period of Mughal rule in India as an age of Islamic despotism; it reconstructed the history of India as a mythic narrative of Hindu resistance to Islam and Christianity and glorified the role of Hindu nationalists in the Indian freedom struggle. Sarkar (1996) argues that the systematic, consistent and generalized project of the Hindu nationalists to control the production of Indian history is motivated by its "insistence on a homogenised, unitary and aggressive Hindu bloc," which defined a culturally essentialist notion of Hindu identity (p.244 & 258). By resurrecting *Hindutva*, the BJP grounded politics in Hinduism by defining India as the "Hindu *Rashtra*" [nation], which essentially incorporates two meanings of Hinduism: Hinduism as culture, and Hinduism as religion (Varshney, 1993). As a top ranking BJP leader, Sinha says, "Hindu is not the name of a religious faith like the Muslim and the Christian; it denotes the national life here" (cited in Jafferlot, 1996, p. 30). By these logics, Indian nation became synonymous with Hindu nation. Therefore, the *Hindutva* discourse of the BJP worked within the RSS's dominant logics of nation which excluded the "Others," the non Hindus from its constitution.

The BJP was very strategic to not infuse the concept of "Hindu" with the racial meaning (on the basis of same blood) that was originally propagated by the RSS's *Hindutva* ideology. Discrimination based on racialized caste and religious groups is endemic in Indian society, but mystification and denial of race differences are also widespread and are further sustained by the social construction of the BJP's Hindu nation. While the Hindu values and cultural symbols were upheld, the word "race" that was originally cited in Savarkar's Hindu nationalism discourse was strategically omitted

from the BJP's *Hindutva* discourse (Kothari, 1994; 1995). In other words, the racial logic based on common blood articulated by the RSS was denied in the BJP's *Hindutva* discourse. However, the meaning attached to the "Hindu," which signified them as the original inhabitants of India was maintained in the BJP's *Hindutva* articulation.

Several arguments can be advanced to explain the omission and hence, denial of race. First, scholars (Baber, 2004) explain that since there had been tremendous changes after World War II, the world had witnessed a significant shift from biology to culture in racial articulation (Gilroy, 1983; Balibar, 1991). In other words, there had been a shift in the focal point of racism from physical characteristics to factors such as social customs, manners and behavior, religious and moral beliefs and practices, language, aesthetic values and leisure activities. Consequently, with the changes in the sociopolitical scenario the world over, some subordinate groups had shown self-assertion and self-governance. Race and racism had been condemned and questioned, and the perpetrators of racism had been brought to justice in various places across the globe. In a postcolonial secular democracy of India, the nation builders did not want to deal with the issue of race and racism. The BJP realized that Hindu as a cultural identity, distinguished from non Hindu identity, had a better chance of acceptance by the people than Hindu as a "race" with common "blood" running through the veins of all Hindus (Baber, 2004). The association of Hindu with untransgressible bloodlines became difficult to justify due to acknowledgement of diversity by the secular government of postcolonial India and its commitment to social justice. Therefore, the earlier conceptualization of Hindu race was displaced onto the realm of culture, so that it is the insurmountability of the cultural differences that has now become the justification of cultural superiority of the Hindus. In



other words, racialized groups (non-Hindus and lower castes) are not burdened or blessed by their genetic traits but by their cultural traits, distinguishable from Hindu culture. Second, since one of the BJP's central creed is Gandhian socialism; the BJP understood that the ideological commitment to socialism is incompatible with the category of race. Hence, the BJP very strategically removed "race" from its political and cultural discourse to more effectively manage diverse electorate masses (Malik & Singh, 1994, Kothari, 1994; 1995). The *Hindutva* discourse denied race in order to justify their inability to challenge or address racial injustices.

Hence, racial denial has been a significant part of the BJP's *Hindutva* discourse from its very inception. Socially and historically constructed racialized discourse of *Hindutva* was manipulated and reorganized by excluding race to mobilize specific meanings and interpretations for *Hindutva* or Hindu nation in order to accomplish specific political goals. However, the racialized meanings that excluded the non-Hindus and the non-Aryans (meaning lower castes) and the glorification of cultural superiority of upper castes were very much alive in the *Hindutva* discourse. In other words, although the *Hindutva* discourse did not state explicitly that non-Hindu "races" were not included; its ideology still maintained that non-Hindus are not original members of the Indian nation. Therefore, through its omission and thereby denial, racial differences and subjugation were maintained. The *Hindutva* strain of exclusive nationalism deliberately sought to either exclude Muslims completely or include them as a subordinate category conditionally, if they accept Hindu culture as Indian culture. While the term "race" is officially excluded and denied, caste is used as an explicit means through which the Dalits and the lower castes are brought under the Hindu fold.

### ***The BJP's Stigma of Upper Caste Party***

Scholars (Basu, Sen, Sarkar, Sarkar, and Dutta, 1993; Hansen, 1999) argue that the core support for the Hindu nationalist movement is drawn from India's elites. Along with these scholars, political analysts also contend that the BJP is often criticized as a party predominantly comprised of upper castes (Brahmins or Bania, a sub-caste of Brahmin) in its leadership and membership. While the "secular" Congress consolidated its upper caste hegemony, the BJP was not far behind. The initial electoral base of the BJP has been the middle and upper classes. Corbridge and Harris (2000) view Hindu nationalism as an "elite" revolt, reflecting "the interests and aspirations especially of the middle classes and upper castes" (p. xix). As the authors note, India's urban socio-economic elites have provided strong support for the BJP in the 1999 general elections in India. Basu, Sen, Sarkar, Sarkar, and Dutta (1993) explain, "organized *Hindutva* emerges right from the beginning an upper caste reaction to establish a self-assertion by downtrodden groups within the Hindu fold. The RSS and the BJP, from their inception till today, have been overwhelmingly Brahmin or Bania (a sub-caste of Brahmin) in composition, drawn together on the basis of a fear psychology directed against other social groups: Muslims, most overtly, but by implication also lower caste Hindus" (p. 16). To maintain the upper caste (Brahmin) hegemony, the BJP never rejected caste system publicly. By instead eliding caste (yet being conscious of it through recruitment) the upper caste seizure of glorified Hindu identity embodied in *Hindutva* not only excluded the non Hindus, but also the lower caste peoples. Though the BJP's political manifesto does not mention caste (just as race is elided), the way the party functions is highly caste based whereby caste status is utilized as and when the party's goals dictate.

Until the early 90s, Dalits and other lower castes were never part of the BJP's elite upper caste political scene. However, as the colonial (and postcolonial) modernization strengthened Brahmanical (upper caste Hindu) influence, the lower caste and Dalit protests against the upper caste hegemony in every sphere of their lives also grew. This upsurge of Dalit dissent required an effort on the part of the BJP to construct a more unified "Hindu front" to expand their electoral votes.

### ***Hindutva's Logics of Suppression of Caste and Dalit Incorporation***

The BJP's strategy to create a pan-Hindu alliance uniting Hindus relied on strategies of instigating violence against the "imagined" enemies, the non Hindus, especially the Muslims and Christians (Basu, 1994, p. 2620). Jafferlot (1996) further argues that Dalits were brought within the BJP fold by reinterpreting one of the many religious scriptures named *Manusmriti* (The Law of Manu; Manu is the name of a sage) and by inventing new cult goddesses for Dalits to worship. Realizing the importance of a unified Hindu front, Valsangkar (1995) argues that considerable time and coercion were expended by the *Hindutva* leaders to convince the Untouchables that the Muslims cannot be trusted. The elite *Hindutva* created a "fear" discourse that Muslims cannot be trusted because they consider all non-Muslims as *Kafir* (infidel). Basu et al. (1993) argue that for the Hindu Right, incorporating Dalits and lower castes through strategies of violence had the advantage because they did not transgress or offend upper caste practices in a way that sociable methods of integration might have. The Hindu Right's main aim has been to break the lower caste and Muslim voting blocs that had in the past defeated *Hindutva's* electoral equation. Dalits bought into this ideology of violence because as Nandy (1995)

opines, “a violent or heroic defense of Hinduism allows one to transcend one’s lowly caste status, at least temporarily” (p.103).

A repetitive feature in *Hindutva* discourse aimed at Hindu audience is the invocation of scriptures (Maclean, 1999). One of the hundred scriptures of Hinduism is the *Manusmriti* (The Laws of Manu), which endorses the caste system, and the BJP selectively appropriated some of its rules. It is also the only one among many Hindu scriptures which indicates how members of each caste should act (Alam, 1994). However, the BJP reinterpreted the ideology in the scripture and claimed that *Manu* (the author of *Manusmriti*) did not mention “untouchability” in the scripture and any references to it are a result of a later interpolation (Palival, 1994). Further, the BJP claimed that some of the views on caste system in *Manusmriti* were not in tune with the modern age (Bhan, 1993), and hence, it asserted that it never aspired to implement *Manu*-based constitution. Therefore, to garner Dalit support, the BJP strategized to approach the problem of untouchability by ostensibly incorporating Dalits in Hindu rituals from which they had previously been excluded (Maclean, 1999). For example, while establishing a temple in 1989, a sweeper from a lower caste named Valmiki performed the first laying of stone of the temple despite the objection of the ultra-orthodox Hindus (Dasgupta, 1994). This token incorporation of an Untouchable in Brahminic ritual was aimed at encouraging other lower castes to imagine a role for themselves within the ritualistic Hindu fold. This incident was repeatedly cited by the BJP in its political campaigns as evidence of its non discriminatory policy (ibid). Moreover, the BJP also organized camps to train Untouchables as priests and taught them the fundamentals of Hindu *dharma* or religion (Maclean, 1999). Further, in order to incorporate Dalits within

its nationalist movement, the BJP constructed entirely new cults and deities for Hindus to rally around, and to evade the consequences of breaking the established tradition of a particular temple. For example, the metamorphosis of *Bharat Mata* (Mother India) from an emotive nationalistic slogan to a benevolent beautiful goddess was highly instrumental in this regard (Bhattacharya, 2001). As Sardesai (1994) points out, “*Bharat Mata* as a worshipable goddess has no precedence in tradition” and since *Bharat Mata* is a recently created deity, she belongs to no caste and has no prescribed method of worship (p. 6). Hence, she can be approached in a public place, and propitiated in an entirely freestyle manner. Van de Veer (1996) notes that this created an avenue for cross caste socialization where deities can be adored and shared by both the upper and lower castes.

The cross caste socialization hence is overridden by the “otherism” of communalism, which distinguishes Hindus from the Muslims, and by initiating violence against the “Others,” Muslims and non-Hindus, through which a sense of cohesion is achieved within the Hindu community. Even though the caste system is not explicitly cited in the *Hindutva* discourse, caste manifests itself within the organizational structure of the BJP, and is pervasive within the BJP organization. Although caste is suppressed and ignored in the political ideology of the BJP, the BJP adhered to caste based categorization of society covertly in a sense that any social mobility offered by the *Hindutva* discourse is done on the implicit understanding that caste hierarchy is not rejected, but negotiable (Jaffrelot, 1996; Sarkar, 1996). The BJP strategically created and allocated positions within the BJP fold for lower castes and Dalits *because* they are from a certain lower caste and not *in spite* of it. In other words, even when the lower castes and Dalits are given positions within the government, they often find themselves in

subordinate positions to the high-caste bureaucrats. Moreover, the BJP utilized the government sanctioned reserved seats for SC and ST specifically for Dalits to ensure that they get jobs within the government *because* they are from a certain caste. Therefore, by never denouncing or rejecting the caste “system,” the nationalist discourse of *Hindutva* maintains systemic inequality through its elision of caste and covert caste-based incorporation of Dalits. The caste “system” (hierarchical status, discrimination) continues to operate through the trope of “caste-based recruitment” suggesting that caste is implicitly incorporated and utilized as and when the BJP’s political goals demanded. In other words, caste stands as a meaningful encoding that is creatively and strategically utilized to speak to shifting needs of caste politics. In this process, the racialized unequal caste structure is maintained, and caste differences/hierarchies are hardened within the structure. This also successfully reinstates the Brahminical superiority and hegemony within the BJP fold.

### ***Logics of Denials by Dalits***

While the BJP very strategically sought to incorporate Dalits and other lower castes within its political fold, it is important to note that some Dalits willingly entered the BJP fold. The party whose majority of the members belongs to the caste group which has committed the utmost violence against Dalits managed to recruit members from the Dalit caste. The support of the Schedule Caste (SC, lower castes in Constitution are referred to as SC) and Dalits for the BJP is quite significant and as Nandy (1995) explains, is a significant “source of much discomfort and defensive denial amongst Dalit leaders” (p. 101). There are certain logics of the discourse of denial operating here, which allowed Dalits and lower castes to participate in their own subordination. One of the

reasons that Maclean (1999) offers for why Dalits joined the BJP, is that Dalits aligned themselves with the side “whose numbers are greater, whose culture is more prominent, with whom the most security is assured” (Maclean, 1999). Besides, the BJP utilized the constitutionally backed reserved seats for the SC and Other Backward Class (OBC, economically backward classes but not from a socially lower caste) in the Parliament to garner support for Dalits. This brought certain benefits to Dalits and SC and OBCs which created a false sense of upliftment for Dalits and SCs. So, for many Dalits, this is a pragmatic choice, not necessarily a substantive one.

Some Dalits affiliate with the *Hindutva* willingly because the logic of Sanskritization allows individuals from lower castes to negotiate caste hierarchy. The term Sanskritization was originally popularized by a prominent Indian sociologist, Srinivas (1962), who used it to characterize the gradual upward movement in the social status of a caste by means of the deliberate adoption of social and religious practices (such as vegetarianism, employment of Brahmin priests, use of meatless offerings, Sanskrit mantras, and other elements of Brahminical cultic practice). These practices are associated with Brahmins and deemed prestigious because they are approved or promulgated in Brahminical literature (or by Brahmin authorities), regardless of whether the Sanskrit language is used to express those ideals. Therefore, Sanskritization involved the reshuffling of hierarchies so that the upward insertion of a previously low caste involved the demoting in lower status of another previously considered higher. It is generally argued that Sanskritization is difficult for Untouchables because “their exclusion and separation of Brahminic tradition” is a gulf too wide to be negotiated (Rudolf & Rudolf, 1967, p. 132) and because their upper caste practices would be

vehemently opposed by dominant upper castes. With the political and social backing of the BJP, this is made possible in a restricted way. It is restricted because the boundaries of what practices and rituals are allowed to Dalits and other lower castes are defined by the BJP. These predetermined roles confine Dalits and other lower castes within specific boundaries. The affiliation of Dalits with the Hindu Right strengthens the position of the elites of organization, as the inclusion of lower caste members enables the upper caste leadership to claim a representation of a broader social base of Hindu society (Maclean, 1999). What may render the kind of mobility that the Hindu Right offers lower castes even more attractive is that there is an immediate upliftment within a Hindu form of society on an individual basis. Faced with marginalization, unemployment and poverty, Dalits “are *searching* for a positive identity,” which is easily furnished by the Hindu Right organizations in exchange for votes and party work, and in many cases, Dalits gladly accept this supposedly upward mobility (Anandhi, 1995, p. 36). What the BJP offers is an “idealized” positive sense of identity that finds widespread legitimacy in the Hinduized public sphere. Incorporation within the *Hindutva* movement “converts the feeling of marginalization to a feeling of power and potency by virtue of numbers, and by virtue of being ‘popular’” (Hansen, 1993, p. 159). For Dalits who have benefitted partially by state policy of reservation and somewhat progressed beyond economic marginalization, aligning with *Hindutva* constitutes a part of their onward march (Patnaik & Chalam, 1996). Moreover, Teltumbde (2005) notes that some Dalit leaders have preferred to rely on the gains of political power rather than on the old-style cultural and social progressive movements propagated by Ambedkar that aimed to improve Dalits’ sense of self-hood and dignity. Economic gains from reservations increased the tendency



among some Dalit leaders and ideologues to consciously de-link Dalit movements from the general democratic and secular struggles. Therefore, the strivings of Dalits for a better life and the stirrings that make dignity non negotiable are being weakened by this de-linking, and have propelled some sections of Dalits towards the BJP's brand of political assertion rather than democratization of society as a whole. That is why the BJP's calculated move was successful in ensuring that Dalits become junior partners of the grand *Hindutva* project of Hindu *rashtra* (nation).

Apart from bringing Dalits and other lower castes within its fold to expand the support base beyond its usual constituency of the upper castes, in the 90s the BJP formed a political alliance in some states with *Bahujan Samaj Party* (BSP, loosely translated, Party of the Majority People), primarily a lower caste party with the overwhelmingly Dalit membership. In fact, at the time of Durban race and caste controversy, the BSP was a BJP ally in the Parliament. For the BJP, Sarkar (1996) argues, lower castes are little more than a political commodity. The attempts to garner their votes, which do not find uniform acceptance among Hindu nationalist leaders, are motivated by expedience in which the ultimate goal is the creation of a majority Hindu vote and Hindu *rashtra* (nation). Kamble (2006) argues that the success of the BJP's political discourse lies in the fact that the groups (upper castes) who committed the utmost violence against Dalits have managed to garner votes from Dalits. However, Kamble (2006) asserts that the marriage of convenience between *Hindutva* and Dalits is of antagonistic nature, and it remains to be seen how the alliance between the BJP and the BSP plays out in the long run. Unless *Hindutva* forsakes its essential Hinduness, and aligns itself to the worldview symbolized by equality, this alliance is on a very tricky ground.

## Conclusion

The two ambivalent national discourses of “unity in diversity” and *Hindutva* have dominated and jostled for mass acceptance since the 80s. While the nation is constituted as a homogenized diversity through the discourse of “unity in diversity” and the ideals of secular nationalism; the Indian nation is imagined in the *Hindutva* discourse as the “cultural” property of the upper caste/Brahmin communities and as a cultural essence that is synonymous with the Hindus. The “unity in diversity” discourse attempts to imagine an Indian nation that embodies cultural pluralism, however, like the *Hindutva*, overlooks caste, race religion or linguistic differences that make up the composite whole. For a newly formed postcolonial nation, the language of political transformation was one of compromise, emphasizing secularism and democracy at the expense of justice and redistribution. Hence, the dominant group, the upper castes Brahmins, stressed on “unity” through the logics of homogenized diversity. This excluded the subordinate groups defined by castes, races, and religions and helped in the consolidation of Brahminical hegemony in Indian political scenario.

The “unity in diversity” dominated the national identity consciousness for several decades, until the rise of the *Hindutva* in 80s, which challenged the cultural pluralism in unity discourse and sought to resurrect the narratives of a nation based on Hindu values and culture. This Hindu nationalism excluded the “Others” (non Hindus and lower castes) and constituted their vision of India based on the ideals of a Hindu nation. The denial of race and suppressing of caste was also prominent in *Hindutva* discourse. The *Hindutva*’s relationship with the “Other” is characterized by three, not necessarily mutually exclusive, approaches: constituting and containing the “Other” (the non Hindus and lower

castes); its marginalization; and finally exclusion. This is done, first, by accommodation, reinterpretation, and then appropriation of religiosity and traditions of non-Brahminic groups within “mainstream” Hindu fold in a subsidiary manner to enlist their support for the Brahminic *Hindutva* project. The second is the cooptation of Dalit by constructing powerful enemy images of Muslims in an attempt to bring Dalits under the total sway of Brahminic hegemony, and to ward off the possibilities of subordinate-caste breakaways. Even if Dalits are brought under the *Hindutva* fold, they do not find themselves achieving the same “status” or position as upper caste Brahmins. Through such logics of incorporation, the BJP is patently unable to address the perpetrators of Dalit oppression as Dalits constitute their support base and party membership. Therefore, under the BJP, the unequal caste structure is “unified” and “homogenized” across castes through diversion and incorporation of Dalits. Fear of loss of Brahminical hegemony has rationalized these strategies which aim to infuse Dalits with a sense of religious participation, injected with communalism (anti-Muslim) to further emphasize their Hindu-ness. For the Dalits, *Hindutva* provides the possibility of inclusion in upper caste rituals, and solidarity, as they channel their feelings of marginalization into the popularized movement that *Hindutva* has become in the 1990s. Yet, because caste hierarchies are replicated within the BJP fold, by aligning with it, Dalits effectively exchange one form of marginalization for another and are co-opted in their own subjugation. This is explained by the logics of Sanskritization, which enables the Dalits to deny their own subjugation.

Therefore, the postcolonial Indian nation was constituted through the denial of race and exclusion and/or elision of caste. The denials of race and elision or suppression

of caste foreclose an ability to make sense of the processes of racialization of subordinate communities, vis-a-vis the “Others,” the non-Hindus, the lower castes. In a sense, issues of race were denied but there, and constitutive but not seen or named aspect of the two discourses. The denial of race and elision of caste also subvert an understanding of the structuring of exclusion and oppression. The attempt to deny the insidious effects of race and suppress or ignore caste in both the national discourses has resulted in claims to “racelessness” and insignificance of caste, which are privileges that are only afforded to upper castes and particularly Brahmins. As a result, these denials and elision have led to a climate in Indian politics that invalidates claims of racism and casteism, as well as racialization, as bases of understanding historical processes of exploitation and exclusion, even in the face of racialized social relations operative in day to day life. Race and racism are unsettling terms in the context of postcolonial India as they were used by the British to colonize the Indians. To forget the trauma of colonial past, the term race and discussion of racism have not been named or seen as a part of the Indian national discourses since independence. Chakrabarty (1994) explains that the absence of usage of race and racism in India is a result of conviction that race is a Western concept and “racism is thought of as something the White people do to us. What Indians do to one another are variously described as ‘communalism,’ and ‘regionalism’ but never ‘racism’” (p. 1). Through the omission of both race and caste, an attempt has been made to deny “race privilege” or caste status of the upper caste in the Indian political realm. The postcolonial Indian nation dwells in its continuing struggle for national unity and recognition, and how to address the question of race and caste in order to diminish the reality of social inequality entrenched within the society is often left answered.

The dominant logics of race denial and caste elision or suppression that are embodied in the national discourses are pervasive, and most commonly accepted cultural ideology found in Indian society through public discussion, media, textbooks etc. For example, research by Shields and Muppidi (1996) and Uberoi (2002) has shown that Indian media have played a significant role in articulating “unity in diversity” and constituting an imagined Indian nation that is culturally pluralistic, yet, “united” as one nation. Rajagopal’s (2001) research has shown how the media, particularly television, helped to spread the message of *Hindutva* across nation’s diverse masses. Following Ono and Sloop (2002), I argue that the logics of the dominant discourses of race denial and caste elision or suppression are implicitly endorsed by the government bodies and because ideology is so thoroughly saturated in society, the logics of these dominant discourses take on the form of common sense. However, for the first time, the accusation that casteism is racism by a marginalized group, Dalit, challenged these dominant logics and made these logics, otherwise embedded and/or suppressed, visible. This historical review of the logics of national discourses helps to understand what is challenged and maps out how discrimination and exclusion are sustained by discursively suppressing caste and denying race. The specificity of the discourses of race denial and caste elision or suppression shift in response to the particular historical, socio-cultural and political forces at play. In my study, the historicity of discourse is a necessary concept because it provides for the spatio-temporality of any textual production and accommodates the diachronicity of discourse, that is, change or development in a linguistic system over a period of time or historical change. Gardiner (1992) argues that language “at any given moment of its historical existence represents the co-existence of socioideological

contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present” (p. 291). Research in which the historical nature of discourse is important includes van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999), whose discourse-historical methodology explores how certain types and genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change. Adapting Foucault (1972), Fairclough (1992) uses the concept of field to track the diachronic shifts in the “objective” world from text to text by looking at the “truth” attributed to texts over time. Texts are classified as belonging to a field of presence, concomitance, and memory (McKenna, 1999, extensively develops the notion as an analytical device). Fairclough (1992) argues that an intertextual perspective stresses the historicity of texts; how they constitute any additions to the existing language of communication consisting of prior texts to which they respond. Further, the intertextual perspective of the discourses is helpful in explaining the relatively stable networks of texts which move along, undergoing predictable transformations, as they shift from one text type to another (eg. political speeches are transformed into new reports). Moreover, the intertextual perspective is helpful in stressing that it is not just the text that intertextually constitute it, that shape interpretation, but also those other texts which the interpreter variably brings to the interpretation process. Therefore, the national logics of denials, exclusions and elisions embedded in the two national discourses provide a significant direction in understanding this shift, and analyzing the discourses of denial of racism and assertion that casteism is racism in the three main Indian newspapers in response to Dalits’ racism accusation at the WCAR.

The next two chapters provide critical analyses based on domains of discourse set out in the introduction. Chapter 4 analyses the dominant civic discourse that denies racism in response to Dalits' accusation that casteism is racism in the main newspapers, *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express* and *The Hindu*. Chapter 5 focuses on the discourse that asserts casteism is racism. The logics of caste and race in this chapter are analyzed to understand whether they work within or outside the dominant logics of caste, race and nation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCOURSE OF RACISM DENIAL: DOMINANT CIVIC DISCOURSE

The preceding chapter mapped out the logics of caste and race, which constituted the “imagined” postcolonial Indian nation in two competing national discourses; the “unity in diversity” created by the Congress party and the *Hindutva* evoked by the BJP party. The “unity in diversity” discourse constituted the Indian nation as a unified entity by superficially affirming cultural pluralism in India but ignoring the structural inequality of caste and the insidious divisions of race. The *Hindutva* discourse constituted the nation based on the cultural superiority of the Hindus through the exclusion of non-Hindus and lower castes as national internal “Others.” The *Hindutva* discourse likewise suppressed the possibility of addressing the inequalities of caste, and denied that its nation of India was steeped in racial imaginaries. These national logics of denials, exclusions and elisions in these two dominant discourses were publicly challenged for the first time since independence by the accusation that casteism is racism brought by the Dalits to the UN conference on racism. The analysis of the dominant logics of unity in diversity and *Hindutva* in the previous chapter provides starting points for the investigation of how the newspaper discourses reconstitute the Indian nation in response to the Dalit accusation. The research question driving this project probes into the discursive strategies and logics, which constitute the Indian nation in the three Indian newspapers, *The Times of India*, *The Hindu* and *The Indian Express*.

Following Fairclough (1991; 1992), I conducted critical readings of texts focusing on signification, the specific use of language such as the choice of words or phrases as well as articulation of larger themes. I also examined syntax, textual organization and



structure, and the composition of discourses in the three newspapers. To understand the implications of these discourses I relied on historical information, scholarly resources and my analytical intuitive knowledge to identify and interpret the discourses. Moreover, I utilized van Dijk's (1992) analytical set of denial of racism strategies to understand how the discourse responded to the accusation of racism. Finally, I worked with Ono and Sloop's (2002) critical insights about the logics and dynamics of civic discourse. My analysis of the three newspapers identified two competing civic discourses: a discourse that denied that casteism is racism and a discourse that asserted, albeit ambivalently and superficially, that casteism was racism. The discourse of denial of racism emerged as dominant because the logics and meanings of this discourse work under the most commonly accepted and institutionally supported cultural ideology that denies race and suppresses caste. This discourse is identified as dominant also because the newspapers devoted more space to the argument rejecting the accusation that casteism is racism and to quotes of government officials, who vehemently opposed the inclusion of caste at the UN conference on racism. In contrast, the oppositional view that casteism is racism received less space, and was framed out as a foil for the presentation of the dominant discourse. In this chapter, I concentrate on the dominant civic discourse of denial in order to examine how this discourse reconstituted the Indian nation by denying race and racism through reworking the logics of both the *Hindutva* and unity in diversity discourses. In the next chapter, I discuss the discourse that asserted that casteism is racism. These two discourses interact and intersect with each other. Fairclough (1992) describes this interaction as interdiscursivity where the discourses are constituted and shaped in relation to each other, and the meanings are constituted by drawing from existing meanings from

other texts. In other words, the discursive categories of the two civic discourses are both fixed and open, discrete yet overlapping and speak to each other. Further, these discourses are internally heterogeneous in terms of elements of discourse such as editorials, quotes, feature articles, language use and content. This governs the production of what counts as meaningful and/or true in the form of ideologies (Thompson, 1984; Eagleton, 1991; van Dijk, 1998). Consequently, ideologies become representations of aspects of the world that contribute to establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation. Moreover, as explained earlier, my study draws from existing discourses as the historicity of discourse provides for the spatio-temporality of any textual production and accommodates the diachronicity of discourse, that is, change or development in a linguistic system over a period of time or historical change. In other words, the concept of intertextuality sees texts as historically transforming the past, existing conventions and prior texts into the present, which creates possibilities for discursive changes as they might be linked to the wider processes of social and political change.

The dominant civic discourse that emerged from the newspapers centers on the denials of any similarities between caste and race. This discourse permeates coverage in the newspapers and reworks the extant dominant logics of caste, race and nation that deny race and elide or suppress caste. However, a deeper look at the discourse reveals that the strategies that are constructed to discount any similarity between caste and race, in effect, divert attention away from exposing the racist structure of caste and deny racism. Therefore, I argue that the denial of the similarity between caste and race is strategically used as a smokescreen for denying racism in India. The implicit denials of racism through

overt denial of similarities between caste and race in the mainstream newspapers reveal that contemporary racist discourses are strategically organized through disclaimers and other denials to deny racism. Following Fairclough's (1992) critical discourse analysis, this analysis reveals that the newspaper texts constitutively reproduce and maintain existing social relations and systems of knowledge and belief. This analysis identified pervasive discursive repertoires and rhetorical devices that are combined flexibly in the interest of the dominant majority group members to justify denials of racism (van Dijk 1993; 1997; Goldberg 1996; 1999). Following this, I argue that the discourse of denial of racism works persuasively toward re-constructing the logics of dominant, yet contradictory, postcolonial national discourses to recuperate the nation faced with a potential "embarrassment" on an international platform. In other words, the mainstream civic discourse flexibly combines existing, often contradictory, logics of national discourses to deny racism, rather than accept the destabilization of the meaning of the nation.

This mainstream mediated discourse represented in most of the articles appears to deny any similarity between caste and race; however, rather than denying the existence of caste, it affirms it as cultural practice. The discourse of denial works through four themes. The first theme dissociates caste from race by identifying and distinguishing between salient identity markers of caste and race. There are two logics that work here. One logic signifies caste with "pride," and the other assigns "skin color" to race to dissociate race from caste. Caste is imbued with pride and, in effect, is represented as individual and cultural, and the structural is thus depoliticized. By reducing race to skin color, and arguing that caste has nothing to do with skin color, race is defined in terms of a biological trait; this argument attempts to distinguish caste from race completely. Second,

government achievements on reservation policies are given primary salience, thereby arguing that the caste problem is remedied by affirmative policies. The strategy is to deflect any accusation of racism through positive representation of the government. The third theme resurrects the national anticolonial dichotomy of the evil West, the external “Other,” and the victim, the East. This strategy deflects attention from internal racism and blames the West and globalization for the East’s increasing dependency on the West’s globalizing influences. The fourth theme highlights the “unity in diversity” national logics that override divisions by race, caste and religion. The central concern of this theme is to safeguard “unity” and not let race talk “destabilize” the “united” nation. These themes establish the discourse of denial because they deny the inherent inequality of the caste system, and the discrimination and exclusions produced by it.

### **Salient Identity Markers of Caste and Race**

The first theme distinguishes caste from race by identifying and demarcating between salient identity markers of caste and race. Two logics work here that distinguish caste from race. On the one hand, caste is imbued with pride and distinguished from race because it is not based on skin color; on the other hand, it is argued that race is exclusively determined by skin color. In other words, the discourse signifies caste with “pride” and argues that pride is a unique feature of caste, and that it is shared and emulated apparently uniformly by all the members of the caste groups. This argument posits that pride is a cultural feature of caste and people of all caste groups wear this “pride” willingly. In contrast, the discourse argues that skin color is the salient identity marker for race and has nothing to do with caste. These two parallel arguments run

through this theme and discursively interact with each other to dissociate caste from race. I will first analyze them separately and then explain the interaction.

### ***Caste Pride: An Essence of Identity***

A distinct pattern of arguments that emerges in this theme strongly imbues caste with “pride.” The word “pride” repeatedly appears with caste in several articles. The discourse argues that individuals belonging to a caste group are distinctly proud of their caste affiliation and do not attempt to hide their caste status. Further, the logic of caste pride aims to detach shame from being a member of lower caste.

The logics of caste pride establish “pride” and “belonging” as salient attributes of caste. Moreover, it is argued that the more localized and particularized castes become, the greater is the commitment to caste loyalties. For example, an writes in *The Indian Express* (2001), “Individuals in the caste system are proud of their caste, traditions and the position within the caste.” This statement implies that no matter what caste one belongs to, one is “proud” of his caste, and moreover, the “position” the caste accords to a person is also a matter of pride. Specifically, this statement implies that the caste system endows an individual not only with his/her identity, but also gives a sense of belonging and status that come with the position of being an individual within the caste hierarchy. Further, this statement also implies that caste system is steeped in traditions that make individuals proud of who they are.

The inclination to extol caste pride is clearly embodied in an editorial in *The Times of India* (June 2001) that states, “Pride is an essential identity of caste in the society. Every caste has its position in the society and the caste of an individual gives him a sense of belonging and status.” This statement specifically argues that a person’s “sense

of belonging” and “status” is conferred by the caste to which he/she belongs. This statement not only attaches “pride” to caste, but also implies that one’s identity is defined by his/her caste. By doing so, it also implies that caste is indeed an important identity marker in the Indian society. In this way, consent to the caste system is being established through the association of pride with the identification of one’s caste position. The entire editorial constructs a position that attaches a sense of “pride” to caste. Such editorials are crucial in establishing or endorsing a point and direction of an argument because newspaper editorials give “the newspaper a chance to present its policies and beliefs” (Harris et al., 1992, p. 477). Again, in an article in *The Indian Express* (2001), a journalist writes, “Every caste member is proud of his or her caste standing. He carries this identity everywhere.” This statement goes a little further and makes “pride” an integral part of caste identity as an immutable and inflexible identity marker of an individual no matter where he or she is. Also, the use of the word “every” implies that both the upper caste and lower caste peoples attach pride to their caste affiliation. This argument completely ignores the fact that many caste members, particularly of lower castes, may not be too enthusiastic to claim their caste position because of the discrimination they face as members of a lower caste (Kannabarian, 2002).

The logics of caste pride are a basis of an argument that not only gives preponderance to one’s position in caste hierarchy, but also strips caste of any shame by quoting prominent government officials who profess being “proud” of their caste. For example, in an article in *The Times of India* (2001) a journalist writes, “one’s pride is attached to his caste affiliation and this pride is uniformly shared by all.” Again this statement uses the word “uniformly” which implies that irrespective of one’s membership

in a caste (upper or lower), he or she is proud of his/her caste. The entire article argues that caste pride is an important identity marker that is experienced by members of *all* caste groups and that also defines one's social standing. This position is significant as it implies that lower castes and Dalits experience the same amount of "pride" in their caste. In the same article, a quote from an official further strengthens this argument, "no caste accepts the notion that they are inferior. Individuals value the caste they belong to and do not hide it or feel ashamed of their castes." This statement on caste pride strips shame from caste by saying the individuals are not "ashamed" of their caste. In other words, it does not matter which caste one belongs to, even if it is the lowest caste such as Dalit, and there is no shame attached to being a Dalit. This implies that the common factor, "pride," is shared by all Indians irrespective of whether they are from an upper caste or lower caste. Through pride, a sense of cultural commonality is reconstructed among the national collective body, and the "shame" of being lower caste or a Dalit is obliterated.

To explain this detachment of shame from one's identity, I draw from Fortier's work on the politics of pride. In her work, Fortier (2005) argues that in Britain the politics of pride seek to eradicate shame by erasing certain histories, such as the history of imperialism and racism, so as to present the British as tolerant. She argues that the British rework their nation to claim that they have always been an inherently multicultural nation, which defies recent evidence that Britishness carries racial connotations. Drawing from Fortier's argument, I argue that the denial discourse reconstructs the cultural logic that all caste groups are equal and carry immense pride in their caste affiliation. By attaching pride to caste, which is supposedly experienced by *all*, the discourse is

subverting the inherently unequal distribution of status within the caste hierarchy, and thereby denying racism that is produced by the inequality among caste groups.

Glorification of pride as a common denominator of caste identity for lower castes and Dalits is noticeable when newspapers quote lower caste or Dalit. In an article in *The Times of India* (2001), justifying that caste is not race, a journalist writes, “How can you separate caste from pride? They go hand in hand.” This gives a clear indication of the inseparability of pride from caste as an identity marker. In the same article, this argument gains more power when a Dalit is quoted stating, “caste pride is integral to one’s identity” (ibid.). This statement stands in stark contrast to the status of Dalit in the caste system. Dalits are historically relegated to degrading occupations such as sewage collection and scavenging; are denied access to temples, village water resources and common land and are discriminated against in access to jobs, housing and purchasing of land (Guru, 1997). Further, a daily dose of humiliation is a constant reminder of their subordinate position in the social order, and “shame” is constantly attached to their status. However, by quoting a “proud” Dalit, the discourse employs what Schön (1983) calls the “logic of affirmation” through the testimony, to support the argument that “every” person from “every” caste group is proud of his caste position.

In another article in *The Indian Express*, an official is quoted as saying, “I belong to a low caste and I am proud of it” (June 2001). This statement again seeks to eradicate shame from “belonging” to a “low” caste, and implies that even though he is a lower caste member, he is not ashamed to acknowledge his caste affiliation. Lower caste people are often stigmatized in the Indian society due to their lower status in the caste hierarchy; by printing a direct quote in first person, this statement affirms one’s “pride” in “low”



caste. However, it is to be noted that the article does not mention what “low” caste this person belongs to. It does not affect the implication of the statement because by the very fact that he belongs to a “low” caste, he will typically not have the same status as a high caste member. Thus, someone from a low caste acknowledging pride in his caste is enough to drive home the fact that everyone is proud of his/her caste affiliation. Further, the article notes that “pride in one’s caste is an essential dimension of caste and everybody respects that” (ibid.). Here, the discourse affirms this argument by positively attaching pride to caste and erasing shame as a feature of attachment to caste. Moreover, the statement also implies that people “respect” their own and others’ caste identity. This also implies that higher castes “respect” lower caste peoples. This argument is further supported by placing affirming statements of upper caste members along the affirming statements of lower caste members. An official is quoted in the same article stating, “I carry my caste pride wherever I go. It is with me all the time. Why wouldn’t I acknowledge it?” Through his statement, pride is again affirmed as an immutable identity marker since the person carries caste “pride” “wherever he goes.” The article mentions at the end that the official belongs to a high caste, but does not mention the name of the caste. Not naming the caste of the MP signifies that the discourse is establishing a commonality among different caste groups by hiding the different positions and status that naming the caste will reveal. For example, a high caste person is not necessarily a Brahmin; he or she could be a Kshtriya or Vaishya, whose status and position are not as high as Brahmin.

Following Fortier’s (2005) work, I argue that in this case, the internal “Other,” (the lower caste) is used as a legitimate speaking subject that adds credibility to the claim

that “pride” is indeed a salient identity marker for all. In Fortier’s (2005) words, “the very recognition of others as legitimate speaking subjects forms those subjects in a particular way” (Fortier, 2005, p.562). Here, the declaration of pride by a member of lower caste functions as a personal testimony, and the speaker is portrayed as an exemplary figure who verifies that one’s sense of pride comes from one’s location in his/her caste. Thus, any possibility of difference among the upper and lower caste groups is foreclosed by having a legitimate speaker from the lower caste affirming pride in his caste along with speakers from upper castes. Specifically, if a lower caste member claims that his “lower” caste status is a matter of pride, just as an upper caste member would claim, then a commonality is being established between the two caste groups. In this way, the “Other” is included and *seen* to speak out as a proud subject of a lower caste. Their declarations of pride function as personal testimonies, while at the same time the speakers are presented as exemplary figures of lower castes. However, their recognition as legitimate speaking subjects reconstitutes them as “Other,” as it is important to have the internal “Other” speak out in order support and maintain the upper caste agenda that claims that pride is an essential caste identity marker. Talking the talk of caste allegiance and pride makes the “Other” one of “us,” and the lower caste “status” is rendered irrelevant. So, the very fact that the internal “Others” are represented in the news discourse as speaking subject to legitimize caste pride acts as counternarrative to the accusation of racism by Dalits, and constitutes the Indian nation of happy and “proud” members. The use of their declarations within the context of the public outcry against a presumed attack on national tolerance and caste pride re-constitutes the speakers in a particular way.

The most significant implication of attaching “pride” to caste is that by doing so, the discourse undermines the inherent systemic superiority-inferiority equation attached to the caste “system.” By repelling shame from caste, the discourse erases possible significance of shame to members of lower castes, who face rampant stigmatization. Shame that is associated with lower caste is replaced with pride that is owned by the individuals of lower and upper castes alike. Through this construction, the newspapers attempt to empty caste of all discriminatory power by portraying caste as a matter of cultural tradition and individual identity that are embraced by all caste groups. A closer look at the underlying logics reveals that arguments are used as strategies to deny unequal distribution of “status” and “respectability” among caste hierarchy and, hence, deny racism on the basis of the structural inequality. By attaching pride to caste, which is argued to be experienced by the members of *all* caste groups, and by reducing caste pride to an individual identity marker, the strategy is to depoliticize caste and rework the Indian nation as one where people share a sense of commonality through “pride” in their caste status. Through this strategy of establishing commonality, the systemic racism of the unequal caste structure is implicitly denied. In other words, by placing caste pride as an individual identity marker, the discourse sustains institutionalized discrimination and subjugation of the caste system. The placement of racism in individual ratifies the existing inequalities and injustices. The individualistic understandings of racism connote that individuals are ‘agents’ of their existence. The notion of agency, however, implies “blame” not only for one’s racial domination of others, but also for one’s failure to overcome such domination. As a result, an agentic notion of racism is troublesome for many scholars, who can point to the obdurateness and permanency of racial

classifications and the discrimination that results from them. As Omi and Winant (1994) argue, racism can be characterized as the process of racial formation, which explains how race is constructed and transformed sociohistorically through competing political projects and through the “necessary and ineluctable link between structural and cultural dimensions of race” (p. 27). In other words, they argue that racism exists because these political projects create or reproduce structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race, implying a link between micro and macro levels of racism.

As presented above, the arguments of “caste pride” work within the dominant logic of caste consciousness as caste “pride” allows the higher castes to preserve the hierarchical nature of caste, and maintain discriminatory attitude and behavior toward individuals situated in lower caste groups. At the same time, by glorifying “caste pride,” caste is strategically depoliticized and made individual. By doing so, the discourse fails to address either the systemic inequality charged by the Dalits, or the social norms and prescriptions that subordinate individuals across caste groups. It also ignores and trivializes the fact that the Indian nation is discursively constituted by an inherently unequal and oppressive caste system. It problematically de-emphasizes the structural conditions (hierarchical rules) of caste that discriminate individuals and charges that caste is available and significant to *all* people and not just Brahmins or Dalits.

In effect, the discourse inadvertently reveals that caste inequality operates through dominance and constitutes the nation through depoliticization of the caste “system.” In other words, through the construction of caste pride as a commonality experienced by all, and constituting a nation where all are equal, the unequal caste system is maintained and reified. The implication is that if everyone is proud of who he or she is, then there is no

basis for the question of inequality, discrimination and exclusion This mainstream logic of caste pride reinstates not only the patriarchal and institutionalized nature of the caste system, and the entrenched hegemony of the upper castes in the society but also in the Indian political structure, particularly in the BJP's party membership. The strategy of affiliating caste with "pride" also puts the Dalits "in their place" within the *Hindutva* fold, since the incorporation of Dalits is undertaken not to overhaul the ideological dominance of upper caste but to manipulate and co-opt them into their own subjugation (Baber, 2004; Maclean, 1999). Caste domination is restored through marginalizing Dalits in their subordinate positions and also by excluding them from participation in any political decisions. This further forecloses Dalits' and other lower castes' access to participation in democratic decision making. Involvement in upper-caste activities gives the Dalits an illusory belief in an immediate uplifting within a Hindu society on an individual basis, but not necessarily the social uplifting of the Dalit "caste" as a whole. The illusion of uplifting rests upon the belief that Dalits can elevate their caste status by involving themselves in upper caste activities such as performing rituals and par taking in politics. However, it is an illusion because their participation in upper caste activities does not allow them to achieve the same status as the upper caste. A Dalit remains a Dalit forever because he is *born* into the Dalit caste. And if "pride" is associated with their caste status, then they will never be able to abandon their caste. Here a casteist Indian nation is associated with pride, and shame is rejected, thereby preventing the issue of racism from coming into the picture. By rejecting shame, the "anger" or the discontentment of the Dalits toward the upper caste racism is silenced or averted. In other

words, the history of racism by upper castes is averted by apparently erasing shame from being a Dalit or a lower caste member.

***Race is about Skin Color, Caste is Not***

While caste is signified with pride, a parallel argument claims that in a racially segregated society, a person's race ( Black or White) is determined by his/her skin color as the salient identity marker. To distinguish race from caste, the discourse asserts that skin color has nothing to do with caste. On the basis of this dissimilarity in identity markers of caste and race, the discourse rejects the notion that caste is race. The newspapers give more space to the argument that skin color has nothing to do with race, than to the argument that skin color is a salient attribute of race. As Entman (1993) suggests, framing involves selection and salience, where some aspects of perceived reality are given more salience to promote a particular issue. In this case, in an effort to promote caste's distinction from race and skin color, the newspapers emphasize that caste is not about skin color.

Explaining why skin color is the most salient attribute of race, an article in *The Times of India* (15 February 2001) quotes an official as saying, "it does not matter if the person is from Belgium, Germany, or Holland as long as the person is White. One can recognize he is White by looking at him." This statement implies that a geographical location of a person is unimportant, and irrespective of where he/she comes from, he/she can be identified as "White" based on the color of his/her skin. This also shows that by White, the speaker means only skin color and not the other attributes that are attached to being White. This article reduces race to skin color in a racially segregated society, particularly in the West. The article then argues that caste is not based on skin color,

which implies that it is neither race nor racist and should not be addressed at the UN racism conference. In another article in *The Indian Express* (25 June 2001) an official is quoted as stating, “A White person is a White person in any geographical location, and it does not matter whether he comes from Western Europe or America. He can be identified anywhere.” The writer then further contends that likewise, “to be considered Black, it is not at all important, or relevant, to know whether the person is from Botswana or from Nigeria” (ibid.). The argument asserts that one knows whether a person is Black or White just by looking at him or her, regardless of where the person comes from. In other words, the reasoning attributes a person’s race to only one physical characteristic, that is, skin color. Further, the article makes a distinction between race and caste by arguing that no one can identify a person’s caste just by looking at him. Through this assertion, the discourse strategically moves away from the signification of any physical or “fixed” immutable characteristic such as color of skin or nature of hair in caste distinctions. On the other hand, by suggesting that just being White or Black (where the identity is based on the lightness or darkness of their skin color) is enough to identify a person, the arguments reveal that the “race” (which is falsely attributed to just skin color) of the person is important anywhere and everywhere, irrespective of a person’s geographical location. An article in *The Times of India* (20 June 2001) also advances this argument when it states that, “Any further sub-classification of race is not necessary, one’s appearance is all that is required.” This implies that just by looking at a person and his/her physical characteristics, one can determine his/her race. In other words, a person is immediately classified into a particular race by his or her physical appearance and that is sufficient to identify one’s race. Through this logic, the discourse establishes race as a

biological construct and strategically edits out the complex social significations of race. In fact, race scholars long ago rejected the notion that race is an objective essence based on biology and classification of phenotypes (Omi & Winant, 1994). Race is a historically and socially constructed phenomenon that has been manipulated by various social actors to mobilize specific meanings and interpretations for racial categories in order to accomplish specific political goals. By reducing race to skin color, the discourse ignores the fluidity with which race manifests itself in different contexts (Flores, 2002; Goldberg, 2002; 2006).

A parallel argument that caste is not about “skin color,” emerges to justify caste’s dissociation from race. *The Times of India* published an article by eminent sociologist Dipankar Gupta (18 August 2001). Other newspapers have also built an argument that separates skin color from caste by drawing specifically from Gupta’s work. The newspapers’ reliance on academicians for the construction of logics of skin color exemplifies van Dijk’s (1995) argument that elite discourse reproduces dominantly held logics and justifies racism through various strategies of denial. This also exemplifies the ability of powerful individuals and groups to act as “primary definers” of the news agenda (Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995). In the newspaper article Gupta argues that, “the early Indologists misread the Vedic texts and interpreted that the Vedic texts distinguish between fair skin and dark skin peoples” (Gupta, 2001). Gupta’s statement points out that the manner in which Indologists have portrayed the Vedic texts’ distinction between the dark skinned and fair skinned peoples of India is highly disputable. In the *Vedas* (the religious script), the different castes are assigned color; for example, Brahmins are associated with white or light color and Shudras (the lowest caste)



are associated with black or dark color (Srinivas, 1965). Referring to this color dimension of caste, Gupta further continues in the newspaper article that, “What is interpreted as ‘fair skin’ in the *Vedas* can easily mean, and most probably did mean, ‘light,’ in which case it was not a matter of skin complexion but of light of knowledge” (ibid.). Gupta contends that the word “light” has been misinterpreted in the *Vedas* and that it should have been interpreted as “light of knowledge” and not as a shade of skin color. This implies that both “light” and “knowledge” are assigned to Brahmins, and “darkness” assigned to Shudras. This, however, maintains the racial hierarchy of color where white or “light” stands for superior. This discourse attempts to preclude this conclusion by strict references to skin color. The superiority inferiority ideology of caste hierarchy is exemplified in another statement by Gupta, “The Brahmins or the Aryans are dispenser of knowledge and that is why they are assigned a light color, while the Shudras are assigned a darker colour because they were the receiver of knowledge” (*The Times of India* 18 August 2001). This statement clearly establishes the superiority of the Brahmins, and positions the Shudras as inferior to the Brahmins in caste hierarchy. This statement also demonstrates that the caste system is based on an inherently superiority/inferiority ideology, which discriminates and excludes lower caste peoples as inherently inferior and separate (Reddy, 2005).

*The Hindu* published an article by Andre Beteille, and described him as an eminent sociologist, a Professor at the Delhi School of Economics, an elite institution. Beteille’s status as an eminent sociologist aids in the construction and strengthening of the separation of color consciousness from caste. In other words, the logics gain power from the credibility rooted in Beteille’s prominent status as a professor. In his article,

Beteille writes that the Brahmins believed that “they were the carriers of light, and that is how they dispelled the darkness and ignorance that reigned during ancient times” (Beteille, 10 March 2001). Beteille’s statement suggests that Brahmins took it upon themselves to spread “light” and dispel “darkness” from non-Brahmin tribes or groups. This clearly injects the superiority and inferiority quotient between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, where non-Brahmins were the inferior group who needed help from the Brahmins to lift them from their “darkness,” positioning the Brahmins in a paternalistic role towards non-Brahmins. One needs to look only at the *Varna* system (caste system) to understand the color dimensions in caste. The *Varna* system differentiates between the four castes on the basis of the *gunas*, or qualities, of each. For example, the superior qualification is arbitrarily assigned to the Brahmin, the highest caste, which takes it upon itself to enlighten the uneducated (Kothari, 1999). Panini (2000) notes that the Brahmin, occupying the highest status, are associated with the color white, which is taken to represent the “*satva*” *guna* (truth or pure quality). As one moves down the hierarchy, one descends to the darkness implied in the “*tamas*” *guna* (dark or impure quality) where darkness and ignorance are represented by the color black, associated with the Shudras (ibid.). Although it is true that there are dark-skinned members of the upper castes and Brahmins (due to the intermingling of different castes), dark skin is almost always associated with lower castes because of the age-old perception that upper castes are fairer and more enlightened than the dark-skinned lower castes, the unenlightened (Das, 1998). This confirms that just as racial categories are essentialized as immutable, inheritable, and quasi-biological behavioral attributes, caste groups are also essentialized and

racialized on the basis of differences identified through quasi-biological overtones, such as fair, upper-caste Brahmins and dark, lower-caste non-Brahmins.

Through the denial of the “color” component of caste, the discourse projects India as “race-blind,” as well as color blind. The discourses revealed that a certain “caste pivoting” is being enacted in the Indian political and social context (Halualani et al. 2006). Caste pride is employed while the skin color is suppressed in this context to dissociate caste from race. These distinctions are made clear by highlighting certain characteristics of caste and race in an attempt to make race external and a western concept. However, Deshpande (2002) explains that color functions as an indelible marker of caste ancestry, and thus racial belonging and the racially informed conceptions of color determine the social position of individuals within the caste hierarchy. Therefore, by dissociating skin color signification from caste, the possibility of addressing discrimination based on skin color in Indian society, which is inseparable from caste position, is undermined. By assigning skin color to the race of Whites and Blacks in the West only, and by not assigning caste, the discourse evokes a narrow conception of race, which precludes the possibility of seeing how it operates through various significations and how the meanings of race are reconstituted and refashioned both through the administrative policies of the state, and by social actors to suit their own experiences and needs (Goldberg, 2002; Halualani, 2006). Moreover, this simplistic generalization of race ignores how race is enacted in various geographical locations, a consideration that should be taken into account as suggested by Goldberg (2006). He insists on analyzing the embeddedness of race in its specific context in order to understand its origins and its manifestation in a particular geographical location. Also, by arguing that a White or

Black person is a White or Black person in any geographical location, the newspapers construct race as an unalterable characteristic, rather than as a fluid social construct that changes over time under different contexts with little or no biological basis. The works of cultural studies and critical studies scholars (Omi & Winant, 1994; 1997, 2000; Hall, 1997; Goldberg, 2002, 2006) inform the understanding of race as discursively produced. These scholars theorize race as both a structural formation and a lived social identity. Omi and Winant (1994) recognize that as a complex issue, race is not just tied to skin color but entails a wide repertoire of cultural meanings and significations through which racial exclusions are enacted. However, an inaccurate, simplistic generalization reducing race to skin color forecloses the possibility of seeing its operation in the caste system.

Further, the discourse strategically constructs an argument that dissociates color consciousness from caste by emulating the Brahmins' task to enlighten the uneducated, mainly the lower castes. Some articles in the newspapers refer to Gupta and Beteille's analyses, and attempt to reinterpret the *Vedas*. While justifying why skin color is not relevant to caste, the infamous religious book, *Manusmriti* is referred to and reinterpreted repeatedly. *Manusmriti* is only one religious book out of many that prescribes rules that guide the life of a Hindu. For example, elaborating on the question of skin color and its relationship with caste, a BJP MP, L. Bhagat, is quoted in an article in *The Times of India* ( 2 June 2001) where he contends that "Even if the word '*Varna*' is interpreted as color, it does not automatically translate into skin color of caste groups." This statement partially suggests that *Varna* could be interpreted as color; however, the meaning of *Varna* does not translate into color by default. Further, he explains, "each order was supposed to have a color pennant of its own, as they represented different phases of the sun's journey

around the earth.” This argument is grounded in cultural logics that the rising sun, the grandest of all, is red, and this color is given to the ruling Kshatriyas (Kothari, 1994; 1995). Further, Brahmins are signified by the red color of the sun in the morning, Kshatriyas by the color of the sun at noon, Vaishyas by the evening sky, and finally Shudras by a dark color signifying the night sky (ibid.). This signifies that the Shudras are assigned a darker color than the Brahmins and Kshatriyas who are assigned brighter colors. Working within the same logic, a journalist explains in an article in *The Indian Express* (4 June 2001) that to extrapolate racial segregation from factual material of “this caste order is indeed farfetched” because one needs to take into account “the order meaning of *Varna* system.” This statement argues that in Sanskrit, *Varna* means both color and order and to give salience only to skin color is fallacious because this is not what the original scripture meant. In another article in *The Indian Express* (“Caste at...” 29 May 2001), a journalist writes, “the term *Varna* in the *Vedas* (Hindu holy scripture) need not necessarily mean skin color; *Varna* can also refer to order.” This statement reinterprets the meaning of the word *Varna* as “color” and “order.” The journalist argues that since *Varna* has two meanings, it is incorrect to say that *Varna* is all about color. If the “order” meaning of *Varna* is taken into account, then the four *Varnas* signify that the society is hierarchically stratified along four orders, with Brahmin at the top, Kshatriya and Vaishya in the middle and Shudras at the bottom. In essence, the statement does not reject the “orders” within the caste system, that is, the hierarchical stratification inherent within the system. It is clear from these arguments that *Varna* has both the “color” and “order” meanings attached to it, however, attempts are being made to detach skin color consciousness from caste to distinguish it from “race.” In other words, although *Varna*

can mean either “color” or “order,” the meaning of “order” is given primacy over the meaning of “color.” Here, the discourse clearly gives prominence to the hierarchical “order” sense of *Varna*, and undermines “color” as a salient meaning of *Varna*. This detaches any racial significance of “color” from caste.

For centuries, these logics perpetuated racism in the caste system via overt and covert means. The underlying logics represented in the newspapers are not about distinguishing caste from race, but about denying racism itself. The logics informing the discourse aim to omit and obliterate the main issue of racism and discrimination that Dalits are fighting. What is essentially happening in the newspaper discourse is an “antiracial” construction, which denies racism through the complete rejection of the category of race. However, caste is not denied, and contrary to the assertions in this discourse, attaching cultural pride to caste cannot successfully argue that the caste “system” does not perpetuate racism. However, the arguments reinstate the cultural logics of having pride in one’s caste, and this strategically deflects, and diverts attention from the subjugation of the lower castes within the caste system. The discourse denies any association between caste and race and by doing so, the logics articulate an ideological commitment to *Hindutva* and unity in diversity, both of which have strategically removed explicit references to “race” from their discourses. However, denying the existence of race does not effectively eliminate discriminatory treatment or the reproduction of social inequality among castes through racism, as racism continues to function within Indian society through the religiously and culturally sanctioned unequal caste system.

The next theme builds an argument concentrating on the positive representation of the government’s reservation policies and their beneficial effects on lower castes.

## **Reservation Policies – Isolation Through Inclusion**

The discourse constructs another significant argument that appraises the government's reservation policies for lower castes (Schedule Caste and Tribes) as evidence of progress. Most articles in the three newspapers studied generally argue that the government reservation or affirmative policies have helped the lower castes and tribal peoples. These arguments are embedded within articles that deny any association between caste and race, and are part of this theme because extolling government policies adds power to the discourse of denial of racism. Most articles constructing this positive representation of the government add considerable depth to the argument by detailing the government's reservation policies. This detailing, in effect, increases the salience of the reservation policies and their beneficial effects on lower castes and Dalits. As Entman (1983) and Kahnman and Tversky (1984) argue, information is structured in a way to increase the salience or significance of individual elements within the news story for news consumers. Thus, salience is given to the reservation policies and their beneficial effects on lower castes, compared to the counter arguments that reservation policies do not necessarily uplift the conditions of the lower castes.

Praising the government's reservation policies, some articles present considerable quotes from government officials stating that several land reform policies have not only benefited the lower castes, but have also significantly improved their economic condition. For example, in an article in *The Indian Express* (19 July 2001), a government official is quoted as stating, "India has done everything to secure the welfare of the lower castes, and the reservation policies are symbols of social progress." The statement links "India" with social progress to the effect that the welfare of the downtrodden within the nation is

well taken care of by the government. In other words, reservation policies are extolled as an effective way to ensure the welfare of the lower castes. In this way, the government is portrayed as having lower castes' interests in mind. The article takes the position that the reservation policies have benefited the lower castes; especially in securing state government jobs, and that this is a positive step in the uplifting of the poorer communities. For example, the article states that there has been a 15% increase in the recruitment of lower caste members for government-sponsored small-scale industries since 1999 (ibid.). In effect, any question or attack on unequal treatment of lower caste and Dalits is lessened because the policies are formulated especially for the ones who need them the most. Here the discourse clearly shows that there is an "uplifting" of the lower castes due to reservation policies. However, the discourse points towards an uplifting in the economic status due to accessibility of jobs, but does not comment on the "social" upliftment of the lower caste status. The advancement in "economic" status does not necessarily translate into upliftment of "social" status of the Dalits. In a feature article titled "Contemporary caste, Durban and reservation policy in India," in *The Times of India* (20 May 2001), a "political correspondent" explains that "For the effective implementation of the various safeguards provided in the Constitution for the SCs and STs, as well as the various other protective legislations, the Constitution has provided for the appointment of a Special Officer under Article 338." The statement asserts that the government has designated special officers to solely look after the implementation of welfare and reservation policies directed at the lower castes and Dalits, implying that Dalits and lower castes are well taken care of by the government. Further, the article explains that the Special Officer, designated as the Commissioner for SCs and STs, is



also assigned the duty of investigating all matters that safeguard the interests of SCs and STs, and makes recommendations to the government pertaining to the immediate needs of these communities. The article revolved around the argument that since “Constitutionally sanctioned laws have protected the rights of Dalits and other lower castes and advanced their status, it is incorrect to associate race with caste now” (ibid.). This means that the Constitution has guaranteed protection of the rights available to the Dalit and lower caste, however, the arguments in the texts do not explain what these specific rights are. The statement implies that such “rights” guaranteed by the Constitution have ensured that the *status* of the lower castes and Dalits have improved in the society. Again, the discourse does not explain whether the “advancement of status” includes advancement of social, cultural and religious status of the Dalits in the caste hierarchy. Also, the incorporation of “reservation policies” in the headline is important to note, as the headlines strategically filter information to mitigate understanding and interpretation of subsequent information (Entman, 2004; van Dijk, 1988, 1991). In this case, the newspapers are drawing attention to the reservation policies. This strategy discredits the accusation of Dalits that they face extreme form of discrimination within the Indian society because of their caste *status*.

Another article in *The Indian Express* (24 March 2001) argues, “with the help of reservation in government jobs and education, Dalits have come to participate in mainstream.” The statement suggests that a marginalized community such as Dalits has benefitted tremendously from reservation policies and programs initiated by the government and this has enabled them to be a part of the “mainstream” population. There is an implicit “common ground” assumption here that the occupations and jobs that are

secured through proper education and skills are naturally available to the upper castes as they comprise the educated populace of the country. By default, then, they also comprise the “mainstream” population. Fairclough (1992) argues that the implicit assumption in text is a pervasive property of text, as no form of social communication or interaction is conceivable without such common grounds. This assumption about “mainstream” population also inadvertently shows that Dalits were marginalized before and have remained outside mainstream India. However, the discourse works toward foregrounding the positive effects of reservation policies rather than highlighting Dalits’ exclusion from the mainstream population. For example, the article argues that Dalits’ engagement in the mainstream population “is a huge step towards social progress for Dalits and the nation as a whole that ensures equal treatment for all” (ibid.). Here, the discourse argues for a “social progress” of the Dalits, however, strategically does not elaborate upon what this social progress entails. Not only does the discourse attach social progress to Dalits, but also attaches it to the Indian nation as a whole. This helps in portraying the Indian nation as a welfare nation that guarantees the equal rights for all. In essence, the portrayal discredits Dalits’ claim that India can be racist towards the Dalits.

What seems quite evident from the arguments about reservation policies is that the contention is to deny any claims of racism by constituting the Indian nation as a nation of equality and justice for all with special attention given to the weaker sections of the society by the government. By portraying the government’s achievements in a positive light, the newspapers strategically constitute equitable participation of all communities and this helps in obscuring the entrenched systemic inequality within the society (van Dijk, 1992). The reality remains, however, that even if lower castes and

Dalits can secure jobs due to reservation quotas, that does not mean their “social status” within the caste hierarchy is advanced or becomes the same as that of Brahmins (Kothari, 1995). However, by arguing that the constitution has provided “rights” to lower castes, the newspapers construct an argument that falsely implies that lower castes have equal rights and face no discrimination.

Such arguments run through most of the articles on reservation policies and some articles quote prominent government officials to validate this positive representation. For example, an official in *The Times of India* (16 August 2001) is quoted, “the Indian Government has introduced a series of measures to give lower castes access to education and non-traditional jobs.” This statement implies that the reservation policies have helped lower castes in securing government jobs and seats in educational institution and this has brought about changes in the demographics of government job holders and in educational institutions. Further, it also indicates that there is an upliftment of lower castes in terms of their socioeconomic status as a result of affirmative policies designed specifically for them. This quote appears in an article that argues that caste should not be discussed at the UN racism conference. So, this testimony from a government official “affirms” the positive representation of the government and beneficial effects of reservation policies (Schön, 1983). Other articles explain how the measures such as reserving quotas for the lower castes have been incorporated within the Indian constitution, so as to enable Scheduled Castes (SC, Dalits fall within this group) and Scheduled Tribes (ST, tribal peoples of India), who tend to be among the economically underprivileged classes, to enter the mainstream of national life, and to facilitate their intermingling with the rest of the Indian population. Quotes from the government officials are positioned to support this

argument. For example, a government official is quoted in an article in *The Hindu* (29 July 2001), “the government follows a policy of reservations in the favor of underprivileged to ensure their equitable participation in governance.” The statement indicates that the creation of jobs through reservations has been beneficial, as they “ensure” “equitable” participation for SC and ST in the political process of the country. This also implies that if the lower castes are economically sound, they can have an opportunity to participate in the “governance.” The use of the word “ensure” is significant, as it implies that the Indian government has secured or guaranteed the “rights” of the Dalits through the policies of reservation. In this sense, it implies that the government is a protector of the lower castes and their welfare has a priority on the government agenda. However, this is a fallacious argument because social status of lower castes or equality with the upper castes is not directly and exclusively linked to their economic upliftment (Kothari, 1995). The representation of quotes in the articles reflects an extant belief in India among the upper caste that the post-independence ascendancy of non-Brahmins in the political and administrative fields represents a fundamental change in the socioeconomic conditions of lower castes (Michael, 1999). In other words, since there has been a considerable increase in the number of non-Brahmins in the Indian political and administrative fields due to reservation policies, the upper castes believe that the policies have advanced the socioeconomic conditions of lower castes in general. Though the article in *The Hindu* (29 July 2001) in general represents positively the government’s reservation policies, it nevertheless takes a position that supports affirmative action in private sectors. This demonstrates that the newspaper is clearly giving a voice to the growing demand, particularly by lower castes (not just

Dalits), for some kind of reservation policy for the private sector of the economy. As a result of these demands, initiatives have been taken by the government to implement reservation in private sectors. First such initiative was the Madhya Pradesh government decision in 2002 to provide a share to the SC/ST in the government contract and the Maharashtra government went a step ahead and passed an Act for reservation in private sector employment (Thorat & Arayma, 2006). However, this issue is not directly related to the accusation of racism by the Dalits.

By and large, the logics of beneficial effects of reservation policies and positive representation of government work toward establishing an argument that the reservation policies can “look after” or “take care” of lower castes, safeguarding their interests effectively through compensatory discrimination. This positive representation of the government helps in normalizing dominating and paternalistic instincts of the upper caste elites who are the power holders and who decide which caste gets compensatory benefits (Dholakia, 2002). The paternalistic attitude is evident in this statement by an official in an article in *The Times of India* (4 March 2001), “the framers of the Indian Constitution incorporated in the Constitution itself provisions for affirmative action or compensatory discrimination as people call it. This was done by providing for reservation of jobs for Dalits in government employment and reservation of seats for them in educational institutions. This ensures lower castes are well taken care of.” The statement explains that the framer of the constitution of India was Ambedkar (himself a Dalit), who made certain arrangements for the upliftment of the backward classes and castes so that they can enjoy a humane lifestyle. Further, the statement posits that more provisions are added to the constitutional provision, which allows the state governments to make any special

provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the SCs and STs. This implies that it is not just the duty of the central government but also the respective state governments to “take care” of the SC and ST groups. Further, the official argues that the explicit constitutional principle of “compensatory discrimination casts duty upon the state to promote the interests of the weaker sections of the society, and redresses the historical disadvantage of the weaker sections” (ibid.) This article by and large argues that the government policies have strengthened the lower caste groups and the Constitution has especially provided reservations in educational institutions for the backward classes and castes and for this reason, caste cannot be equated with race and discussed at Durban. In the above mentioned quote, the Attorney General admits that the lower castes have experienced historical disadvantage in terms of accessing economic resources. However, by confining the SC, Dalits and OBCs within paternalistic reservation “quotas,” the policies are made to “look after” or “take care” of Dalits and lower castes by enabling the upper castes to “control” over “weaker sections” of the society. This implies that the upper castes still control who can benefit from the reservation “quota.” The repetitive use of “look after” or “take care” or “quotas” or “beneficial” in relation to reservation policies present a particular view of reservation policies that are designed specifically for lower castes’ welfare for equitable distribution of resources. It exemplifies the textual feature of hyponymy, in which repeated words and phrases, and thus their meanings, are interchangeable (Fairclough, 1989). In this case, “look after” or “take care” or “quotas” or “beneficial” are substitutes for reservation policies. Consequently, the use of the term “reservation policies” comes to mean beneficial to lower castes. Further, by quoting

government officials considerably, the newspaper seeks to add credibility of the news content and influence public opinion. This reiterates Paletz and Entman's (1981) argument that the subjects, sources, and interpreters of the news are usually politicians and government officials whose activities can influence citizens.

The general argument constructed in the newspapers on reservation policies can be summed up in this statement in an article in *The Times of India* (21 January 2001), "the Indian state has made explicit use of multiple remedies against discrimination (in the form of legal measures and Reservation policy) in employment, education and political and civil spheres to look after the welfare of Dalits and SC & ST." Here again, "India" is constructed as a paternalistic figure who "looks after" the best interests of those who need help, meaning, the weaker sections of the society (lower castes). In another article in *The Indian Express* (21 February 2001), a central government official is quoted, "the lower castes and Dalits have been provided considerable concessions and facilities for their upliftment by the government. It is a duty of the democratic state to ensure equitable distribution of resources and look after those who are the weaker sections of the society." Once again, the language of this statement, especially use of words and phrases such as "duty" or "look after" constructs the Indian government as paternalistic and holding powers to grant the lower castes reservations for jobs. Further, the article gives a nuanced detailing of the extent and reach of the reservation policy in India. However, the newspaper does not discuss how these reservation quotas are distributed among various lower castes groups or the various criteria that need to be met for a SC or ST to avail the benefits of the quota system.

While the government is constructed as paternalistic and possessing power to confer “benefits” to lower castes and Dalits, contrary to that, the newspapers construct Dalit subjects as the “weaker” section of the society whose fate is dependent on policies, “quotas” and “concessions” from the government. Further, the arguments are mostly focused on “lower” castes, SC, and ST and not specifically on Dalits. Dalits, being at the lowest rung of caste hierarchy, face the maximum discrimination and exclusion (Omvedt, 1998). In other words, the nature and extent of discrimination that Dalits face may be very different from other caste groups. By not focusing specifically on the Dalit problems, the discourse marginalizes the “Dalit” cause. The omission and suppression of the Dalit as a subject in this argument suggests that newspapers are aiming to discount any claims by Dalits on caste discrimination and racism experienced specifically by them. This suggests that the mainstream news discourse suppresses the opposing views as the articles that construct a positive representation of the government are written in response to the Dalit accusation of racism (Parenti, 1986). Most of these articles concentrate on elucidating the far reaching beneficial effects of contemporary reservation policies on the lower castes. This clearly suggests that reservation policies and positive representation of the government are used as strategies to deny racism in India (van Dijk, 1992).

By ignoring the fact that the lower castes may not possess enough skills to access the benefits of reservation quota, the discourse ignores the entrenched social inequality in India where a large number of lower castes are illiterate and lack skills to acquire jobs in a market driven economy. According to van Dijk (1992), denial of racism (in this context, also casteism) through positive self-representation of the government as



constructed in the newspapers has significant implications. This glorification of the government policies emphasizes that the discourse strategically portrays the Indian government as representing national interests, the upper-castes, as well as that of the Dalits and lower castes. Therefore, if the government is portrayed as considerate, and tolerant towards lower castes and Dalits, then it becomes more difficult for the Dalits and other lower castes to challenge existing inequalities, take unified action, and gain credibility and support among other upper-caste peoples and international communities. Through the positive representation of government policies, the structural similarities between race and caste are subverted and the racist system that perpetuates discrimination and subjugation is also elided. The positive self-representation creates an illusion that Dalits and lower castes in contemporary India are better off. Moreover, by portraying the government's reservation policies in a positive light, the government is portrayed as a protector of Dalit rights and privileges.

Dholakia (2002) argues that along with being paternalistic, reservation policies are also isolationist as they are politically inspired to "mark" or "identify" lower castes who fall under the quota system. This is exemplified in this statement in a feature article on "Reservation policies and contemporary caste" in *The Indian Express* (2 May 2001), "the SC and ST can avail quota system with identity papers in wide variety of institutions including educational institutions." The verb choice of "can avail" emphasizes the fact that there are options and choices available to Dalits and other lower castes because of reservation policies. The statement explains that Dalits and lower castes (SC and ST), are eligible to take advantage of reservation quota with "identity papers," which are signified as a "mark" of their identity that distinguishes them from the upper castes. The

reservation system confines the lower castes within protected boundaries and they are forever marked or identified by their caste status because they are the ones who mention their caste affiliation to claim reservation benefits. Therefore, reservation policies ensure that lower castes remain significantly attached to its individual ascriptive status, giving them a sense of “identity” through caste affiliation (Kothari, 1995). In this way, reservation functions as an identity marker and group category for lower castes who carry their caste “marker,” and are isolated to be easily separated from the upper castes. Through the construction of reservation policies as beneficial to lower castes, the discourse ignores, excludes or suppresses the issue that casteism or discrimination is perpetuated by inherently differential and hierarchical caste system. This illustrates Paletz and Entman’s (1981) argument that oppositional views are excluded and suppressed to highlight “established *establishment* view,” here the established view is reservation policies have been beneficial to the lower castes (emphasis in the original, p. 241). There is an existing cultural view among the upper castes that the reservation policies are beneficial to the ST and SC and have considerably uplifted their conditions (Vakil, 1985). However, the reality remains that the reservation policy itself is a differentiated process in which the lower castes claim the “benefits” because they belong to a certain caste (Dholakia, 2002). Therefore, the inclusion in the nation’s workforce via reservation does not fulfill promises of equal social standing because the lower caste does not get equal “status” to Brahmins in society, and hence, this undermines political equality implied in democratic commitments.

There are a few opposite views by some Dalit activists included in the newspapers who argue that lower castes are not always the beneficiary of reservation policies. Their

arguments are embedded within the texts and often appear toward the end of the articles, which shows that these contradictory views receive less prominence. There are four articles written by Dalit activists and not government sources; one in the *Times of India* and two in *The Hindu* and one in *The Indian Express* that are solely on the intricacies of the reservation policies. However, these articles do not bring up the issues of race and racism accusation. This implies that the discourse ignores or subverts the main issue of racism accusation. The counter-arguments on reservation policies reflect the reality of caste inequality, which is quite different than how it is largely portrayed in the newspapers. For example, a Dalit activist in an article in *The Hindu* (23 May 2001) explains, “lower castes are deprived of education and access to higher-ranking jobs, and lag considerably behind the higher castes in spite of the constitutional guarantee of equal status to all castes and the allocation of reservation quotas.” This clearly argues that the reality of the situation is that the lower castes are marginalized in all spheres of life including social, economic and educational. Moreover, they “lag behind” the upper castes particularly in top level jobs because of the lack of education or skills that are required for those jobs. This sentiment is reflected in another article in *The Times of India* (“Caste in...” 18 June 2001) where a Dalit activist argues, “by reserving seats and ensuring equal access for SCs and STs to institutions of higher education and government jobs do not necessarily mean that these groups do not encounter social and economic discrimination.” The argument points out a significant fact that discrimination against the lower caste does not stop just because a percentage of seats in the government jobs are guaranteed for the lower castes. The statement points to the fact that there are other possible factors that lead to discrimination and exclusion of the lower castes. As argued elsewhere, the caste

system is a socio-religio-cultural system of discrimination where exclusion and subjugation is based on the ascriptive status of a person (Kothari, 1995). In other words, to find a solution to end discrimination, one has to go to the root of the caste system, and address the religiously and culturally sanctioned discrimination and exclusion. This argument has far reaching implication because the negative attitude toward lower castes comes from the perceived belief that they are inferior, as it is written in the scriptures. So, to change this belief, it requires concerted social and cultural efforts among various social groups within the country to work toward annihilation of caste system. The above mentioned article in general argues that to truly assess the benefits of reservation policies, it is important to compare the percentage of lower caste workforce in government and private sectors to that of upper and middle castes. The articles that feature opposition views on reservation policies address some important questions such as: how many lower-caste people, particularly Dalits, have the necessary primary education to claim the benefits of higher education? Or, do the jobs put the SC and ST in equal social status with the upper castes? Research by Deshpande (2001) reveals that the SCs and STs continue to belong to the lowest rung of the economic ladder after more than 60 years of independence, calling into question any notion of substantial upward caste mobility. A recent study by Thorat and Arayma (2006) reveals that the reservation policy is confined to a tiny government and public sector only, and vast private sector comprising agriculture, industry and service sector in which majority of unorganized SC/ST labor force is employed, remains outside the purview of the reservation policy.

The presence of oppositional view reveals that when heterodox arguments are portrayed in media that challenge the previous messages or views, the opposing views

provide the opportunity to compare, question and engage in views that the mainstream or dominant media have otherwise suppressed (Parenti, 1986). Further, the construction of this oppositional view on reservation policies supports Greenberg and Knight's (2004) argument that news discourse articulates "a range of social and symbolic elements that cannot be ideologically closed or rendered invulnerable to contradiction and contestation" (p. 156). However, since the positive representation of government policies received most coverage space in the text, and the oppositional views are embedded within the texts toward the end of the text, this suggests that although the oppositional views are constructed, the dominant views and ideologies are given more salience and the news organizations do not deny institutional elites and their views privileged over accessing to channels of news (Carroll, 1992). Further, the structural position of the oppositional argument on the effects of reservation policies supports van Dijk's (1972) argument that lead paragraphs provide explicit as well as embedded notions of the primary emphasis of a news item. This thrust of information embodies the most important information of meanings of a discourse, which are organized hierarchically, subsuming ever-larger units of texts (ibid.). By and large, however, the logics in the newspaper construct a positive representation of the government and argue that the lower castes and Dalits are better off due to affirmative action. This significantly discredits the accusation of racism by Dalits. The denial of racism is further strengthened by the logics of next theme that caste is an "internal" matter of the country and should not be discussed at the world conference.

### **Caste is an "Internal Matter:" The Construction of the External Other**

Another theme that emerges from the newspapers strongly opposes the move to discuss caste at the international conference, because it is an "internal matter." To justify

that caste is an “internal” matter of the nation, the discourse reconstitutes the colonial dichotomy of the East and the West by blaming the West for “meddling” in India’s internal matters. By doing so, the discourse seeks to keep caste localized within the national borders. By keeping caste localized, the discourse also forecloses any human rights investigation into accusations of discrimination and exclusion by the Dalits. The arguments that are constructed in the newspapers can be summed up in a statement in an article, “haring off to the Durban conference will not help the caste situation one bit. We all know about the meddling of the West in affairs of the East. Caste is an internal matter and we will solve it if it needs to be solved” (*The Hindu*, 12 July 2001). This argument re-establishes the colonial dichotomy of “East” (us) vs “West” (them, the external “Other”) by representing India as a “victim” that has fallen prey to the West’s “meddling” or interfering tendencies. The use of verb “meddling” adds agency to the West as interfering in India’s internal affairs. This also evokes India’s past trauma of British colonialism. The use of the verb “haring off” signifies that the Dalits’ act to take caste issues to Durban has been done in haste without much thought or consideration of its advantages. In other words, the statement implies that there is no guarantee that the West will be proactive in offering help to Dalits’ call for justice. Further, the statement emphatically argues that caste is an “internal” matter of the country that needs to be discussed within the national borders. In the article, the reporter argues that the western nations driven by the market economy have always pressurized underdeveloped or developing nations to liberalize their economy for free trade movement. The “meddling” of the West further implies that not only the West has dictated the terms of trade movement, but have interfered in social and cultural issues of particularly eastern nations,

which are culturally and politically widely antithetical to western values. Here again, one can notice that the “logic of affirmation” is played out when the reporter gets expert or elite testimony such as the Finance Minister to affirm the approach of the news, which paints a negative image of the West (Schön, 1983).

In an article in *The Hindu*, Indian sociologist, Andre Beteille argues that equating caste with racial discrimination will be an “act of political irresponsibility” on the part of the UN (10 March 2001). Beteille argues that it is not quite understandable what the UN is trying to achieve by including caste in racism conference and charges that “the UN has not really thought through the matter as there is no commonality between caste and race.” By arguing that it is a “political irresponsibility” on the part of the UN, the scholar places onus on the UN for making a wrong political decision that could affect geopolitical relations. According to him, if there are discriminations occurring anywhere in the world, they should be treated separately and not as racial discrimination, which would be a grave mistake on the part of the UN. Here, there is a distinct attempt to separate “discrimination” from “racial discrimination.” In other words, the scholar is implying that even if casteism is a discriminatory system, it does not amount to “racial” discrimination. So, in this sense, caste discrimination could be based on ascriptive status, or descent of an individual, but not on race. So, there is an implication that there can be discriminatory practices based on color, descent etc. but these discriminations need to be separated from racism. In other words, discourse argues that discrimination is there, but does not name that the discriminatory practices imply racism. Specifically, here racism is denied but it is there and constitutive but not seen or named aspect of this discourse.

Further, in the article, he clearly expresses the view that caste and race are not the same and caste is an “internal matter” of the country which can only be dealt by the Indian government and not by the West. Beteille’s arguments clearly reject not only any association between caste and race, but also oppose the discussion of caste at the UN conference. Beteille’s stature as a prominent academician adds validity to the logics of this argument. Agreeing with this position, an article in *The Hindu* (10 June 2001) quotes an official, “eastern nations now seem to need tips on how to handle cultural discrimination and learn from the Western experience? Have we forgotten our past?” The rhetorical device in these statements is to sarcastically question the West’s patronizing attitude demonstrated in questioning India’s discriminatory policy toward Dalits, when the West itself is guilty of colonizing eastern nations, particularly India. Further, by rhetorically questioning India’s past relation with the West, the argument effectively evokes India’s colonial past and the trauma of subjugation and discrimination. This evocation of the trauma of colonialism is strategically used to resurrect the old antagonistic feelings towards the West. This is clearly evident in the next statement where the journalist writes, “the West’s double standards are visible when the West accuses less developed nations, of discrimination where the conditions that India (and many other Eastern nations) are in now are a result of historical injustice perpetrated by the colonial rule.” In this statement, the journalist clearly enkindles the “historical” context of colonialism and “injustice” that India has experienced at the hands of the British. The article also quotes a government official who states, “the western values that lean towards capitalization and corporate economy are incompatible with eastern values of welfare economy which is still a huge part of India’s economic policies” (ibid.). In this



case, the article not only represents elite opinion to affirm its point, but also negatively portray western “values” on “capitalism” and eastern “values” on “welfare economy.” Ball-Rokeach and Rokeach (1987) and Shah (2001) argue that value-framing concepts point to the criteria that determine what is relevant to issue formation. In this case, the “capitalist” West is represented as ill-equipped to deal with the East’s (India) internal caste situation.

In a feature article in *The Times of India* (21 February 2001), a journalist writes, “the West has always intervened in the cultural life of the East.” Elsewhere in the article he continues, “it is about time the West’s meddling into our affairs stopped” (ibid.). Here again, the negative word such as “intervene” or “meddle” is attributed to the West’s attitude toward the East. The article takes a strong position that criticizes the West’s intervention in the national affairs of other nations, particularly, eastern underdeveloped or developing nations. The journalist further contends that “caste is a matter that can be solved internally and an international non-governmental entity such as the UN cannot understand the specificity of caste” (ibid.). Here, the negative attitude toward the West is also extended to the UN, which is portrayed as incapable of “understanding” the specific conditions under which caste operates within the country. This invalidates the UN as an inter-governmental body that is “capable” of looking after issues of human rights. Moreover, the discourse implies that caste is a social condition that is “specific” to India and may not be applied to other social context. The specificity of caste in India is a product of Brahminic social structure based on superiority and inferiority and purity and pollution index of stratification. These factors make caste system a unique social structure in the Indian context. In other words, the caste gets its meanings from the

specific context of India, and the West may not be able to grasp the full connotation of its implications and functions because it is not part of the West. In this sense, caste and race cannot be similar. In essence, the discourse is arguing for the *particular* details of caste, and arguing that *knowledge is situated*. Here, locality and specificity of caste with its uniqueness, empirical concreteness, and complete experience are given importance. Through this, any similarity between caste and race are disjoined.

Other articles support the argument that the weaker nations in the East are increasingly giving up intellectual and political leadership to the West, including in areas where “Westerners” have no special expertise. For example, a government official states in an article in *The Times of India* (19 June 2001), “how do the enthusiasts who want to go to the Durban conference imagine that international or Western agencies will help fight caste in India?” This rhetorical statement not only calls into question “western” or international agencies’ ability to understand specificity of caste situation in India, but also challenges their capability to find a solution. The article takes a position that since caste is a uniquely Indian phenomenon, it needs to be addressed nationally and concerted efforts by all the state governments could address pressing social and economic issues to bring social changes. Further, the article argues that the West has no knowledge of how caste manifests in the Indian context and hence, it is inappropriate to discuss something that is evidently an “internal matter” of India at an international conference.

In some articles where this argument emerges, the liberalization of the Indian economy and globalization are blamed for essentially making India dependent on the West and its policies. The liberalization of the economy and consequent globalization have adverse effects on the poor peasants and farmers, who are mostly from lower castes

and the Indian media have widely criticized the unrelenting liberalization of the economy in the 90s, especially the government's poor balancing of agrarian economy and the market driven sector (Malik & Singh, 1994; Rajagopal, 2001). The discourse reconstructs the logic here that strongly blames the West and its globalizing tendencies to put pressure on India (the East) to further open its markets. For example, in an editorial in *The Times of India* (13 May 2001) the writer argues, "it is because of liberalization that the East has ceded knowledge advantage to the West on one front after another, beginning with the economic, and then moving on to the political." This statement critically assesses how the rich western nations have pressurized the Indian government to liberalize its economy since the 80s. Moreover, it also argues that as India liberalized its markets, there have been pressures from the western nations on political front too. The editorial constructs a view that the West is increasingly taking "advantage" of India, because India has opened its doors to foreign investment. Likewise, in a feature article in *The Hindu* (4 March 2001) a journalist writes, "globalization is detrimental to eastern nations. The East is increasingly being dependent on the rich western nations for survival." The article clearly blames the forces of globalization that have detrimental effects on the "eastern nation," particularly, the developing nations, such as India which are dependent on the West for various resources and aids. Further, the article also argues that liberalization has intensified this western "intervention" in every sphere of social life in India. In another article in *The Hindu* (19 March 2001) a journalist writes, " liberalizing the economy and allowing foreign investment do not mean India has to be at the beck and call of the dictates of the West." The statement implies that India's participation in the global market has brought in foreign investment, however, that has also resulted in dependence

on the West. By implying India is in fact, at the “beck and call” of the western nations, the statement and the article in general create a negative impression of the West’s domineering attitude in relation to India. The article cautions that too much liberalization allowing foreign (West) investment will bring in more western intervention in India’s internal social and cultural spheres. It seems that the cautionary note is directed at the decision makers at the Center (that is, the Federal government) and their economic policies.

There are four implications of the constitution of the argument that caste is an internal matter by the reconstruction of dichotomy between the East and the West. First, the liberalization of the economy has intensified the tension between the old and the new ways and the national governments in the postcolonial India have been unsuccessful in providing resources for growth and ascertaining social equality for all (Sen, 2001). While the liberalization and globalization are not completely rejected, they are looked at with suspicion and condemned by some political parties, at least publicly, to gain wider acceptance. For example, the BJP have appropriated the colonial dichotomy of East and West as their political needs demand, to gain wider support and cover up their own incompetency. They have time and again attacked liberalization policies, yet at the same time, to satisfy the demands of the middle class, allowed foreign investment in the IT sectors. So, in effect, their attitude towards liberalization and globalization has been that of ambivalence (Tetreault & Denmark, 2003). The logics of the discourse of racism denial work within the dominant logics of *Hindutva* that has at least publicly condemned wide spread liberalization through the construction of the West as the dominating figure meddling into India’s internal affairs.

Second, the insistence on caste being an internal matter works within the logics of nationalist, anti-colonial narratives of colonial times. By reverting back to and centering around the axis of colonial antagonism of East/West and “victim”/“meddlers” the discourse masterfully hides the internal contradictions and polarities of upper caste/lower caste and Hindu/non Hindu divisions within the postcolonial nation. The nation, in this sense, is constituted through the old postcolonial rhetoric of the external dominant “Other,” the West, now rearticulated as the UN, the developed nations and international agencies and the East, India. Identifying the Indian “nation” as a victim provides a means of denying responsibility for domination over the internal “Others” and conceals the contemporary antagonistic relationship between the upper castes and the lower castes. In India’s anti-colonial movement, such binaries are appropriated by the Indian nationalists, who contend that India’s value lies in the great tradition of antiquity (Chatterjee, 1993). This version of nationalism retains the basic tenets of Orientalist thought as it divides the world into East and West, each with essential characteristics. The nationalists concur with the Orientalists that the East has a monopoly on spiritual merits and the West on material virtues; however, according to Chatterjee, they invert the valuation given to each domain (ibid.). The spiritual domain evokes positive image while the material domain evokes a negative image. By creating this colonial dichotomy between the East and the West, the discourse reworks the negative “meddling” image of the West, as postcolonial version of “colonizers.” The reconstruction of the East and the West dichotomy in the civic discourse resurrects this colonial polarity between the evil colonizer West and the colonized East to gain wider acceptance of the Indian masses for the argument that caste is an internal matter.

Third, the articles referring to the “eastern nation” (specifically, India), encourage readers to imagine a community of readers simultaneously performing the same activity (Anderson, 1991). Most of this theme develops out of editorials and newspaper editorials are significant because they give “the newspaper a chance to present its policies and beliefs” (Harris et al., 1992, p. 477). National newspapers by definition are nationally distributed, and although there may be difference of age, gender, region, social class, ethnicity, religion, even within the readership of individual articles, the limit is that of the nation. So the dichotomy of the “West” and the “East” reaffirms the nation.

Fourth, discussing the issue of caste at an international conference would also have tarnished the image of India presented to the international community and the Indian population. As caste discrimination increasingly becomes an international issue, it is of utmost concern to the Indian government to keep it “internal” or localized, in order to safeguard its national interests and restrict questioning of structural social and economic inequality based on caste. As the discourse shows, caste is portrayed as “specific” to the Indian context, and it gets its meanings from the context where it is embedded. In this sense, caste situation can be understood only by the Indians who live within the boundaries of the nation-state, and if there is discrimination, it can only be solved by the Indian government. By taking caste to the conference on racism, the government of India faces the risk of being exposed as a government that has not seriously addressed the crudest form of discrimination. Such an image could be detrimental to India’s efforts to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Further, equating caste with race and racism with casteism may induce international human rights organizations and/or the UN to take punitive action against the

Indian government, which is likely to embarrass India. Hence, the internal matter argument works within the logics of dominant discourse of the government that it is in the national government's sole authority and power to address and redress caste issues "internally," away from the watchful eyes of international human rights organizations. The strategic resurrection of the old enemy, the West, is crafted to deflect attention from internal racism, and this gives power to the discourse of denial of racism. Further, keeping caste internal or localized facilitates the articulation of Indian political players, who have always utilized caste as and when the political needs arose. Conceiving of caste (and Hinduism) in India as timeless unique and local enables further consolidation of caste system and reification of Brahminical hegemony. Quite simply, keeping caste internal makes similarities between caste and race irrelevant, and also forecloses Dalits groups attempt to forge alliances with other marginalized groups across the globe.

In terms of media construction, none of the articles, which employ this argument, refer to why casteism is "racism," or why Dalits are accusing that casteism is racism, which signifies that the racist system of caste is implicitly denied through its omission. Instead, the newspapers focus on the West's interfering tendencies in the East's internal matters. Hence, the denial of racism is constituted through the omission of information and removal of racism as a salient issue (Entman, 1983; van Dijk, 1991; McCarthy et al., 1998). Also noticeable omission from the headlines, such as "Globalization and caste at Durban" or "Caste question at Durban" is the words "race" or racism." This suggests what news discourse analysts (Tuchman, 1978; Cohen & Young, 1981; van Dijk, 1983; Bell, 1991) argue that the daily press is organized by the principle of relevance or importance, and the function of the headline is to convey important strategic cue to

control the way the readers process and make sense of the news. By highlighting “globalization,” “caste at Durban,” in the headline, and omitting “race,” “racism” and “casteism,” the newspapers reduce the relevance, salience and importance of these terms for the readers. As Entman (2004) and van Dijk (1988; 1991) argue, headlines strategically filter information to mitigate understanding and interpretation of subsequent information, and this is why headlines are potent in their ability to structure boundaries around what may or may not be conceived about particular issues. Therefore, clearly, the newspapers strategically avoid using racism and race from headlines to divert the attention of the readers away from the accusation of racism.

The central focus of this argument presents caste as an “internal” affair, similar to the internal problems of every nation. On the basis of this logic, it is argued that caste should not be discussed at the UN racism conference. By keeping caste discrimination as an internal matter, the nation is made the sole benefactor of nation’s marginalized peoples, and the discrimination and exclusion produced by caste is kept away from the watchful eyes of the international human rights groups. This further forecloses the possibility of conducting investigation on how racism manifests in the Indian context by the human right groups. By constructing the West as interfering and meddling, India is represented as a victim, who is expected to concede to the dictates of the West. Therefore, the discourse rearticulates the West’s evil tendencies strategically to divert attention from caste discrimination and accusation of racism.

To further deny racism, the discourse strategically rearticulates the “unity in diversity” discourse to keep the nation unified from the perceived threat of racism accusation.



## **Destabilization of “Unity in Diversity”: The Question of Internal Other**

The final theme that constitutes the discourse of denial of racism is that voicing the notion of race in the Indian context destabilizes the very idea of “unity in diversity” and cultural pluralism, which are the foundations on which India as a nation is constituted. This logic of destabilization of nation emerges mostly out of editorials and feature articles which argue that caste is not race and race talk in India can potentially destabilize the national unity. This logic works toward constituting a unified India in the wake a perceived *threat* of accusation of racism by the Dalits.

An editorial in *The Indian Express* (2 July 2001) argues, “the entry of race in the Indian context has the potential to destabilize the nation’s unity in diversity or synergy of India.” The use of the phrase “the entry of race” is quite significant in its explicit rejection that race exists at all in India except for through the Western gaze. In other words, the discourse discounts the fact that race is applicable in the Indian context, that it is an alien concept, and implies that the “entry” or introduction of race in India can raise issues that have long been hidden or unseen. This also implies that the argument works on the implicit understanding that race is a highly volatile issue, and is a western concept, and if discussed, it can potentially open cleavages within the nation. Further, through this statement, the “unity in diversity” national discourse is resurrected that has been constituted at the time of independence. The statement acknowledges that “race” has the “potential” to “destabilize” the nation’s unity. The article does not elaborate on what these cleavages are and this is left open to interpretation. This is a significant suppression of reasoning because analyzing these cleavages would mean focusing on conditions that make caste a highly discriminatory and racist system in the Indian context. Instead, the

newspaper stresses “unity in diversity,” glorifying the nation’s diverse milieu that has sustained the country for centuries. The editorial points out the importance of maintaining “stability” elsewhere in the article, “it is significant to maintain the country’s stability to ensure proper governance and to promote national development.” Here the writer acknowledges that India is a pluralistic nation, however, stresses on good governance and national progress, which can be achieved through national “stability.” The editorial skirts the issue of how race or race talk can potentially “destabilize” the nation. Instead, it focuses on the advantages of keeping the nation politically stable and ignores the causes of instability. In doing so, the logic works toward constituting a desired stable, unified nation.

Such concerns are expressed in other articles where “cultural pluralism” is constructed as essential to maintain nation’s stability. In another article in *The Times of India* (23 June 2001), a political analyst argues, “cultural pluralism has sustained the nation for so many years. We cannot forget that and let divisive elements penetrate into the nation.” This statement reiterates that “cultural pluralism” has long been considered as the pillar of Indian democracy, and an integral part of Congress (first independent government) government’s political mantra on which the national discourse of “unity in diversity is constituted. Scholars (Narain, 1976; Kothari & Parajuli, 1993) argue that cultural pluralism and syncretism are the foundations on which Indian democracy is built and these ideals encompass racial diversity, linguistic heterogeneity, cultural fusion, and variations and synthesis in customs, behavior patterns, beliefs and rituals. These ideals are fore grounded in the article. In this newspaper article, the writer implies that race is a “divisive” element, which has the potential to raise questions that have long been buried.

However, the article leaves room for interpretation because it avoids any comments on race's association with caste but points to how race has been a factor in inequality and injustice elsewhere. This implies that the discourse suppresses race in India by deflecting attention to race and racism outside of the national borders. Again, by putting "cultural pluralism" in the headline, the newspaper is directing the readers to think about the effects of synergic fabric of India, and how this synergy can be threatened if caste is taken to Durban. Such words in the headlines are carefully chosen and structured so as to maximize the effects of the headline (Entman, 1983; van Dijk, 1991). "Cultural pluralism" is again stressed in another feature article on "The UN and contemporary caste situation in India" in *The Hindu* (22 May 2001) where the journalist writes, "the process of acculturation and integration has been extensively at work at all levels in India since independence. National unity is reinforced by cultural pluralism and the composite heritage of the country, which cannot be dismantled." Again, the word choices such as "cultural pluralism," "integration," "acculturation" and "composite heritage" are carefully chosen to imagine an India that is seamlessly woven in spite of cultural diversity. Again, in another article in *The Hindu* (3 March, 2001), a journalist argues that "cultural pluralism is the essence of "secular-democratic framework which is enshrined in the republican Constitution of the country" (ibid.). Through this statement, the discourse not only stresses on the synergetic Indian culture, but also reminds the readers that Indian "democracy" is based on "secular" values. Therefore, through these statements the discourse of denial of racism functions to imagine India that is not authoritarian, but is a nation where people participate in governance and enjoy freedom to practice any religion.

The newspapers here play a significant role in constituting an imagined, unified Indian nation.

The logic of cultural pluralism resurrects and rearticulates the “unity in diversity” national discourse that has been the hallmark of the Congress government in constituting a nation of equality. It obliterated any internal differences for several decades after independence (Malik & Singh, 1994). Within the mainstream cultural pluralism ideology of the Indian nation, the Hindu nationalists have found a niche in the 80s that propagated the alternative ideology of Hindu nation as explained in the previous chapter (Malik & Singh, 1994). The conflict between the meanings of two discourses exemplifies the complexities within and between these two predominant national discourses. Therefore, the dominant narratives of the Indian nation since the rise of *Hindutva* have been that of ambivalence: one, the “unity and diversity” that unites a diverse population into a single whole; and the other, the discourse of *Hindutva*, which constitutes a “unified” homogenous Hindu nation. Both these national discourses profess national unity and integrity. But what “unity” means to the former (homogenized diverse population of India, commonly known as cultural pluralism) differs from what it means to the latter (homogenized ‘Hindu’ nation). In their effort to be homogenizing, both these national discourses do not directly address and hence, exclude the internal “Other,” the lower castes, the non Hindu populace of the Indian nation and the racial and religious groups distinct from each other. While the logics of caste and race were not overtly articulated in any of these national discourses, the upper caste political players orchestrated the logics of these discourses and constituted their visions of Indian nation. The consolidation of upper caste in the creation of the nation meant marginalization of the lower castes and

Dalits from the mainstream political process (Aloysius, 1997). Pluralism and “unity in diversity” were contained through racial homogeneity and exclusions as the official national identity, while the power-holders remain the upper-caste Brahmins.

The theme further emphasizes why “unity” needs to be maintained. The repetitive use of the word “unity” suggests that the newspapers are constructing “unity” as the most important desired goal of the nation, as exemplified in a quote in an editorial in the *Times of India* (4 February 2001), “unity among diverse masses is a single criterion that the nation should work on.” Similarly, citing “unity in diversity” as the torchbearer of the “nation’s stability and progress”, another editorial in *The Hindu* (6 June 2001) states, “unity in diversity is the torchbearer of the nation and a fundamental idea behind social progress.” Both these statements signify that “unity” is a “single” and “fundamental” criterion for the Indian nation that overrides multitude of problems and issues that plague the country. Furthermore, since both these editorials are written in the context of Dalit’s accusation of racism, these editorials imply that the very idea of race has the potential to disrupt national solidarity and even “progress,” although these two newspapers do not define “progress.” Again, the statements mentioned above acknowledge that India is a diverse nation; however, they do not explain what that diversity means. The editorials also do not explain why casteism is accused of racism. This is a clear indication that it is a strategy to divert attention from casteism, racism, and unequal social structures faced by “diverse masses” and put utmost salience on maintaining “unity.” In another article in *The Indian Express* (May 2001) a journalist writes, “the issue of national unity and integration is closely intertwined with political and cultural lives of Indians.” The article goes on to argue that the process of adaptation and interaction among the various groups

brought about, on the one hand, India's characteristic diversity and, on the other, a composite cultural tradition. Further, the article argues that this fact is "borne out by historical sources and contemporary surveys as well as researches in folklore" (ibid.). By this, the article makes an intertextual connection in Fairclough's (1992) terms, with the extant cultural folklore in the broader social dimension where "cultural pluralism" and "unity" are glorified. In other words, the writer takes a position that this tradition of assimilation of different cultural values dates back to ancient time, so in a sense, the text appeals to the historical context in which the perceived "integration" in India has taken place. This reiterates the cultural understanding that the questions of nationalism and national identity in India are embedded within the broad context of ancient Indian civilization and its transformation over the years due to various mixtures of cultures and religions (Kosambi, 1987).

Two significant structural features of the news can be noticed in the construction of this theme. First, as mentioned earlier, this theme mainly emerges out of editorials and feature articles. Editorials are significant because they can be persuasive and present official position of the newspaper that is deemed of a particular importance at the time of publication. Further, editorials have shown to play role in public agenda setting (McCombs, 1997) and to be generally representative of the newspaper's specific framing of the issue, although it has happened that editorial position differed from the view expressed in the news article. However, when editorials appear on the nation newspapers such as *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express* and *The Hindu*, they acquire an even more special character; they reflect the opinion of an influential part of the society. In this sense, these newspapers play a role in reconstruction of identification of Indian nation

through the cultural pluralism and “unity in diversity.” Communities and identities to some extent are constructed through *threats* to the boundaries of those communities, both internal and external. One can extend Schlesinger’s (1991) views of nation-state’s treatment of threat to the symbolic threat of accusation of racism by the internal “Other” Dalits at the international arena. In an event of accusation of racism then, the nation is united by its exposure to threat of accusation of racism that can destabilize the *shared* national unity.

Second, there is a glaring omission in these articles and editorials of words and phrases such as “racism,” “caste discrimination.” Some of these articles are under the headlines “Caste at Durban” or “the UN and Caste” or “Cultural Pluralism, Caste and Durban,” however, close readings of the texts reveal that the articles skirt the issues of racism and caste based discrimination. Most of these articles concentrate on articulating national “unity” and “cultural pluralism.” This is a strategy employed to deny and suppress inequalities and differences that amount to racism faced by lower castes, particularly the Dalits. Therefore, through the logics of cultural pluralism and the alleged caste and racial “unity,” the “unity in diversity” national discourse is resurrected and represented to portray a very enticing notion of a nation united through diversity. This also rearticulates postcolonial India’s “desired” imagination of a nation, which conveniently excludes the internal “Other.” Such representational equality in the newspapers draws from the larger national discourse of secularism and pluralism, and helps to create a social vision of a society that has finally come to terms with, and perhaps even embraced, its caste, racial, religious and linguistic diversity. Brahminization or the upper caste hegemony articulated through “unity in diversity” retains its invisibility

and caste/racial neutrality (Aloysius, 1997). In so doing, “unity in diversity” is then able to masquerade as anti-casteist/anti-racist. However, the underlying logics, fundamentally based on structures of superiority/inferiority and dominance/subordination, remain. The logics of “unity in diversity” suppress the dynamism and existence of internal “Others” within the postcolonial nation to the national and international audience. By erasing the internal “Other,” this discourse forecloses the possibility of understanding the caste hierarchy and racial and communal divisions operative within the nation, which perpetuate discrimination and subjugation of internal “Other.” Further, the discourse silences the voices of internal “Other” through the emphasis on “unity.” Invested in the process of stressing on “unity” is a process of splitting the national collective between patriots and unpatriotic citizens. In other words, if the marginalized internal “Others” question the “unity” or express dissent or attempt to criticize the nation, then they are likely to be accused of being unpatriotic or criticizing the nation. The discourse silences the internal “others” and their accusation against the nation by stressing on the significance of “unity.” Therefore, not only the internal “Others” are silenced, but the dissent as a democratic act is also undermined.

It is also important to mention that the articles where this theme emerges, do not re-present the *Hindutva*'s religio-cultural nationalist discourse at all, although those logics underlined the previous themes. Instead, the articles foreground the nationalistic discourse which is most acceptable in modern world; the Indian version of discourse of multiculturalism, cultural pluralism, and tolerance of diversity. Chatterjee (1993) and Roy (2003) argue that the project of Indian nation-building through the constitution of “unity” out of Indian “diversity” by weaving the fragments into a viable nation-state has



continued in India even after independence. Specifically, the challenge was that of bringing India's different religious communities together under a secular regime of undoing the work of communalization that had brutally ruptured the body politic into two nations at the very moment of freedom (Uberoi, 2002). This period, which embodies what one may call, albeit somewhat imprecisely, the Nehruvian vision of the national, has been simply glossed over as ephemeral in the light of the broader divisions. Media have played a role in the task of uniting the different classes and castes, men and women, tribals and others, into a homogeneous, democratic and just national society in India (Shields & Muppidi, 1996; Rajagopal, 2001). Uberoi (2002) has also shown how media have foregrounded "unity in diversity" through denial or transcendence of contradiction where all modes of development are presented synergistically in calendar art. This reconstitution of the "unity in diversity" national discourse is again observable in the analysis as the newspapers reinstate the media as powerful agency to reconstitute Indian's diverse peoples and through the obliteration of differences and marginalization of internal "Others." Therefore, the rearticulation of "unity in diversity" is used as an effective discursive strategy to divert attention from unequal caste system, and the discrimination and exclusion that it perpetrates, and consequently, to deny racism charge by the Dalits.

## **Conclusion**

The newspaper texts analyzed for this study are read daily by millions of Indians, and function as a dominant civic discourse, which provides and refines culturally accepted beliefs that protect social advantage of the upper castes (mostly Brahmins) and maintain their location within the system. The analysis of the civic discourse that denied racism and denied that caste is racist through the smokescreen of dissociation between

caste and race reveals that it works under the most dominantly circulated logics of caste, race and nation. The analysis shows that the dominant civic discourse used a repertoire of strategies to deny or mitigate racism. This discourse goes the length to entrench and preserve the dominant upper-caste norms, and the logics of caste, race, and racism are either depoliticized or denied, rather than allow for their destabilization (van Dijk, 1991).

### *Denials of Racism and the Role of Newspapers*

This finding supports scholars who argue that mass media discourses play a central role in the discursive and symbolic reproduction of racism by elites (Hartman & Husband, 1974; van Dijk, 1991). These scholars note that though newspapers try to report “objectively,” they have to draw upon government sources when reporting issues and policies pertaining to the government. In this case, the newspapers gave prominence to the quotations and arguments of government officials, and academicians who articulated a dominant consensus that there is no racism and caste and race are completely dissimilar constructs. These quotes were woven into the fabric of news discourse to give semblance of “facticity” and authenticity: a quote from the newsmaker’s own words renders it as incontrovertible fact (Tuchman, 1978, p. 96). The powerful are further empowered through quotation patterns that enhance their status and visibility, while the systematic silencing of the powerless, only further disempowers them (Scannell, 1992). This is hardly surprising since one of the properties of racism in the press, according to van Dijk (1992), is that the minorities or the marginalized groups are largely silent or hardly quoted or quoted with suspicion or distance in news reporting. This also shows that the government officials and the academicians qualify as primary news sources in the

conventional sense; the other sources are typically given a secondary role (van Dijk, 1992). Research on news structures and news production reveals that elite news actors have special access to the media because they are considered important, newsworthy, and credible by journalists (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). Elite sources cement their access through institutional discursive practices such as press releases, press conferences, and the activities of their own public relations offices. Therefore, given the elites' easy access to news media and journalists' reliance upon government sources, van Dijk (1991) argues that the news media in general, and the press in particular, are crucially involved in the reproduction of racism, through their close involvement with the power structures. Hence, they share the consensus of the dominant political elites in the reproduction of racism (Lichter, et al., 1990), which is clearly evident here through the strategies they used in denying that caste is racist.

The discourse in the newspapers constituted an India that is just and the one that ensures welfare for the downtrodden through positive representation of government's reservation policies. This strategy is effective in denying accusation of racism. As van Dijk (1992) argues, this positive representation is a strategy of the elites to deny racism. By extolling affirmative action, which is a symbol of social progress and modernity, tolerance and equality are promoted. Again, to divert and distract attention from the issue of racism, the discourse resurrected the anti colonial nationalist dichotomy of the West and the East to accuse the West of "meddling" in India's "internal" affairs. The discourse re-constructed the "nation," (see, Wodak, 1999; Brookes, 1999; Ricento, 2003) by stressing on "unity" and "cultural pluralism," "welfare" and "pride" as primary definers of the Indian nation. This finding confirms the argument that newspapers reproduce, or

reinforce commonsense boundaries of nation through re-articulation of dominant logics of national discourses. The newspapers worked discursively within the same ideological framework as the politicians and officials, the framework of denial through strategies of diversion and subversion of caste racism, positive representation of the government and reworking the dominant national logics. Thus texts are linked to societal and cultural processes and structures (Fairclough, 1989; 1992). The analysis also supports Fairclough & Wodak's (1997) argument that discourse not only shapes and reshapes social structures, but also reflects them. Therefore, I conclude that the civic discourse of denial of racism works persuasively toward re-constructing the logics of dominant, yet contradictory, postcolonial national discourses when faced with a crisis that has the potential to "embarrass" the nation on an international platform. In other words, the mainstream civic discourse in the postcolonial national context flexibly combines existing, often contradictory, logics of national discourses to deny racism, and marginalize internal "Others" rather than accept the nation's destabilization. The analysis also reveals that the postcolonial nation is a multidimensional construction that is continually "in motion" and rearticulation.

The denials of racism have serious implications because if the leading politicians and newspapers refuse acknowledge that there is a serious problem, then there will be no public debate, no change of public opinion and hence, no change in the system of power relations between the upper castes and lower castes (van Dijk, 1992). The various logics of discourse reveal that there are no substantively new arguments in ways of thinking about caste or race or nation. The analysis indicates that the coverage was for the most part clearly not concerned with systemic, political and economic factors that are

responsible for the oppression of Dalits and other lower castes. Instead, the newspapers reworked and rearticulated strategically the existing logics of national discourses, as and when needed, to deny racism. The analysis also reveals that the postcolonial Indian nation is a multilayered construct constituted through internal contradictions by drawing from extant logics (Chatterjee, 1993; 2005; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001). For example, the nation is portrayed as a “just” nation that celebrates representational equity. Nation is further constituted by “unity in diversity,” demonstrating the postcolonial desired vision. The utopian vision of the nation works within the dominant, yet contradictory national discourses of *Hindutva* and “unity in diversity.” As shown in the previous chapter, the dominant narratives of the Indian nation since the rise of *Hindutva* have been that of ambivalence: one, the “unity and diversity” that homogenizes a diverse population into a single whole; and the other, the discourse of *Hindutva*, which constitutes a “unified” homogenous Hindu nation. The logics of caste, race, nation, exclusion and denials that articulate dominant national discourses are selectively utilized and reworked as and when needed to steer away from admitting acts of racism. However, the analysis also reveals that caste system is inherently based on categorizing people according to their caste position which functions to produce outcomes that are racist. Caste practices are racist not just because of the racist intentionality of its structure, but also in terms of its effects. These practices exacerbate and produce exclusions and subordinations which are coterminous with supposed “racially” (Aryans and non Aryans) different population (Goldberg, 2002).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CASTEISM IS RACE/RACISM: CIVIC DISCOURSE OF AMBIVALENCE

Chapter 4 presented a detailed analysis of the dominant discourse of racism denial constructed in three Indian major newspapers in response to the Dalit's charge that casteism is racism. In this chapter, I analyze the construction of the opposing discourse in the three newspapers that *apparently* supports the charge that casteism is racism, albeit with deep ambivalence. This discourse is fully articulated in three articles written by Dalit scholars, Kancha Ilaiah and Gail Omvedt and Dalit activist Teesta Setalvad, who argue that casteism is racism. Additionally, this discourse emerges from articles in which it appears in quotes by Dalit scholars and activist and some journalist, but these quotes and comments are either reframed as "caste is race" or submerged in the dominant discourse of racism denial. The ambivalence in the construction of this discourse is in part due to the fact that the newspaper articles strategically frame quotes from Dalit scholars as "caste is race" and not as "casteism is racism." So, in effect, the articles appear to support the charge that casteism is racism, but a closer reading reveals that the dominant claim is that caste is race. In this sense, the oppositional discourse is split into two: casteism is racism and caste is race. Additionally, both terms "racism" and "race" remain ambiguous and unclear. The term "race" is used without an explicit discussion of its content or referent which renders it vacuous. Race is not a fixed immutable category that can be used anywhere to describe a natural division among groups, but it is a social construct that is reconstituted or renewed to justify exclusion and discrimination of groups in different contexts. Therefore, just equating caste with race does not address what, how or who makes casteism equivalent to racism. The ambivalence in the texts

makes it difficult to ascertain what the real argument is: whether caste and race are similar or whether discrimination and exclusions produced by caste are racist. The result is that the strength of the argument that casteism is racism in the articles written by Dalit scholars and quotes by Dalits activists decreases and the discourse circumvents their opposition to the dominant logics.

According to Ono and Sloop's (2002) theoretical map in which this project is grounded, an oppositional discourse has the potential to be an outlaw discourse which functions from a marginalized position to challenge the dominant order. However, this oppositional discourse that *apparently* supports casteism is racism, but actually only asserts that caste is race is constrained by the logics of the dominant discourse. This oppositional discourse emerges as supporting rather than a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse of racism denial. Most of the oppositional arguments that emerge are embedded within the articles where denials predominate. In that sense, the structuring of the arguments from an oppositional point of view lacks visibility and prominence in relation to the dominant view of denial of racism. Ono and Sloop (2002) argue that as an outlaw discourse begins to emerge in civic mainstream outlets, it dissolves into a dominant discourse. This happens either because it is ideologically disciplined and no longer challenges the dominant logics, or because the logics of dominant discourse are accepted. In this case, the discourse of casteism is racism develops in response to and from within the dominant discourse of racism denial. The discourse of the Dalits does not get a foothold as an outlaw discourse in the media. Moreover, media news reports operate considerably through dominant logics and reinforce dominant ways of thinking (Ono & Sloop, 2002). In other words, even if an outlaw discourse enters the domain of the "civic"

(mainstream), it is likely to lose its potential to resist and challenge the dominant, and is thus rendered unable to alter the status quo power relations.

I will demonstrate that the arguments in the three newspapers that equate caste with race and casteism with racism often work along the same logical line as the dominant discourse of racism denial. A closer look at the underlying logics of the discourse reveals that even if the newspapers appear to support the view that casteism is racism, they are doing so in an ambiguous manner by articulating a discourse that claims that caste is “race,” and by moving away from the specificities of the “Dalit” cause and failing to explain how casteism is racism in the Indian context. I argue that the ambiguity in the terms “race” and “racism” in the newspapers, has two important implications. Firstly, I argue that the word “race” is used predominantly as a descriptive term to explain caste, without any critical meaning attached to it. This strategy deflects attention from the pertinent questions such as, how casteism is racism, or under what specific historical, social and political conditions caste functions as a racist system of exclusion and discrimination against lower castes and Dalits? Arguing that caste is race does not necessarily translate into arguing that caste is a racist system, nor does it put forth a cogent explanation on the nature and extent of discrimination and exclusions that make the caste system a racist system. Race, here, is strategically used as a term that lacks critical meaning. Secondly, I argue that Dalit scholars utilize the term “racism” as a broad term in an attempt to translate casteism into international terminology and evoke condemnation of casteism by appealing to international norms against racism. The international norms have been shaped by the mobilization of American civil rights movement and later the international opposition to South African Apartheid. Therefore,



by utilizing the term racism, the Dalit scholars and activists attempt to draw attention to the violence and discrimination against the Dalits as racist on an international platform. Here, racism acquires power of metaphor. Casteism requires the analogy with racism in order to gain more visibility and condemnation in the international fora. However, this contention by the Dalit scholars and activists remains submerged in the overall structure of the discourse that caste is same as “race,” and hence, loses its critical edge.

Two themes addressing specific problematics of caste, race, and discrimination in varying degrees articulate the oppositional discourse split between caste is “race” or casteism is “racism.” The first theme is *Economic Base of Caste* where caste discrimination is equated with racial discrimination on the basis of their similarities in the economic and class subjugation. Three parallel subthemes run and intersect with each other within this economic base theme. The first subtheme, *Caste Labor*, argues that both caste and race have a class basis and class differences are based on the inequality of the economic system. The second subtheme, *Menace of Liberalization and Globalization* blames liberalization of the Indian economy and globalization for increased marginalization of lower castes and Dalits. The third subtheme, *Dalit Emancipation*, argues that the only way to achieve emancipation of lower castes is through “class consciousness” that binds all lower caste peoples together as a coherent “lower class” bloc. The second main theme is the call for *Internationalization of Caste*. Two subthemes develop within this theme. The first subtheme, *Lets go to Durban*, argues for taking caste issue to the Durban conference so that a “global alliance” can be forged with other marginalized groups across the globe. However, this subtheme also constructs India as a moral nation and this reduces the power of the discourse that casteism is racism. The

second subtheme, a *Unified South Asian Alliance*, equates caste discrimination in India with other discriminatory practices in Asia, particularly those in South Asia. In doing so, the discourse marginalizes the specificity of the “Dalit” cause. As I delved more and more into the discourse and the various themes, it became clear that “race” and “racism” were ignored in the news reporting and broader caste issues were given prominence, which circumvented the accusation of “racism” based on discrimination and oppression perpetuated by caste.

### **Economic Base of Caste**

The first theme that emerges from the discourse presents race and caste as similar on the economic and class basis. The economic logics of this theme constitute the Indian nation as a classist nation based in class and caste inequalities. Three interrelated subthemes run through the theme of economic base of caste. First, it is argued that both caste and race have a class basis and class differences are based on the inequality of the economic system. The second subtheme blames the liberalization of Indian economy and globalization as two primary reasons for the increase in the oppression of lower castes and Dalits. The third subtheme claims that only “class consciousness” can lead to “lower” caste (not just Dalit) emancipation from oppression.

### ***Caste Labor***

The discourse builds an argument that caste and race are based on disparities in the economic conditions and class differences. In a feature article in *The Hindu*, written by Dalit scholar Kancha Ilaiah, the author draws attention to a significant area of debate

in Indian sociology literature, one that concerns the relationship between caste and class, and argues that “both race and caste are economically exploited categories, and hence the resultant discrimination is on the basis of economic inequality among caste groups” (Ilaiah, 21 August 2001). This statement clarifies that the discrimination experienced by people because they belong to a certain racial or caste category results from their lower position in the economic ladder. Further, elsewhere in the article Ilaiah reiterates that the similarities between the two systems of discrimination lie “in the way in which these forces of social oppression are based on economic oppression” (ibid.). He goes on to argue that the “social oppression” experienced by members of certain castes and race are because of the economic inequality of the two systems, which place individuals in different positions. In other words, any discrimination that Dalits and lower castes face is because they form the lowest rung of the economy, and in the absence of economic empowerment, the subjugation will continue. Here, the author clearly situates caste (and race) within the systemic functions, which is in stark contrast to locating discrimination borne out of race and caste as individual acts emphasized in the dominant discourse of denial. By locating racism within the system, the racist structure of the state, its policies and actions become visible (see race scholars Omi & Winant, 1994; Goldberg, 2002). Locating discrimination and oppression in “systemic” inequality, the author argues that unless the economic conditions of the lower castes and Dalits are improved, there would be no end to their “oppression.” In this article, though the author rightly locates discrimination and exclusion within the system of racist structure, however, the discrimination is reduced to an oppressive “economic” base, and the argument overlooks the multiplicity of ways that are used to discriminate lower caste groups such as the

religiously sanctioned notion of polluted self of the lower castes, the subordinate social status, and their inferior culture (Oommen, 1986; Kothari, 1995; Reddy, 2005). In other words, the “social oppression” that lower castes experience is not only because of their poor economic status, but also due to the very fact that they have been born into a “low” caste, and are thereby inferior to someone born into a “high” caste.

In an article in *The Hindu*, a journalist writes, “the forces of social oppression are based on economic domain, and both [race and caste] are about denial of means of production to certain peoples” (Menon, 3 August 2001). Developing the same theme as the article discussed above, the journalist argues that “social oppression” is due to the deplorable economic conditions of the people belonging to certain caste and racial groups. The journalist further argues that “the root cause behind the impoverishment, deprivation and oppression of millions of people in India is the economic exploitation of the lower castes by the upper castes.” This statement clearly assigns oppression and deprivation of people in India to the “economic exploitation” perpetrated by the upper castes on lower caste peoples. In the article the journalist uses economic logics when he argues that “the social discrimination of certain caste and racial groups is predicated on the basis of lower class status of these groups in the market economy.” In this sense, “class” as a category is defined on the basis of perceived economic differences between groups in the capitalist market economy. In other words, the discourse centers on the argument that because of differential class interests, which are borne out of economic disparity, the upper and lower castes battle out against each other. The article, however, does not explain what makes casteism equivalent to racism. In the article, “economic exploitation” is used in conjunction with “class” repeatedly, which replaces the term caste by the term “class,” and caste itself takes a backseat. All lower caste groups are placed within a

single category, which is problematic as not all lower castes experience same kind of discrimination or oppression, and their demands and problems may be quite varied and specific to that caste group (Srinivas, 1982; Oommen, 1986; Kothari, 1998). The discourse subverts the fact that even if the lower castes manage to ameliorate their economic condition, it would not translate into their acquiring the same social status as upper castes. Caste hierarchy is based on a socio-religio-cultural code, which places individuals on superiority-inferiority index that arbitrarily assigns lower castes with a subordinate social status. Hence, the attempt to argue for the class and economic basis of caste inadvertently works under the dominant logic that marginalizes the charge against the caste “system” because economic alleviation does not necessarily mean “social” upliftment in a caste based society like India. By likening caste to class, the discourse edits out a number of complex questions about class formation, caste hierarchy, racism, exclusion, social status, economic and social position and disadvantage. Therefore, the dominant cultural logics that assign the upper castes their “high” status, because they are born into the high caste, is still maintained by the classist logics of the economic base of caste subtheme. There are a lot of poor Brahmins in India, but they still enjoy high social status because of the position and status assigned to Brahmins; however, a rich lower caste member may not enjoy the same “high” social status as a Brahmin because his or her caste is ranked “lower” in the caste hierarchy (Das, 1989; Reddy, 2005).

Again, drawing similarities between race and caste, an article in *The Indian Express* advances the argument that both caste and race use the same mechanisms of oppression, “the economic ones, which have to do with access to jobs, landownership, healthcare, decent housing, and all the other expected equal amenities” (24 March, 2001). This statement links the condition of lower castes to their inability “to access jobs” in

sectors that require skills which they do not have. Further, the article explains that this results in “stratification in society on the basis of skilled and unskilled labor” (ibid.). The article clarifies that typically the upper castes are the skilled laborers because they have necessary education and opportunities to acquire skills needed for the new market economy, while the lower castes are unskilled laborers and do not have the means to acquire new skills. Here, the argument is based on the similarities between caste and “race” and does not define “race” or explicitly spell out how casteism is “racism.” Besides, this argument is embedded in an article that lauds government’s reservation policies that receive more salience. A prominent social activist, Setalvad contends in an article in *The Hindu*, “Dalits are condemned to backwardness, social, economic, and educational, because of the humble occupation the caste system has ascribed to them. Their poverty and backwardness are the consequences of historical injustices and discrimination done to them by an exploitative, occupation-based caste system” (Setalvad, 28 August 2001). The statements seek to explain that the subjugation and discrimination that Dalits face is due to the fact that the Dalits are engaged in demeaning jobs sanctioned by the “occupation based” caste system. This ascriptive occupation renders the Dalits economically downtrodden. The caste system is based on a hierarchical system where occupations are assigned to each caste group. For example, the occupation of a Brahmin is to impart education, while the occupations of Shudras are manual jobs such as cleaning, cremating dead bodies, etc. The article builds a case which focuses on class exploitation of Dalits at the hands of upper castes and further argues that “class exploitation reinforces economic inequality of the caste system, just like the racist system.” This implies that on the basis of the inequality, Dalits face further

discrimination, which “they can never overcome unless there is economic empowerment.” By arguing that the injustice that Dalits face is “historical,” the argument locates caste discrimination in the historical context dating back to the ancient times when the religious book *Manusmriti* was written. *Manusmriti* is the religious book which explains the caste system and prescribes rules of behavior for the different caste groups. By situating caste inequality historically, Setalvad presents the injustice as structural, where the methods of discrimination are normalized and naturalized within the system for centuries. However, by reducing caste to its economic base, the discourse ignores the other cultural ascriptive factors such as status and purity-pollution, which make caste a racist system. An article in *The Hindu* constructs an argument that asserts that the “class inequality structures the position of Dalits and lower castes” (6 June 2001). Here again, the statement gives primacy to the inequality in class relations among different caste groups where the lower castes are clustered within the lower class category. Caste differences within lower castes are edited out to the extent that the lower castes are considered as a single “class.” Further, the newspaper article compares caste with “race,” and argues that “caste and race relations developing out of class interests lead to class exploitation” (ibid.). Here again the exploitative relationships between caste and racial groups are situated within “class interests.” The article, however, does not make any attempt to explain how the caste system is akin to racism or define what race means.

The arguments in the newspapers reflect a Marxist orientation in the analysis of caste. The Indian Marxist scholars argue that both race and caste are based on an exploitative economic system, and caste and race relationships are based on class interests. Drawing parallels with the feudal system in Europe, Ghurye (1996), who

belongs to the Marxist school of thought, opines that the upper castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas) are similar to the nobility in France and Britain, which bestowed privileges and an aura of superiority even to those individual members who became impoverished, while the few individuals from the lowest castes who achieved wealth were denied full social rights. The *jati* dimension of caste, which refers to the hereditary groups of people supposedly associated with certain occupations (although, nowadays, in practice, many do not follow such occupations), and whose members intermarry, also has parallels in other systems of exploitation. For example, in medieval Europe, occupations such as pot-making, weaving, milling, baking, iron-working, saddle-making, etc., were often passed from father to son (hence many of the surnames that survive today: Potter, Weaver, Miller, Baker, Smith, etc.), and the guilds for each occupation were central to the social organization of towns (Ghurye, 1996). Ghurye (1996) and Srinivas (1998) explain that the growing penetration of market relations into the Indian society, interestingly, encouraged many people to turn to *jati* (ascriptive occupational groups) communities and associations for economic security, thereby seeking identification with their *jati* position in the hierarchy. For example, the Brahmins used their caste superiority to hold their own against rich merchants and big farmers (ranked lower than Brahmins) who were more successful in market terms, while the landowners used it to maintain their dominance over peasants. Peasants, with small plots of land, in turn, used to keep Untouchable landless laborers in their place. Moreover, just as the development of capitalism in the 19th century strengthened the divisions of race in the southern states of the US and in South Africa, with Blacks at the lower end of the occupation ladder engaged in blue collar jobs; it similarly hardened caste attitudes in many parts of the subcontinent



(Ghurye, 1996). In other words, just like in the racial economic hierarchy and occupational structure, in India, the Untouchables are at the bottom of the hierarchy, as sweepers, night-soil removers, coolies, rickshaw pullers, and above all, as laborers in industry and are subject to continuous humiliation.

The discourse of the class basis of caste is influenced by the Marxist scholarly arguments of ignore other social factors that function to perpetuate exclusion and discrimination. Hence, the logics of economic basis of caste constitute India as a classist nation where unequal distribution of wealth has led to the subjugation and economic displacement of the large section of the population. This view of nation is in stark contrast to the homogenous national discourse of “unity in diversity,” which obliterates all divisions of caste, class, religion, ethnicity and language, and constructs an equitable Indian nation (Narain, 1983; Shields & Muppidi, 1996). This discourse of caste as race is also antithetical to the discourse of *Hindutva*, which articulates a nation that belongs exclusively to the Hindus. However, by constituting India as a classist nation, the discourse in the newspaper ignores India’s casteism and that the discrimination and subjugation inflicted upon the lower castes and Dalits are not just the result of their economic dispossession. It is not that the newspapers deny caste. However, the representation of logics of class in the newspapers displaces the presence of inequalities resulting from ascriptive, religiously sanctioned differences and reduces all lower castes to one lower “class” bloc. Caste is a much more complex form of stratification that has economic and non-economic aspects to them and cannot be reduced to a simplistic economic base (Mathew, 1994).

The attempt to reconstitute the postcolonial Indian nation on the basis of class as opposed to caste reflects the fact that Indian media have always argued for an inextricable relationship between the discourses of class and nation from the outset of postcolonial nation building (Mankekar, 1999; Fernandes, 2001). This is due to the fact that the anticolonial nationalism has been a fundamentally middle class and upper caste phenomenon, which was implicitly embedded in the postcolonial national discourses (Chatterjee, 1991). Mankekar (1999) argues that since the dominant visions of the future of the Indian nation are fundamentally upper and middle class in their orientation, the media, which are run by upper class and caste and middle caste and class have played a crucial role in the cultural constitution of upper and middle classes as a powerful historic bloc. Through them, the national discourses of secularism, patriotism, and modernity configured a vision of India that consolidated a hegemonic coalition of upper caste Hindu power (Mankekar, 1999; Fernandes, 2001; Rajagopal, 2001). In other words, there has been a consolidation of historical forces representing the Hindu upper-caste, and upper and middle class nationalist elites as constituting a social formation. This tendency to lean toward a classist constitution of the Indian nation is evident in the newspaper discourse of caste is race, where caste, represented as an anachronistic social force is hidden or elided in the representation of the class aspirations (in this case, formation of lower class bloc) of the nation. Specifically, in this case, the media provided a positive representation of a modernist notion of “class” that can encompass the Hindus (part of the caste system) and non-Hindus (outside the traditional caste system) instead of challenging the ancient religiously sanctioned caste system that is too anachronistic and is bounded by a rigid system of classification.

### ***The Menace of Liberalization and Globalization***

Extending the theme of the material basis of caste and race, another subtheme emerges blaming liberalization of the Indian economy and globalization for the economic downfall of lower castes and Dalits.

An editorial in *The Hindu* argues, “the liberalization of economy and globalization have worsened the economic conditions of the lower castes just as the globalization has deteriorated the conditions of the lower castes in the market economy” (21 June 2001). The statement clearly places the blame on globalization and unrelenting liberalization of the economy for the increased subjugation of lower castes. Further, the editorial argues that market economy operates on skill-based jobs and a huge majority of lower caste workers lack suitable skills to access these jobs. The editorial continues that “the government needs to regularize the market and not act on the pressures of global market pull to open economy to foreign direct investment (FDI) on the primary sector (agricultural) of economy” (ibid.). This suggests that the forces of globalization need to be curbed and restrained through government policies in order to ameliorate the conditions of the agricultural sector which is mainly comprised of lower caste peoples. Globalization and liberalization are blamed in other articles too. For example, in an article on “Dalits and economic liberalization” in *The Hindu*, a political analyst, Mehta, states that, “in the countryside, the pressure of the liberalized market on tens of millions of small farmers makes them want to cut labor costs, and so increase the burden on their Dalit laborers, whereas, the rich farmers, reap all benefits” (Mehta, 5 September 2000). This statement clearly makes a distinction among Dalits who are laborers, and small and rich farmers (implying upper castes). The statement also argues how each of these groups

is affected by the market economy and Dalits are faced with “increased burden” because of loss of jobs due to mechanization of agriculture. Economic liberalization benefits only the rich farmers as they can afford modern machinery to cut agricultural costs. This argument is supported by scholars (Chopra, 2002; Pankaj, 2007) who argue that with capitalist economic development, caste is less based on economy. Ironically, as Chopra (2002) argues, the old caste loyalties and prejudices are brought into play as the poor turn on the very poor. As people flee rural poverty for the cities, caste connections become very important in knowing where to get jobs and who to talk to for them. The discourse in the newspaper argues that due to globalization, and the opening of the market, the already poor Dalit laborers are getting poorer because of loss of jobs due to mechanization of the agricultural sector.

An article in *The Times of India*, states, “those from the historically literate groups, especially Brahmins, are best placed to get ‘white-collar’ and professional posts in market economy, even if many have to eke out an existence in low-level clerical jobs with meager pay and no prospects” (2 June 2001). In this statement, the author points out the linkage between upper castes’ affinity toward white-color jobs in the liberalized market economy. The argument reveals that with the emergence of new, skilled jobs, the upper-caste, educated “professionals” mostly benefit, because they can use their skills to avail these “white-collar,” skill-based jobs and make a *shift* from their traditional, occupation-based work. In other words, job choices for the upper-caste, “literate” groups have widened significantly. This is significant in understanding the occupational choices of caste based labor, which “reinforces and maintains the economic and hierarchical stratification due to the social forces of liberalization and globalization in India” (ibid.).

This article argues that caste-based stratification is not only maintained, but also enhanced due to globalizing forces, because now, with the shift in job choices for upper castes and migration to urban areas, they are becoming stronger economically. Further, the article states that lower castes, due to a lack of skills and education, are losing out in the new market economy, as well as losing their land to the industrial setup.

An article in *The Indian Express* also contributes to this theme. The journalist explains that since “the lower castes engage in blue collar jobs and the upper castes typically have access to white collar jobs due to their higher socio-economic status, the liberalized market forces that opened up alternative jobs further perpetuate the hierarchical nature of the caste structure” (24 March, 2001). In other words, due to the push and pull of market forces, the peasants (who mostly belong to lower castes) get “blue collar” jobs in the cities, while the landowners may leave their traditional jobs in the agricultural sector and opt for “white collar” jobs in the urban area. The discourse presents a direct linkage between skilled jobs for the upper castes and the unskilled jobs for lower castes as a result of changing market economy. Further, the article creates a clear dichotomy between the upper castes and lower castes and the divisions between the castes are being translated into division between classes, which has been pronounced by the effects of the new market forces in the traditional caste based society.

This trend of the movement of upper castes to “white collar” jobs and the lower castes to “blue collar” jobs in the new market economy is shown in several studies. Recent studies (Teltumbde, 2001; Vaid, 2006; Pankaj, 2007) have demonstrated that the benefits of liberalization are not enjoyed equally by all members of individual castes, as is evidenced by the formation of what has been termed the “creamy layer,” that is, the

more advanced, literate sections of the backward castes, who are able to take advantage of preferential policies, in contrast to the more deprived, illiterate sections who cannot access the jobs because they don't have skills or competencies. Teltumbde (2001) notes that the relative distance between the "creamy layer" and non-Dalits seems to have remained the same or increased. More than 75 per cent of the Dalit workers are still connected to land; 25 per cent are the marginal and small farmers and over 50 per cent are landless laborers. In urban areas, they work mainly in the unorganized sector. As Pankaj (2007) notes, both colonial and postcolonial India has aided the process of racializing castes on the basis of who can perform certain jobs, which depended on the hierarchical position of each caste group. For example, upper castes were used by the British to do clerical jobs and after independence the administrative jobs became the preferred job choice for mostly upper castes, while to lower castes did manual jobs. Therefore, a system of classification of pre-existing social entities that assign subjects to specific positions and occupations has sustained the caste stratification in India. In other words, a continuation of hierarchies involving novel forms of resignifying socioeconomic and ascriptive differences has led to the maintenance of caste and labor and this has been exacerbated by liberalization of economy and global capital flows. Vaid (2006) observes that there is a concentration of high castes in the more secured "white-collar" occupations while lower castes are concentrated in insecure and temporary occupations. SCs are disproportionately located in the class of manual laborers, both skilled and semi-unskilled, as compared to members of higher castes, very few of whom can be found in this category. The high castes are over-represented in the more stable and prestigious "white collar" work categories, and in routine non-manual as well as in farm-owning jobs

and large businesses. The SCs, on the other end, are not only under-represented in these job classifications, they are moreover over-represented in lower income, less stable, temporary employment, in manual work categories, and as laborers (ibid.).

However, this subtheme unproblematically points to the social forces of globalization and liberalization that have translated the caste hierarchy into class hierarchy. It is problematic because liberalization and globalization are not the only reasons why the conditions of lower castes have deteriorated. The continued “social” discrimination based on socio-religio-cultural system and the negligence by the governments which are not directly linked to liberalization and globalization have also contributed to deterioration of lower caste conditions (Kothari, 1995). By arguing for an economic base, the oppositional discourse forecloses the possibility of considering the entrenched socio-religio-cultural discrimination and exclusion of the caste system. It also forecloses the possibility of locating the systemic discrimination in the administrative apparatus and in every sphere of social lives of Indians. In the previous chapter I have shown that the dominant discourse of denial blamed the liberalization and globalization for increased dependency on the West. Here again, we see that the logics of economic base of caste blame the deteriorating conditions of the lower castes, however, from a different direction. There is a significant shift of focus in the oppositional discourse. While the dominant discourse, as we saw in the previous chapter, blames the globalizing tendencies of the “West” for “meddling” in India’s “internal” affairs by creating a clear dichotomy between the East (the Indian nation) and the West, the oppositional discourse does not name any concrete “enemy” of the nation but puts the onus on the broader processes of globalization and liberalization. By not constructing any concrete enemy,

such as the external West or internal government policies and state apparatus, against whom any concrete action can be taken, the discourse fails to create a complex discussion of the motives behind liberalization of economy and the role of the government policies and financial institutions that lobbied for it. In this sense, this subtheme of liberalization and globalization accusation works under the dominant logics because in both cases the government policies or political parties are not blamed. The newspapers never mention any political parties or governmental bodies who implemented the liberalization laws and who aided the globalization process in India. An article in *The Hindu* (Mehta, 5 September 2000) does offer a suggestion to the government to regularize agricultural sectors, but does not point to Congress or the BJP's role in initiating and accelerating these processes in India. Although one cannot ignore the relationship of caste with the capitalist market economy, the relationship is more complex than how it is represented by this subtheme.

What the discourse ignores is the internal needs for liberalization of economy that developed in India and the role of both Congress and the BJP, which initiated the process of liberalization. The neoliberalism that informed the economic policies of the Congress government in the early mid-80s, interestingly also facilitated the rise of *Hindutva* discourse. Dalit's relationship with *Hindutva* and the neoliberal forces is complex. In the previous chapter I have shown the ambivalence in the BJP's attitudes toward globalization and liberalization. Since *Hindutva* is a cultural and ideological expression of the elite castes and classes in India, its inherent congruence with neoliberalism can be hypothesized to explain the special affinity between upper castes and classes (Maclean, 1999; Teltumbde, 2005). The economic reports have shown that the BJP has covertly



supported the liberalization of Indian economy and welcomed foreign investment in private sectors (Malik, 2003). The discourse fails to address the BJP's role in encouraging liberalization of economy. Moreover, it was the Congress who brought liberalizing policies in the early 90s, which was a natural economic progression because years of closed economy did not bring about desired economic prosperity. Globalization and *Hindtuva* historically began under the aegis of the Congress and both the BJP and Congress represented the ideology of the ruling class and the upper castes. Therefore, these *internal* drives toward neoliberalism and globalization that created situations in India which in turn gave rise to certain forms of economic subjugation of the lower castes and Dalits. To further extend the theme of the economic base of caste, the underlying logics also argue that Dalit and lower-caste emancipation can take place through "class alliances" among all the different lower-caste groups.

Further extending the argument of economic base of caste, the discourse also argues that Dalit and lower caste emancipation can take place through "class alliances" among different lower caste groups.

### ***Dalit/Lower Caste Emancipation through Class Alliance***

The subtheme of class alliance emerges within the economic theme. This subtheme argues that the Dalit and lower caste emancipation can be achieved through "class alliance." This is exemplified in this statement by a social activist quoted in *The Indian Express*, "the true basis of lower caste particularly Dalit emancipation, is class consciousness" (25 May 2001). This statement specifically argues that Dalits can alleviate their conditions through "class consciousness." He continues, "Dalit emancipation can materialize through the class alliance of all lower castes who are

struggling for rights” (ibid.). This statement is significant not only in calling for “class consciousness” of Dalits, but also in attempting to forge a “class alliance” of the lower castes, irrespective of their differences. Therefore, the discourse argues for abandoning the specific Dalit problems and joining with other lower castes to create a lower class bloc. The activist further argues that “lower caste voices in India are fragmented because there is no sense of cohesion among the different lower caste groups” (ibid.). What this means is that lower castes are divided by their differential caste statuses and local issues, and do not realize that they all form part of the lowest rank of the economic ladder. In order to create a “cohesive” front against the upper castes, the lower castes need to form “alliances” that obliterate caste differences. However, the article does not elaborate on why the lower castes voices are “fragmented” and how the castes are different from each other. Nor does it talk about why casteism is racism.

An article in *The Hindu* quotes a Marxist leader stating, “the first step toward Dalit emancipation is their material progress and alliances with other downtrodden caste groups” (20 June 2001). The statement seeks to generate a sense of “class” awareness and belonging across lower castes, including Dalits, rather than concentrating on problems only specific to Dalit’s caste position. Though the statement argues that the “first step” of Dalit emancipation is “material progress,” however, it ignores social and cultural progress as integral parts of Dalit emancipation. The article does not elaborate on the fact that economic emancipation is only a small part of Dalit emancipation. Further, the writer of the article does not elaborate on how “emancipation” is defined or what does “fight for dignity” entail. Dalit scholar Teltumbde (2005) argues that Dalit emancipation needs to take into account social, economic and cultural factors simultaneously in order

for Dalits to achieve their legitimate rights from the upper castes. Further, this article clearly argues that “without class awareness of all the lower caste groups,” not just Dalits, “the fight for dignity, and economic and material resources will not be realized” (ibid.). In other words, this article strengthens the logic that “class” awareness is the key to “material” and “economic emancipation” of all the lower castes. The article further argues that the “alliance of lower caste is the most effective way to create a strong political front against the overwhelmingly upper caste consolidation of political parties in India.” This suggests that the author is not only arguing for a lower class alliance, but for translating this alliance into an effective “political front” against upper castes.

In another feature article in *The Hindu*, the journalist quotes the Marxist writer to substantiate his argument that without the realization of Proletarian (lower caste) “unity” there can be no emancipation of lower castes. He quotes states, “the decisive challenge of caste and untouchability has to be defeated by the leaders of the mass struggles by inculcating a strong anti-caste feeling among the fighting toilers – above all among the workers in the spirit of proletarian unity and solidarity (Ranadive, 1999, p. 21). This statement argues that lower castes need to develop a strong “anti-caste” feeling to forge an alliance or “proletariat unity” among lower castes, a vocabulary drawn from Marx’s theory of class struggle. This statement calls for a class “spirit” among the lower caste. Further, the writer states that for a mass struggle to germinate, Dalits have to abandon their specific caste issues so that the democratic forces will open the way to political power and rapid industrialization on the basis of the socialization of all means of production and usher in an upliftment in Dalit and lower caste conditions as a whole. By quoting a Marxist scholar the author of the article clearly shows a Leftist bias and since

this article is published in *The Hindu*, which is a self proclaimed leftist newspaper, the political orientation of the author and the newspaper is evidently clear. To the same effect, an article in *The Times of India* quotes a social worker, “to achieve emancipation, lower castes need to primarily focus on making an alliance with each other to enter the new market economy as an organized labour force” (19 June 2001). His statement referred to the overwhelming concentration of Dalit and other lower caste workers in the unorganized sectors of the economy that include urban migrant workers, and unregistered day laborers. Following the same theme, he asserts that lower castes need to join with each other and “organize themselves as one “class” bloc to combat the new market forces. The argument drives home the point that the insecurity of unorganized labor market can be partially solved if the lower caste realizes their “class” potential. However, this argument is briefly mentioned in the in the middle of the article. The article mostly blames the West for pressuring eastern nations on economic and political fronts. In other words, the article mostly works under the discourse of racism denial which dominates the discourse of casteism is racism. It is interesting to note here, that *The Times of India* does not have a stated political bias; however, this article shows a leftist political leaning.

The above articles use words such as “alliance,” “unity”, “class awareness/consciousness” frequently to refer to lower caste “emancipation.” The repetition of these terms presents a particular view of lower caste emancipation that can be achieved through a “class alliance” or “unity” among lower castes to form a “cohesive” lower “class” bloc. It exemplifies the textual feature of hyponymy, in which repeated words and phrases, and thus their meanings, are interchangeable (Fairclough, 1989). In this instance, “class consciousness,” “class awareness,” and “proletariat,” “class

alliance” are substitutes for caste consciousness and Dalit or lower caste emancipation. As a result, the use of the term “emancipation” comes to mean an achievement through class consciousness and class alliance. This manages to subvert the caste system in India and reduce Dalit and other lower-caste problems to merely a lower “class” issue. Scholars (Jaffrelot, 1999; Kothari, 2000) have argued that forming a common “class” of lower castes does not necessarily address the social and cultural issues specific to each caste group. In other words, simplistic arithmetic that attempts a homogenization of all non-Brahmin castes against Brahmins is unrealistic, because it is based on the premise that there are no contradictions between lower castes.

The subtheme of Dalit emancipation through class alliance has two implications. First, it unproblematically situates Dalit emancipation within the class consciousness and material emancipation of Dalits. Second, it implies that the alliance of Dalits and other lower-caste groups can lead to Dalit emancipation. I’ll take these issues up individually. Bandopadhyaya (2002) argues that caste formations are not identical to class divisions. There is a caste structure within each class, and a class structure within each caste. Further, he argues that they generate different forms of sociopolitical belonging, loyalties, and consciousness. Both on the epistemological and empirical planes, caste consciousness proves antithetical to class consciousness, and stymies the growth of class solidarity. The unity of the working class in India is constantly weakened by the caste consciousness and caste loyalties of peasants and workers. For example, as Bandopadhyaya (2002) explains, the poor ‘upper’ caste peasant or worker does not consider his poor ‘lower’ caste co-worker or neighbor his equal, tends to look down on him, and generally refuses to build or accept any socio-cultural linkages with him.

Again, a relative well-off lower-caste peasant does not consider another well-off lower-caste peasant ranked lower than him in the caste hierarchy as socioculturally equal to him. Research by Mukherjee (2003) has shown that while workers and peasants belonging to different castes do join trade unions and participate in common struggles about purely economic issues, they generally desist from developing life-sharing socio-cultural linkages across caste barriers. In many cases, it is individual and collective economism rather than “class consciousness” that motivates participation in agitations for specific economic demands (ibid.). This is also evident from the fact that support of workers for political parties does not always correspond with their trade union belonging. One might side with the political party of his own caste rather than join the trade union. By ignoring this complex “caste” loyalties and “caste consciousness,” the theme of economic basis of caste and its subthemes, expose their ideological bias toward a Marxist analysis of lower caste emancipation that argues for “economic” or “class” basis of caste. Therefore, the discourse ignores the fact that issues of identity, communalism, and gender are equally important in how caste functions in the Indian society. Therefore, an unproblematic view of class and material base as social markers as presented by the oppositional discourse does not fully explain caste structure and process in India (Teltumbde, 2004). The discourse also ignores the fact that successful emancipation of Dalits would imply integration of Dalits in the mainstream society.

Moreover, coalescing Dalit problems with those of other lower castes dilutes Dalit issues, which are very specific to their caste. The discourse puts salience on repeatedly using words such as “lower class alliance” repeatedly in the news reporting and the word “Dalit” is not often used. This demonstrates that the discourse was emphasizing the

salience of the issue (lower class alliance) through the placement of Dalit with “lower class.” The lower class emancipation is made more salient in news texts in such a way as to present the Dalit problem as lower class problem. However, the discourse forecloses the possibility that the lower class alliance may not necessarily bring Dalit emancipation because the structural, religious, social and economic subjugation that Dalits face is not similar to the subjugation of other lower castes that comprise the lower “class” bloc. For example, the stigma of untouchability is only attached to Dalits and not other lower caste groups. Moreover, in terms of salience of news, though some arguments focus on relationship between caste and “race,” the arguments then focus on the broader caste issues such as effects of liberalization and lower class alliance and do not concentrate on why caste is a racist system. So, in effect, the oppositional discourse that apparently argues caste is race or casteism is racism loses much of its strength and dissolves into dominant logic of racism denial.

One significant feature can be observed about the Indian press and its construction of this theme of caste, race, and class. Most articles dealing with the relationship between caste, race, and class are published either in *The Hindu* or in *The Times of India*. There are very few articles in *The Indian Express*, which talked about lower-caste emancipation. As noted earlier, *The Hindu* is a self-proclaimed Leftist newspaper; however, *The Times of India* and *The Indian Express* do not have any stated political affiliation. The articles in *The Hindu* take a strong position on Dalit and lower caste emancipation through political and class mobilization of all lower castes, which exposes its leanings toward Leftist political ideology. This clearly shows that the newspaper is concerned with the salience of issues sets the agenda for the public. Agenda setting

explains the transfer of issue salience from media to the public, the contingent condition of agenda setting, and influences on media agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The underlying assumption for all three areas is that what is covered in the media affects what public thinks about it. In this case, *The Hindu* showed clear Leftist bias and set the news frames by stressing on class instead of caste and this affects attitudes because this endows with greater relevance to class than would an alternative frame of caste (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997). Tewksbury (2001) found evidence that the degree of presence, the weight or salience given to a frame in the news affected the relative emphasis given to this frame in readers' interpretation of a local policy issue. However, in contrast to *The Hindu*, *The Times of India* holds contradictory views and tries to present varied views. *The Indian Express* does not have a strong classist position vis-à-vis caste. However, both *The Hindu* and *The Times of India* argue for a strong economic basis of the caste system. In doing so, they also manage to subvert the intricacies of caste discrimination, which does not depend on merely economic inequality. The position that *The Hindu* and *The Times of India* takes is quite significant, considering the influential role that the Indian press plays among the formal and informal networks of landowners, industrialists, bureaucrats, industrial executives, and politicians-intellectuals, who constitute the large Indian middle class (Sonwalkar, 2002). Ryan (1990) and Sonwalkar (1996) argue that most Indian publications make some effort to confine views to the editorial pages and to keep news columns free from bias, though with contestable degrees of success. Overall, as scholars argue, there is tension between two roles of the Indian press: a role based in the tradition of formal opposition to the government, and the new post Independence role as an exponent of government policy in uniting the country to work for democratic and



social progress. This analysis reveals that when there is conflict between the two, the press leans toward keeping the “unity” discourse rather than destabilizing the hegemony of national interest. This further strengthens Shields and Muppidi (1996) and Rajagopal’s (2001) arguments that the Indian media have played a role in the task of uniting the different classes and castes, among others, into a homogeneous nation. The constitution of ‘unity’ is clearly visible in the previous chapter. Here, the analysis revealed that a classist unity or alliance is being forged against the cleavages of caste and race within the nation. Though the newspapers blame liberalization for deepening the economic downslide of the lower castes and Dalits, the newspapers do not criticize any political party directly; instead they give primacy to the class alliance.

Moreover, the economic theme of caste does not mention race or racism in articulating a class base of caste. Although the newspapers do not deny Dalit and lower-caste exclusion and discrimination in political and social spheres, they do not explicitly argue that this discrimination is “racism,” even though the discourse supports, however ambivalently (as the next theme will reveal), the inclusion of caste at the UN conference. This indicates that the newspapers are eliding the “race” and “racism” issue yet again through their omission, and giving salience to Dalit struggle and “emancipation” through the “alliances” of other lower castes, which can happen only within national borders (on the issue of salience, see Entman, 1983; van Dijk, 1991; Scheffele, 1996). In other words, while framing the economic logics of caste, the newspapers concentrated on the broader caste issue, which was not directly related to the UN controversy on caste. The economic, class, and Dalit emancipation issues are framed within the articles that ran with such headlines as “UN racism conference,” or “caste in UN,” or “caste, economic

oppression” and “the UN;” however, a close reading of the articles revealed that the arguments mostly ignored “race” and “racism” and their relationship with caste, and dealt with broader issues of lower-caste and Dalit struggles. By doing so, the accusation of racism is sidelined and mitigated, and it loses its power to be truly antithetical to the dominant logics. This also implies that a section of the newspapers believe that caste issues need to be addressed within national boundaries and by the Indian government.

The theme of the economic base of caste grounds the Indian nation in a classist structure of inequality, connecting the systemic, capitalist operation of unequal, racialized class/caste relations to the development and hardening of differences, while equating caste with race. In a recent study, Gimenez (2006) has shown that identity politics needs to be grounded in both cultural difference and common locations in the structures of inequality to find a solution to the inequalities within the system. However, the newspapers fail to articulate the complexities of caste, and the social, religious, and cultural elements that work in tandem to subjugate Dalits and lower castes. The emancipatory agenda cannot be realized unless progressive forces become sensitive to the specificities of oppression and exploitation resulting from the structure of caste. What the economic logic of caste fails to address is that social locations dictated by caste are influenced not only by economic dimensions, but by social and political dimensions and identities and culture, too. Although the similarities between caste and class opens new frontiers to deal specifically with the question of integrating the struggle against caste oppression with the broader class struggle in the objective Indian context, by stressing only the class or economic basis of caste, the heterogeneous issues that make the caste system unequal and discriminatory are marginalized in this argument.

The next theme calls for internationalization of caste and argues for discussing the caste issue at the UN conference.

### **The Internationalization of Caste**

The call for internationalization of caste is the second theme that builds the oppositional discourse that casteism is racism. The discourse argues that since both caste and race are comparable forms of human rights violation, caste is no more a “local” and uniquely Indian phenomenon. Hence, caste needs to be addressed on a global platform. The theme of internationalization of caste stands in a contradiction to the theme indicting liberalization of economy and “globalization” for increasing the subjugation of Dalits and lower castes. These two themes are part of the same discourse, in spite of the contradiction, because the underlying logic asserts that caste is race. However, while on the one hand, the newspapers take a position that both liberalization and globalization have deteriorated the condition of lower castes and Dalits, on the other hand, they argue for a “global” movement of caste and global alliances among different marginalized groups. Within the broad theme of internationalization of caste, there are two subthemes that work to mitigate this call for internationalization of caste and taking caste issue to the UN conference. The subtheme of lets go to Durban calls for taking the caste issue to the UN. This subtheme works under the premise that India has always supported the UN in condemning racism elsewhere in the globe and hence, there is no reason why India should not allow caste to be discussed at the UN. However, this argument loses its strength when India is constructed as a “moral” nation. The second subtheme compares Indian caste situations with global caste-like situations, particularly in South Asia, South East Asia and Japan. This manages to take some heat away from oppressive caste

situation in India and shifts the focus to similar discriminatory systems in other parts of the globe.

***Lets go to Durban but India is Moral Nation***

Several articles argue that the caste issue should be discussed at the UN conference. However, except for articles written by Dalit scholars Kancha Ilaiah and Gail Omvedt and Dalit activist Teesta Setalvad, this argument is submerged in texts, which give more salience in the framing of the argument that rejects any association between caste and race, and oppose taking caste to Durban. In that sense, the discourse of casteism is racism lacks in prominence and salience in the newspaper texts in relation to the framing of arguments of racism denial. Arguing the caste should be taken to Durban, in an article in *The Indian Express*, a Dalit activist mentions the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), which was established in India in 1998, and states that, “India and the *International Community* recognize and uphold that Dalit rights are human rights. Caste should be discussed at Durban where other human rights issues would be discussed” (4 June 2001). Through this statement, the activist argues that the Dalit issue is recognized by the “Indian” government as well as the *international community* as a “human rights” issue, and this justifies the fact that caste should be discussed at a conference dealing with issues of human rights violations from across the globe. In terms of syntactic structure, the phrase “*international community*” is italicized to give it salience and importance. Further, the article argues that the issue of human rights will facilitate the convergence of “a range of international organization, institutions and individuals working on caste discrimination not in an isolated fashion but engage in a more concerted way” (ibid.). What this implies is that the Dalit issue needs to be

discussed with other “human rights” issues at the international platform, to not only address marginalized peoples’ struggles across the globe, but also find commonalities among them that will enable the search for solutions to end discrimination. This also implies that the argument seeks to forge a global alliance to combat human rights issues, although the word alliance is not used in the article, but substituted with words like “convergence” and “concerted effort.” However, this argument is embedded towards the end of the article, which devotes more space to dissociating caste from race and argues for distinguishing caste from race on the basis of skin color. In other words, the newspaper framed the racism denial issues more prominently by stressing on why race is not caste and endowed these logics with greater relevance.

Other articles argue that since caste and race are same, caste should be discussed at the UN conference. For example, an article in *The Indian Express* argues that caste and race are similar in many ways and on the basis of that caste should be discussed at Durban. The journalist writes, “Both caste and race are similar in many ways. The experiences associated with caste are virtually indistinguishable from race. On the basis of this caste should be discussed at Durban” (15 July 2001). Though the statement claims that caste and “race” are indistinguishable, the journalist goes on to say elsewhere in the article, “both caste and race are hereditary. Unlike race, however, a caste formation is not determined by biological characteristics such as the colour of one’s skin” (ibid.). This latter statement creates a difference between the two categories based on color, which is used as a distinguishing marker to reject any association between caste and race in the dominant discourse of denial. The use of the words “unlike” or “however” or “not” clearly signifies a distinction between race and caste on biological terms. This, in effect,

undermines the notion that the caste system is based on racist ideology and the discourse loses its critical potential as it reverts to the biological signification of race through skin color, and thus, dissolves into the dominant logic that reduces race to its biological characteristics. The article does not elaborate upon the definition of race either, nor does it explain why casteism is equal to racism but argues that caste needs to be discussed at WCAR. By arguing that caste needs to be discussed at the UN, the argument seems to agree with Dalits' contention, however, makes a clear distinction between the characteristics of caste and race, which makes it impossible to see caste as a racist system that perpetuates discrimination and exclusion of lower castes and especially Dalits. In an article in *The Times of India*, a Dalit activist is quoted, "casteism is surely racism and caste should be included on UN conference agenda" (15 February, 2001). The activist's statement clearly argues that discrimination produced by caste is racism and on that basis caste should be a topic of discussion at the racism conference. However, the activist's views are embedded within the article that explains the contention between the government and the Dalits. In terms of salience, the government views that argue for a distinction between caste and race on the basis of skin color get more space than the activist's opposing views. Here, clearly the news was framed in a manner that Pinto's views received less space. As a privileged site for the construction, contestation, and criticism of issues and problems, news organizations play a leading role in establishing which local and international issues and events will be selected for attention and how they will be inflected with meaning and made salient. Although, news media may not tell readers what to think, but they have a particularly powerful effect on encouraging readers to think about certain issues and do so in certain ways (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). This is

not to say that news media have the ability or power to supersede the direct experiences of the world that individuals obtain at home, with friends, or in the workplace, but that in the sorting of issues of public concern, news media play an active, rather than simply a reflective, role. Therefore, the argument that caste is not race is made salient in the text that defines race in biological terms (Entman, 1993). The article does not explain as to why casteism is racism nor does it give enough space to his opposing view. So, even though the article presents the activist's view affirming that casteism is racism, the structuring of information increases the salience and significance of the discourse of denial (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984).

Dalit scholar Ilaiah argues in an article in *The Hindu*, “government views are nonsensical and politically mischievous, even bordering on offensive” (11 June 2001). Here the scholar directly charges that the government's refusal to address caste at the UN is “politically motivated.” This implies that government's vehement opposition is politically motivated because once the issue of caste is raised at the UN, the UN and other human rights organizations might order an enquiry commission to investigate human rights violation in India on the basis of caste. If this happens, then it will be a huge embarrassment for the Indian government. Ilaiah further argues, “Casteism is surely racism and caste should be included on UN conference agenda. Taking the caste issue to the UN forum is not only for the sake of debate. It would draw the attention of the world community so that more aid might flow in for taking up educational and empowerment programs.” Here, the scholar also argues for the advantages that discussing caste at the UN would bring. Foreign aid can tremendously help to create and sustain programs that alleviate the conditions of Dalits. In this article Ilaiah very clearly equates casteism with

racism and condemns the government for its negligence of Dalit issues and its refusal to discuss caste at the UN conference. This sentiment is also expressed by Dalit scholar Omvedt in his article in *The Hindu*. Omvedt states, “South Africa conference marks a big step ahead for Dalit issues” (4 April 2001). This statement refers to the fact that the WCAR conference in South Africa marks the culmination of the International Year of Elimination of Racial discrimination. Further, Omvedt also explains that bringing caste to the conference that year is significant because the international bodies could be instrumental in drafting policies to address caste-based racism from India. The article also mentions that Dalit supporters who had lobbied at the UN focus their energies on equating caste with race. The main contention of the Dalits is that “caste is an institutionalized system of discrimination and violates human rights, and it should be discussed at the international conference to dislodge it from its local moorings” (ibid.). Omvedt stresses on the fact that caste needs to be uprooted from India, and contextualized within a global platform. This also suggests that taking caste to Durban would create common grounds where caste can be analyzed with other cases of human rights violation. The scholar is arguing for a global alliance among all who address human rights violation issues so that common actions can be taken to combat discrimination on an international level. At the bottom of the article the newspaper mentions that Omvedt is a renowned Dalit scholar. In both Ilaiah and Omvedt’s articles it is clear that the scholars agree that since the discrimination and subjugation resulting from an inherently unequal caste system amount to racism, caste should be discussed at Durban conference on racism.



Other articles touch on global “alliances” but do not go into details to identify or address how this could be done or what is the role of NCDHR in taking the Dalit movement across national borders. For example, in an article in *The Times of India*, a political analyst argues, “in a global age, fighting racism, and similar discrimination means global alliances and international as well as national policies” (2 June 2001). Although the statement mentions “racism,” the article does not talk about how racism is defined and on what grounds global alliances could be forged. Here, while the word “racism” is used, “caste” is not. In other words, the lexical usage avoids using caste and racism in the same sentence, but refers to caste as “similar phenomenon” as racism. In another sentence in the article where a political analyst writes, “it is important that the UN is taking the initiative to discuss racism and similar issues at the WCAR. This gives a global voice to various human rights issues” (ibid.). Here again, the analyst avoids juxtaposing racism and caste in the same sentence, thereby illustrating an example of issue avoidance. In other words, by circumventing racism and “similar issue” the writer avoids dealing with the concrete or specific issue that casteism *is* racism. Although the writer argues that global “alliances” of dispossessed peoples is a significant step toward charting out policies for their betterment without concretizing how this “alliance” is going to be forged, this argument is embedded within the article which primarily dissociates caste from race. Similarly, another Dalit activist is quoted in *The Indian Express*, “going to the UN is important because it is an opportunity to forge broad alliances that protect the exploited masses from the dominant group” (4 June 2001). Here, the activist stresses on the point that taking the caste issue to an international forum has great advantages because it can create “alliances” among marginalized groups beyond

national borders. The logic behind arguing for global alliances also imply that globalization can be used effectively and positively to identify and address common systems of discrimination across the globe, and have international and national communities that seek to alleviate the conditions of marginalized groups decide on policies.

The theme of the internationalization of caste raises an important point—that of bringing the caste issue to the UN platform. However, it fails to construct a cogent and powerful argument in favor of utilizing the UN platform, and the role of the UN in pressuring the Indian government to address caste discrimination in India. The logic does not argue how the UN, an international non-governmental organization, can play a crucial role in questioning the credibility of the Indian government in safeguarding the human rights of the people residing within its territory. Hardt and Negri (2000) explain that “the entire UN conceptual structure is predicated on the recognition and legitimation of the sovereignty of individual states, [but] this process is effective only insofar as it transfers sovereign right to a real *supranational* center” (emphasis in the original, p. 5). To take caste to Durban is not only to accept this paradox, but also to deliberately transfer responsibility from the individual nation-state (in this instance, India) to a supranational body like the UN, and view the nation-state not as a protector of the marginalized groups within the nation. By denying that casteism is racism, and strongly rejecting the inclusion of caste on the conference agenda, the Indian government officials do not recognize certain rights or entitlement to nondiscriminatory treatment as human rights which are universal standards of civilized behavior of all nation-states toward one group. Conferences such as this try to re-define and reiterate the obligations of the nation-state

of which the individual is a citizen and of the international community consisting of all other nation-states and civil societies to deliver the rights by removing those discriminations. As Sengupta (2001) writes, “the right of all individuals to be treated as equal is universal, but the obligation of delivering that right is contextual depending upon the context in which that right is violated by specific discriminatory practices” (p. 169). The inclusion of caste in the conference carries significance because it provides a platform to discuss the specific forms of discrimination that casteism implies, so that the obligations of state parties and all other individuals can be defined, culpability identified, and the violators indicted. Therefore, raising the caste issue at the Durban conference is an attempt by Dalit supporters to enact a politics of “embarrassment” on an international stage, and expose the Indian caste system as a form of social stratification. However, these issues are not clearly laid out or recognized in the logic of the internationalization of caste. While the arguments clearly favour caste being discussed at the UN conference, the logic does not explicitly lay out how the UN could potentially influence or pressure the Indian government to address caste discrimination in India. Instead, the logic concentrated on forging global alliances with other marginalized groups, thereby deflecting attention from both the UN and the Indian government’s responsibility in combating caste discrimination in India.

The discourse takes a position that opposes the government’s view that caste is an internal matter; however, this position loses its critical edge when the arguments construct India as a moralistic nation. An article in *The Indian Express* argues, “India is refusing to discuss caste at the UN; however, India is a signatory to many UN rights documents condemning discrimination. India has always supported the UN in

condemning discrimination across the globe” (29 May 2001). While the editorial points out that India refused to discuss caste in a international conference, it is quick to reduce the accusation by adding that India has condemned racism in other countries, and has always supported the UN in its action against discrimination across the globe. This implies that India is concerned about racism, and is not entirely oblivious to issues of discrimination and exclusion. This reduces the negative impression that India might have given because of its reluctance to discuss caste at the UN through the positive depiction of India’s cooperation with the UN on discrimination issues. Referring to Attorney Soli Sorabjee’s statement in the *Times of India* (12 June 2001) that caste is an internal matter, an activist is quoted in *The Times of India* stating, “it is sad that the country which has not hesitated to condemn racism elsewhere, is so sensitive on the issue of caste being discussed at the global forum” (19 June 2001). The statement supports the theme that India has “condemned racism” elsewhere in the world. Though the speaker posits that India is “sensitive,” about discussing caste at the UN, however, the speaker does not accuse India directly of racism, but expresses her “sadness” about the reluctance. By using words such as “sad” and “sensitive” the theme of moral representation of India gains power, because the speaker is not engaging in an open criticism of the Indian government’s action. Agreeing with this view, the journalist argues elsewhere in the article, “India has played a positive role in condemning racism in South Africa,” and adds that India is a conscientious nation (ibid.). By referring to South Africa’s racist past and India’s role in its struggle against racism, the logic of India being a moralistic and conscientious nation is imbued with much power.

Likewise, a journalist argues in an article in *The Indian Express* that caste should be discussed at the UN. He writes, “India’s condemnation of apartheid in South Africa is well known. A moral, moralizing state needs to take caste to Durban” (2 March 2001). Here again referring to South Africa and India’s role in condemning “apartheid” creates a very positive image of India as a “moral” nation. The statement, on the one hand, seeks to portray India as one of the forerunners of social justice that has played a significant role in condemning one of the gravest racist acts in the world, but on the other hand, urges India to be open about discussing caste situation at the UN conference. However, the article does not accuse India of being racist against the lower castes. Instead, the statement creates tension between two views, one negative, and one positive. The positive view represents India as “moral” nation, and conscientious about discrimination against marginalized people. This positive representation of India discredits the accusation of racism to a certain extent. In other words, if India is such a moral nation, then how can India perpetrate racism against its own people? The verb choice such as “needs to take” implies that the author is suggesting the move to Durban as more of a prescription and not an accusation of India’s racist attitude toward caste. This modal verb choice does not explicitly charge the Indian government and appears as a subjective or personal suggestion of the writer. The point is, if India is so moral and quick to condemn racism and discrimination elsewhere, why now accuse India of racism?

Further, another subtheme emerges that compares India’s caste system with other systems of discrimination across the globe, particularly Asia.

### *Caste as a Unified South Asian Problem*

The theme of the internationalization of caste is supported by another subtheme that compares the caste system in India to discriminatory systems in other parts of Asia, particularly in South Asia. This argument is presented in *The Hindu*, which quoted a social activist, stating, “caste discourses in India are easily transferrable to discourses in other parts of South Asia. This enables caste to transcend the local and even the national border” (19 March 2001). This argument brings out the significance of the South Asian context and the specific social and cultural conditions in South Asia in which discrimination and exclusion of caste functions. By doing so, this logic challenges that highlighted in the previous chapter, which refers to caste as individual and localized. This suggests that caste cannot be attributed to a fixed category of caste “pride,” which becomes localized within a certain geographical area within India as explained in the previous chapter. Caste, as a social system of inequality can also function in other regions outside the national borders of India. The importance of the South Asian context is exemplified in another article in *The Times of India*, where a social activist states that, “caste discrimination is not just an Indian problem because caste discrimination exists in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and in related forms in Japan and parts of the African continent” (20 May 2001). The logic of the discourse shows that caste “discrimination” is attributed not to a social malaise in India only, but encompasses the entire South Asian region. This argument argues that the Durban conference provides an opportunity for subjugated caste groups across the region to unite and portray the caste issue as a “South Asian” concern. The article argues, “the discrimination across South Asia needs to be represented as South Asian problem” (ibid.). This clearly indicates that

the subtheme works toward presenting caste as a unified “South Asian” problem at the UN. In her work on caste, sociologist Reddy (2005) has shown that caste discrimination is by no means confined to Indian society alone and can be found in several countries of South Asia and East Asia, even though its nature and extent may vary. However, Reddy (2005) also mentions that unlike other systems, caste in India has religious sanctions, which make it a deeply entrenched social and cultural system of stratification. The theme of caste as a unified South Asian problem does not lay out the nature and extent of caste *differences* in South Asia and the specific conditionality of “Dalit” caste and what makes a Dalit “Untouchable.” In other words, the subtheme does not detail how caste manifests itself in India and what are the similarities and dissimilarities amongst caste groups across South Asia. The subtheme also does not explain the fact that the caste system in India is unique in its way because it is sanctioned by religious scripture, which makes it even more entrenched within the Indian society.

Further, the theme develops by not only arguing for caste as a common “South Asian” problem, but extends the similarity of caste situation to other parts of Asia. For example, in an article in *The Hindu* a journalist writes, “Untouchability is not an exclusively Indian practice. For example, because of their long association with leatherwork in the past, the Buraku of Japan suffers a predicament comparable to that of the chamars of India. The case of the Peekchongas of Korea and Ragyappas of Tibet may also be cited in this context” (8 September 2001). This statement specifically seeks to associate deprived groups in Tibet, Japan, and Korea who share the same discriminations of untouchability like the Dalits (Dalits are also known as chamars, and have traditionally been engaged in leatherwork). However, elsewhere in the article the author mentions that

“untouchability is constitutionally banned in India,” and is rarely practiced (ibid.) By clearly citing the outlawing of untouchability in India, the article maintains that the government has recognized the problem, and has taken concerted action to make it unconstitutional. This implies that in India, untouchability is a “crime” that is punishable by the law of the land. In an article in *The Indian Express* the writer pens, “the situation of indigenous people across Asia is alarming. The hill tribes of Thailand such as Akahs, Lahus, Lisus and Karens are barred from participation in the political process although their ancestors have been residing in Thailand for more than 200 years. There are several instances across Asia where indigenous people experience age-old discrimination” (29 May, 2001). This statement cites an example of hill tribes of Thailand to illustrate how “indigenous” people have been barred from “political” process of the nation-state, and since the plight of these people will be discussed at Durban, Dalit issues should also be taken to Durban. However, the journalist does not refer to the Dalits as “indigenous” people of India. As a matter of fact, Dalits are not recognized as indigenous people by the Indian government (Omvedt, 2001). A few lines after these statements on indigenous peoples, the article problematically points out that “Dalits have Constitutional rights to participate in the democratic process in India and this has always been guaranteed ever since the Constitution was created in 1950.” This statement attempts to treat the condition of the Dalits separately from the plights of other indigenous peoples across Asia. Also, the article does not define what “indigenous” means or how it is defined by the governments or whether Dalits are considered as “indigenous” people of India. By strategically portraying social and political discrimination that indigenous peoples across Asia face, the discourse attempts to present a comparative situation between the Dalits



and the indigenous peoples of Asia. However, the discourse manages to show that Dalits are better off because they “rights are constitutionally backed” as opposed to other indigenous peoples across Asia, who are politically disenfranchised. The juxtaposition of these two conditions mitigates the nature and extent of Dalit subjugation in India, which is a cultural practice sanctioned by religion. Even if Dalit “rights’ are constitutionally backed, Dalits are born into an unequal hierarchical caste system, which positions them at the bottom of the hierarchy, and they thus face discrimination and exclusion from social, cultural and political processes. Again, in an attempt to find similarities between India’s caste system and that of Japan, a journalist writes in another article in *The Indian Express*, “Let us take the case of Japan which had a caste system for a thousand years and remnants of which still survive. There is now no difference between Dalits of India and the Etas of Japan. However, unlike India, Japan has not introduced any affirmative action but depends upon educating majority public opinion” (25 June 2001). The above statement clearly draws a parallel between the caste system in Japan and the Indian caste system. This comparison draws attention to the fact that Dalit in India experience the same socio-cultural exclusion and subjugation in India as the Etas in Japan. There has been very sparse research to corroborate the similarities between the caste systems in Japan and India. Newell (1961) notes that in various parts of Japan, but principally in the centers of older Japanese cultures, there are special classes of people once known as Eta, the dirty people, but now known as Burakumin. However, there are debates among Japanese scholars and quite a few of them deny that Burakumin are a caste. Abbeglen (1958) argues that the discrimination towards Eta in Japan is one special form of the widespread departmentalization of Japanese life, in which status and grading are carefully

regulated in accordance with fairly fixed cultural norms. He also argues that one of most distinguishing features of the Burakumin and the Indian caste system is that there is no occupational specialization peculiar only to Burakumin over the whole of Japan. However, both Abbeglen (1958) and Newell (1961) agree that both the systems are extremely discriminatory toward the Burakumin and Dalits who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. The newspaper does not address or explain the similarities between the two systems. Therefore, even if there are similarities between the two, the effect of comparison loses critical edge because of the lack of information on the nature and extent of these similarities. Moreover, article clearly explains that the plight of the lower castes is ameliorated by the reservation policies, while it is not the case in Japan. This dulls the critical edge of the argument that compares Japan's discriminatory caste system with India's caste inequality. The juxtaposition of Japan's Etas and India's Dalits, where Dalits appeared to be "taken care of" by the government, at least on paper, undercuts the Dalit struggle against social injustice and discrimination, which is still prevalent in spite of government's policies. The juxtaposition of these two cases makes Dalit condition appear better in comparison to that of the Etas of Japan. Besides, this subtheme resonates with the logic of reservation policies in the previous chapter, which presents a positive and paternalistic representation of the government. Such representation trivializes the Dalit cause. Therefore, by bringing in Japan's discriminatory attitude towards the Etas, the discourse is trivializing the extent of caste based discrimination prevalent in India.

The subtheme of comparison between discriminatory systems in Asia, particularly South Asia, seeks to mitigate, trivialize, and deflect attention from the severity of the Dalit problem in India. The extent, condition, and effects of discriminatory practices in

South Asia may not be similar, and ignoring the specificities of each condition might lead to the Dalit situation being treated as part of a South Asian problem at the UN, and not as an extreme condition of socio-cultural-religious degradation and economic deprivation specific to India. The discussion of the Dalit caste issue in the context of WCAR does not effectively engage the local contexts within which Dalits become Dalits, and this may vary significantly from the social injustice prevailing in the rest of Asia. For example, caste is not only a rigid social stratification that ranks groups defined by descent and occupation, but is religiously sanctioned by the Hindu scriptures (Kothari, 1998; Reddy, 2005). This is the most distinguishable feature of the caste system, compared to other systems of stratification. By coalescing the caste system in India with other social systems of stratification in Asia, the discourse ignores this religious basis, which is deeply entrenched in the cultural and social lives of Indians. Thus, it is evident that there has been an attempt to marginalize the Dalit cause in the mainstream media discourse. The Dalit leaders wanted to discuss the “Dalit caste” problem at the UN conference, not the “South Asian” problem. However, the newspaper discourse, while seemingly supportive of the inclusion of caste at the UN conference, failed to articulate what exactly “Dalit” issues are, and the nature and extent of the caste system in India by coalescing it with other Asian systems of social stratification.

## **Conclusion**

The discourse that argues that caste is race reaffirms certain logics of the dominant civic discourse. There are considerable ambivalence and contradiction in the news construction. Fairclough (1990) argues that ambivalence is a general feature of the news discourse because of the heterogeneity of language use and also because one has to

consider whether at times the newspapers are giving words of the report or the newspapers are reformulating them. This is the case as seen from the arguments of the Dalits scholars and the positions that the newspapers take. While the Dalit scholars and activists argue that casteism is “racism,” most of the articles argue that caste and “race” are the same. However, the analysis reveals that the newspapers have more definitional control over the caste and racism issue than the Dalit activists. The discourse in the newspapers reveals that meanings of “race and “racism” suffer from a lack of conceptual clarity because these terms are not used consistently to argue that casteism is racism. The discourse attempts to fit caste in readymade, given category (of “race”) but does not communicate the specificities of the caste’s situation in India and how casteism equals to racism. Dalit scholars and activists are the ones who clearly assert that casteism is racism resulting in exclusion and discrimination. What becomes clear through the discourse is that Dalit scholars and activists, use “racism” as a condemnatory term, or at least the one capable of doing what “caste” grounded in particularity, does not. Further, the Dalit scholars and activists use “racism” to mobilize opposition to casteism by treating caste in terms of “discrimination” “subjugation” and “exclusion.” However, this contention by the Dalit scholars and activists is submerged within the predominant argument that caste is “race.” The word “race” lacks any critical meaning and is used to replace caste, without any explanation why caste is race and how it matters. In other words, if caste is race, then what, why and how does it produce discrimination and exclusion? The lack of conceptual clarity of the terms “race” and “racism” leads me to conclude that the newspapers utilize a discursive strategy to deflect attention from the real issue that caste is a racist system. The analysis is a clear indication that the discourse that casteism is racism does not flow

through to the logical conclusion that caste is based on a racist system that perpetuates discrimination and exclusion of a larger section of Indian population.

The oppositional discourse in the newspapers use “race” more as a descriptive term without any critical meaning attached to it. Arguing that caste is race does not necessarily translate into arguing that caste is a racist system, nor does it put forth a cogent explanation on the nature and extent of discrimination and exclusion that makes caste system a racist system. Race is used in this sense as a vacuous term that lacks any definition or meanings. Without defining what race is, the discourse leaves several pertinent questions unanswered such as, is it a category that has its origin in biological essentialization of groups; or is it culturally and ideologically defined? Is it used as a merely descriptive term or with more critical thrust that explains a specific form of discrimination and exclusion? Scholars (Miles, 1989; Omi and Winant, 1999; Goldberg, 2006) have questioned the analytical validity of race, and Goldberg (2006) has argued that race assumes its power in and from “the thick contexts of the geopolitical regions in which it is embedded the specific conditions of which concretize the notion of race representing them” (p. 332). But the contexts, the specific conditions and the particularities that count for socio-specific determinations that make caste acquire race like characteristics and caste based exclusion and discrimination becomes racism are not presented in the newspaper articles. Since the discourse did not give conceptual definition or distinguish between race and racism, this lack of clarity takes much power away from claim that caste is racism. Hence, the discourse fails to be an outlaw discourse. The result is that the strength of the argument that caste is race/racism decreases immensely and lacks power to generate a strong opposition to the dominant logics. Therefore, the

arguments in the three newspapers that cogitate caste with race and appear to posit that caste is race/racism, often work along the same logical line as the logics of caste is not race, and denial of racism. Hence, the logics of both denial of racism and *apparent* assertion that casteism is racism often reify the same cultural logics where “race” is denied or sidelined.

However, I argue that the very presence of oppositional voices of Dalit scholars and activists, constrains the dominant discourse of denial to permanently close meanings surround race and racism. The study of this contestation in the civic discourse is significant because the Dalits were able to bring the discussion of race and racism in public sphere for the first time in India, and had been able to turn the focus on caste racism. The unfolding controversy about Dalits’ accusation of racism as played out in the news media became the vehicle for a public debate, yet unfinished, over the re-constitution of the nation, over the meanings of race, over the caste racism, and how the meanings surrounding these are constituted in age of universal human rights. In so doing, it permitted a vocalization of concerns and conundrums not easily addressed by politics-as-usual in the mainstream civic domain. Even more, the debate entry in discussion about caste racism made it possible to contemplate and legitimate discrimination against those marginalized internal “Others,” whose plight was not given proper recognition. In so doing, it sanctioned, albeit unwittingly, to open possibilities of further discussion on a new form of racism, caste racism; a form of racism that has existed for centuries, yet concealed and hidden.

Nevertheless, most discussions that appear to be opposing the dominant position that deny that caste is racism are fraught with ambivalence and contradiction. For

example, on the one hand, the discourse constructs an argument that blames the liberalization and globalization for the increased deterioration of the economic conditions of the Dalits. On the other hand, the discourse calls for the internationalization of caste issue and welcomes the call to discuss caste at the UN conference. However, my close reading of the texts reveals that the discourse distracts the attention from the specific nature of Dalit discrimination and racism, and focuses on discrimination across Asia, particularly South Asia. This successfully manages to subvert the severity of the Dalit cause that is specific to India. The extent, condition and effects of discriminatory practices in South Asia may not be similar and ignoring the specificities of each condition has the potential to ignore extremity of racism faced by the Dalits which is a result of socio-cultural-religious degradation and economic deprivation. Further, by blaming liberalization and globalization for the conditions of Dalits and lower castes, and not constructing any concrete target per say against whom any concrete action can be taken, the arguments thereby fail to address the government policies and financial institutions that have lobbied the government for liberalizing the economy. The discourse does not specifically delve into how the internal drives within the nation have brought about liberalization of economy and how both the Congress and the BJP have aided the process of liberalization and globalization. The discourse ignores the questions such as: What is the role of the political institutions in India who initiated liberalization? What is the relationship between globalizing tendencies and *Hindutva*, and how does that affect the economic policies that affect Dalits? These are the questions that are relevant to the Dalit condition, but are completely neglected. Moreover, when arguing about economic and class basis of caste, the discourse unproblematically ignores the socio-religious-cultural

factors that link up to create the conditions of exclusion, subjugation and discrimination of Dalits. So, in other words, even if the arguments appear to be supporting the Dalit cause, they rely on specific assumptions that economic alleviation can ameliorate Dalit condition and this reproduces, in large part, the racist logic of the dominant culture by eliding and suppressing exclusion, oppression and discrimination that make caste a racist system. Thus, the discourse inadvertently allows for a reconstruction and reification of dominant logics, but from a different direction and fails to become an outlaw discourse. Therefore, the arguments in the newspapers do precisely what racist logic intends: in its opposition to social change, it reinscribes the racist assumptions of the state, even while on the surface it appears to be opposing such assumptions (Ono & Sloop, 2002).

### *Classist, Moral India?*

The discourse also constitutes India as a classist nation where unequal distribution of wealth has led to the subjugation and economic displacement of a large section of the population. This view of nation is in stark contrast to the national discourse of “unity in diversity” where all divisions of caste, class, religion, ethnicity and language are obliterated and constructs an equitable Indian nation (Narain, 1983; Shields & Muppidi, 1996). By reconstituting India as a classist nation, the discourse ignores the fact that India is also a casteist nation and the discrimination and subjugation inflicted upon the lower castes and Dalits are not just due to their economic deprivation. The discourse does not deny caste, but the logics of class obliterate inequalities resulting from caste differences and reduce all lower caste to lower class. Here again, caste is suppressed and this works within the dominant logics of the nation that have always suppressed or “silenced” caste. In other words, an attempt has been made to reconstitute the postcolonial Indian nation



on the basis of class as opposed to caste. From the outset of postcolonial nation-building, the logics of class and nation have been woven together (Mankekar, 1999; Fernandes, 2001). Chatterjee (1991) argues that the anticolonial nationalism was driven by middle class and upper caste. Further, Mankekar (1999) argues that the future of the Indian nation is predominantly shaped by upper and middle class values and Indian media have played a crucial role in cultural constitution of upper and middle classes as a powerful historic bloc. Through them the national discourses of secularism, patriotism, and modernity configured a vision of India. This has successfully articulated a hegemonic coalition of upper caste Hindu power (Mankekar, 1999; Fernandes, 2001). In other words, historical forces have represented the Hindu upper-caste, upper and middle class nationalist elites and played a significant role in nation-building. This tendency to lean toward a classist constitution of the Indian nation is evident in the newspaper discourse, where caste, observed as an anachronistic social force is subverted or hidden in the represented classist aspiration (in this case, formation of lower class bloc) of the nation. Here again, the newspapers are playing a historical role in constituting a powerful classist vision of India, where caste is suppressed and caste differences are ignored.

The discourse appears to oppose the government's view of keeping caste an internal matter; however, this position loses its strength when the discourse portrays India as a moralistic nation. The discourse does not accuse India of being a racist state that perpetuates discrimination against the lower castes. Contrary to that, the logics of the discourse highlight India's positive role in condemnation of racism in the past and attach "moral" and "moralizing" attributes to the Indian state. This further discredits the accusation of racism. By stating that "India" recognizes the Dalit rights as "human

rights,” the discourse constitutes India positively and manages to lessen the accusation of racism against Dalits. If India recognizes the Dalit issue as “human rights” problem, then it also implies that India is concerned with Dalits’ welfare and interests. This portrays India as concerned about racism and not entirely oblivious to the issues of discrimination and exclusion. Therefore, an attempt is made to juxtapose two views, one negative, and one positive. This, however, disregards the Dalit struggle against social injustice and discrimination which is still prevalent in spite of government’s policies. How are the readers to make sense of accusation of racism, when the newspapers clearly state that the constitutional rights of Dalits are protected, untouchability is outlawed and affirmative policies confer special attention Dalits?

The analysis is very much in keeping with the findings of other studies showing that mainstream media construct “hegemonic” or dominant themes, and present images and narratives that imply that social change has been made, however, “in fact the very same ideologies that media purportedly transcend actually continue to be perpetuated in media texts” (Ono & Sloop, 2002, p. 113). My study of the civic mainstream discourse of both denial of racism and assertion that casteism is racism add to the body of work on mainstream discourse that works toward reestablishing the dominant hegemonic themes. This racial project and denial of racism and apparent assertion that casteism is racism in the newspapers are fashioned partly by the resistance of those it most directly affected, that is, the racially characterized, marginalized, exploited, and excluded – the Dalits. Dalit supporters racialized the Indian nation by their attempt to include the caste agenda on the WCAR and by claiming that caste is a form of racism, which triggered the discourses in the newspapers. The discourses fail to explain how race and racism

originated in India, the historical and material conditions within which it is manifested, and the expressions, effects, and implications that indicate its similarity with race and racism in other geographical locations. Goldberg (2006) argues that contextualizing racism helps to better understand the specificity of racism. Race is used more as a descriptive term than a critical category that engages serious thoughts on how it manifests itself in the Indian context. As Goldberg (2006) explains, racism has a history of traveling and transforming in the course of its circulation, and the regional mapping of racism reveals how, in a particular locale (in this case India), it is enacted through its own material and intellectual history and typical modes of articulation. The newspaper discourses fail to identify the socio-material and political conditions in India that interacted with each other to give shape to racism. In doing so, even the opposing discourse that apparently claims that caste is race/racism, lacks any strength to be called outlaw discourse.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

This project identified two discourses of denial of race and racism in the media representation of the government officials, Dalits, and academicians' responses to the Dalit accusation that casteism is racism. The dominant discourse *Caste is Not Race* denied racism explicitly. The other discourse, *Caste is Race*, only *apparently* supported the charge that casteism is racism, albeit with deep ambivalence, and circumvented the racism charge and shifted the focus to broader caste issues. The question driving this research was: What are the discursive strategies and logics, which constitute the Indian nation in the civic discourse? Based on my analyses, I argue that the two discourses interacted with each other in the same discursive domain, and reworked, reconstituted and reified the extant cultural logics of race, caste and nation to deny racism in the postcolonial Indian context. In this chapter, first, I summarize the strategies and logics utilized in the dominant discourse, *Caste is Not Race*, and in the discourse, *Race is Caste*. Then, on the basis of the results, I advance the following theoretical claims. First, I argue that race and racism are constitutive of the postcolonial Indian nation through their denial. Second, I extend Chatterjee's (1993) model of the emergence of postcolonial nation and argue that it is necessary to recognize the constitutive function of race in the formation of the nation of India. I posit that the internal racism of the Indian nation is preventing decolonization because of the projection of internal repression and exploitation onto the West. Third, I argue that the Indian press served the interests of the dominant caste and the Indian government. Fourth, I argue that while the press incorporated opposing views on race and racism, it did so as a foil for their support of the

dominant discourse, and the government and upper caste interests. Finally, I argue for linking postcolonial work with that of critical intercultural communication theories to understand the antagonistic relationship between the national power holders and a marginalized group within a postcolonial nation.

### ***The Strategies of Denial***

The following discursive themes constituted the dominant discourse of denial: *Caste is Not Race*, were *Caste Pride*, *Reservation Policies*, *Caste is an Internal Matter and Construction of the “Meddling” West*, and *Race-talk Destabilizes the Nation*. This media discourse was a discourse of denial because it did not address the issues inherent in the Dalit accusation. Instead, these themes worked through strategies of defense as defined by van Dijk (1992). The strategies of defense, positive representation, counter attack and that of projection worked through the above specific discursive themes to deny caste racism.

The strategy of defense worked by identifying and demarcating between salient identity markers of caste and race. Caste was imbued with pride and distinguished from race, which was defined as skin color. By arguing that caste and race were fundamentally different, and claiming this difference to be “the truth,” the discourse denied the effects and presence of race and caste racism for Dalits and other lower castes in India. This theme worked as defense because it rejected the grounds for the Dalit accusation.

The strategy of positive representation of the government policies was used to deny charges of racism by constituting the Indian nation as a nation of equality and justice for all where special efforts were extended to advance the disadvantaged sections of the society by the government’s reservation policies. Following van Dijk, I argue that

the positive representation of the government's reservation foreclosed attention to the systemic racism within the caste system, and to the discrimination and exclusion of the Dalits and lower castes. In other words, if reservation policies had "ensured" equitable participation of Dalits in the Indian society, then there is no justification for the accusation of racism. This strategic positive representation obscured the entrenched systemic inequality within the society, and thereby denied caste racism. The reservation policies are symbols of social progress and modernity, and by upholding them, the discourse portrayed the Indian government as considerate and just, both nationally and internationally.

The strategy of counter attack worked through the argument that race-talk could potentially destabilize the nation's "unity." It was argued in the newspapers that race was a "divisive" element, which had the potential to raise questions and open old cleavages. To avoid addressing any questions on race or racism, the discourse explicitly rejected the existence of race in the Indian context except for its imposition through the Western gaze, and the strategy worked to silence the accusation of caste racism in India. The argument worked on the implicit understanding that race was a highly volatile issue, and was a western concept, and if discussed, it could potentially open cleavages within the nation. So, by counter-attacking the accusers for intending to destabilize the nation by creating the problem that was not there before, the caste racism charge by the Dalits was rejected.

Additionally, I identified a new strategy of projection through which the accusation of racism was denied. To justify that caste was an "internal" matter of the nation, the discourse appealed to the colonial dichotomy of the East and the West, and transferred the "blame" for racial problems onto the West, which was "meddling" in

India's internal matters again. The discourse, did not blame the UN directly for meddling in India's internal affairs, instead the UN was subsumed under the label of the West. The transference of the blame to the West and to the UN was problematic because the UN being a non-governmental organization, its members are not only the powerful western nations, but also eastern nations and newly formed postcolonial nations. Therefore, the transference of blame onto the UN also pointed to and questioned the global alliance of nations, which are committed to facilitating cooperation transcending national borders in issues on international law, security, economic development, social progress and human rights. Since the Dalit accusation was an issue of great human rights relevance, blaming the West and the UN's "meddling" tendencies had significant implication because India was indirectly undermining the UN's commitment to world cooperation, and particularly, the global concern toward human rights violations. This projection of blame was done to avoid negative impression of India, and to shift the focus on the "external" West. This foreclosed any human rights investigation into accusations of discrimination and exclusion by the Dalits by the national powers.

These various strategies of racism denial against the Dalits maintained the upper caste hegemony and defended the "in-group," that is, the upper caste as a whole, against charges of being racist. Furthermore, by blatantly denying racism, the discourse maintained the constitutional rights and commitments that presuppose and guarantee equality and justice for all; if there was no caste racism, then the question of discrimination, subjugation, oppression and exclusion of the Dalits was not possible. So in other words, the denials protected the entrenched inequality of the caste system.

The discourse, *Race Is Caste*, that only apparently supported the Dalit accusation was constructed through two themes. The first theme was *Economic Base of Caste* which had three subthemes *Caste Labor*, *Menace of Liberalization and Globalization*, and *Dalit Emancipation*. The second theme, *Internationalization of caste* had two subthemes, *Lets Go to Durban* and *Unified South Asian Alliance*. The media discourse *Race is Caste* only appeared to support the Dalit charge on the surface by representing the Dalit accusation and arguments in its coverage. Although it appeared affirmative, it, in effect, became a discourse of denial as the structural and framing prominence was given to the discourse of *Caste is Not Race*. The new strategy of denial that I identified in the themes of the *Race is Caste* discourse was a strategy of diversion.

Employing the strategy of diversion, the discourse circumvented race and racism, and ignored the concrete or specific issue that casteism *is* racism. However, the discourse did not deny caste oppression. Nevertheless, the media discourse pointed to that aspect of caste oppression, which agreed with Marxist explanation of caste- the economic subjugation of caste system, and exclusion of lower castes and Dalits on the basis of that. Communist political ideology in India forwards a Marxist interpretation of caste, and is commonly discussed in the Indian newspapers, especially, in the Left leaning *The Hindu*. Hence, the articulation of caste oppression in the civic discourse depended on a Marxist perspective, primarily advancing the Marxist political ideology, and showed commitment to economic and class interpretation of caste. I call this a strategy of diversion because it focused on only the economic basis of caste system and a goal of unified South Asian alliance instead of addressing the socio-cultural-religious specificity of the caste system of India. By circumventing issues of Dalit emancipation through class alliance, and



blaming liberalization and globalization for lower caste economic subjugation, the discourse managed only to *apparently* support the Dalit charge and did not admit that casteism had anything to do with racism. The strategic focusing only on the economic basis of caste system foreclosed questioning the religious, social and cultural underpinnings of the caste system that makes it a unique system of subjugation. Kothari (1995) argues that in order to address lower caste emancipation one needs to take into account the economic, social cultural as well as religious factors of the caste system. However, the discourse strategically edited addressing those issues out, and concentrated only on economic oppression. Through this diversion, the discourse managed to re-establish the centrality of the caste system in Indian society, and, in the end, its racist underpinnings. Therefore, the hegemonic nature of discourse operated through continually renewing, recreating, defending, and modifying the dominant order of upper caste by moving away from the specificity and sources of caste oppression, which is within the socio-cultural-religious codes of superiority/inferiority and purity/pollution codes.

My project extends van Dijk's typology of strategies of denial by two strategies: diversion and projection. Van Dijk's strategies of defense, positive representation and counter-attack had been used to deny racism in the context of societies in the West. My study is specifically grounded in a postcolonial context where the conditions and mechanisms used to deny racism included unique strategies. The postcolonial nation of India provided a unique context involving an antagonistic relationship between the colonized, East and the colonizer, West. This relationship is still maintained and strategically utilized in the political discourses in India. For example, the BJP and the

Communists have often blamed the West for its interfering tendencies toward India. So, in the context of the Dalits' accusation of racism, the already existing perceived "enemy," the external "Other," the West, was an easy scapegoat to blame. The blame was shifted to foreclose attention to the racist caste structure and India government's inability to address it. In this particular case, the West was not the perpetrator of caste racism, yet, because of its unique antagonistic position vis-à-vis India, it was an easy target of projection of blame of interference.

The strategy of diversion was used to focus *only* on the economic basis of caste oppression, and did not address the cultural, social and religious factors that make caste a deeply hierarchical system of stratification and discrimination. The diversion from addressing the non- economic factors ran through the various logics to deny caste racism. Now that I have identified the strategies used to deny racism, I delineate the underlying logics that worked to deny racism and reinstate the upper caste hegemony.

### ***The Logics***

According to Ono and Sloop (2002), logics of discourse are the principles that guide reasoning in discourse. The strategies of the dominant discourse worked on the basis of the logics of *Hindutva* and "unity in diversity" national discourses identified in chapter 3. These logics were Brahminical hegemony; meaning of race as a western domination; race as irrelevant in exclusion; caste distinction but silencing of caste oppression; homogenized diversity; and subjugation of Dalits through partial incorporation. These logics affirmed and rearticulated the two discourses of denial.

The analysis of discourse denial demonstrated that the discourse worked through and reaffirmed the logics of meaning of race as a western domination, caste distinction

but silencing of caste oppression, race as irrelevant in exclusion, subjugation of Dalits through partial incorporation, homogenized diversity were utilized to deny racism in India. However, it also showed that Brahminical hegemony was broadened to include the upper caste hegemony.

The logic of race as a western domination was affirmed through the theme of the “meddling” West interfering in the internal matters of the country. The logics completely rejected race as applicable in the Indian context. By identifying the Indian “nation” as a victim in the hands of the “meddling” West, the logics provided a means of denying responsibility for domination over the internal “Others,” and concealed the contemporary antagonistic relationship between the upper castes and the lower castes.

The logics of caste distinction worked through the theme of *Caste Pride* that silenced the caste oppression. By attaching pride to caste, which was argued to be experienced by the members of *all* caste groups, and by reducing caste pride to an individual identity marker, the logic worked to depoliticize caste and rework the Indian nation as one where people share a sense of commonality through “pride” in their caste status. Moreover, through this, a commonality among all caste groups was established, and the systemic racism of the unequal caste structure was explicitly denied. In other words, by using caste pride as an individual identity marker, the logic sustained institutionalized discrimination and subjugation of the caste system.

The logic of race as irrelevant in exclusion was affirmed through complete rejection of race in the discourse of denial. All the themes *Caste Pride*, *Reservation Policies*, *Caste is an Internal Matter and Construction of the “Meddling” West*, and *Race-talk Destabilizes the Nation* worked to reject any association between caste and race

and, thereby, rejected the charge that race functioned through caste by discriminating and excluding lower castes and Dalits.

The logic of subjugation of Dalits through partial incorporation informed the theme of the positive representation of the government's reservation policies. This logic worked by emulating reservation policies to deny any claims of racism, and constituted the Indian nation as a nation of equality and justice for all where special attention is given to the weaker sections of the society by the government. By portraying the government's achievements in a positive light, the logic of the discourse strategically constituted equitable participation of all communities and this helped in obscuring the entrenched systemic inequality within the society. This further reinforced the subjugation of the Dalits and ensured that they remained inferior, even if access to education and employment opened up opportunities for the Dalits and lower castes.

The logic of homogenized diversity worked in the rearticulation of "unity in diversity" and cultural pluralism discourses by arguing that "race-talk" could potentially destabilize the nation. The rearticulation of "unity in diversity" suppressed the exclusion of the internal "Others" within the postcolonial nation. By erasing the internal "Other," this discourse foreclosed the possibility of understanding the caste hierarchy and racial and communal divisions operative within the nation, which perpetuated discrimination and subjugation of internal "Other." Further, the discourse silenced the voices of the internal "Other" through the emphasis on "unity." By stressing on "unity," the national collective was split between patriotic and unpatriotic citizens. In other words, if the marginalized internal "Others" questioned the "unity" or expressed dissent or attempt to

criticize the nation, then they were likely to be accused of being unpatriotic or criticizing the nation.

Therefore, these logics worked to deny that casteism is racism by reworking the cultural logics of caste, race and nation and, in effect, discredited Dalits' accusation and denied the exploitation and violence perpetrated by the upper castes on Dalits.

The discourse of *apparent* support of the Dalits built on logics that caste oppression was based on economic subjugation and race was irrelevant to caste oppression. The discourse of the class basis of caste was influenced by the Marxist scholarly arguments that ignored other social, cultural and religious factors that functioned to perpetuate exclusion and discrimination. The representation of logics of class in the newspapers displaced the presence of inequalities resulting from ascriptive, religiously sanctioned differences and reduced all lower castes to one lower "class" bloc. Caste is a much more complex form of stratification that has economic and non-economic aspects and cannot be reduced to a simplistic economic base. However, these factors were excluded from the logics. Moreover, these logics largely made race irrelevant to caste oppression, and reinforced the dominant perception that economic liberalization and globalization were deteriorating the conditions of the lower castes and Dalits. Therefore, the reinforcement of the extant logics maintained the age-old cultural religious logics central to the caste system, and ensured their continuity.

Thus these various strategies and logics worked in tandem through the civic discourses to deny racism in India. On the basis of these results, I advance some theoretical claims and future directions of research.

### *Theoretical Claims*

I advance the following claims on the basis of my results. First, I argue that the Dalit accusation made the constitutive function of race visible through denial. Up to this point, race was suppressed and largely invisible in the Indian national discourses. However, with the Dalits' accusation and the articulation of denials of race and racism in the civic discourse, race and racism demonstrated their constitutive function in the constitution of meanings of social categories such as caste, class, and religion, and thereby, in the imagination of the Indian nation. According to Goldberg (2006), race assumes its power in and from "the thick contexts of the geopolitical regions in which it is embedded, and the specific conditions which concretize the notion of race representing them" (p. 332). In this case, race gains its power from the caste system, which employs racial meanings to maintain itself, even if race is denied. Following Goldberg's concept on racial regionalization, I argue that in India, race lives through the category of caste as a form of racial Indianization. Not only was the Indian nation racialized through the naturalization of Brahminic rules via exclusion of internal "Others," but the powerful institutions of the media also played a role in racialization through the civic discourses of racism denial and diversion. Further, I argue that the notion of racial Indianization offers a radical potential for understanding the constitutive functions of race within the caste system. The Dalit accusation was a gateway to broader consideration of caste racism in India, the plight of Dalits, and the insidious working of race visible.

My analyses showed that the Indian nation became imbued with racial and caste meanings and racial/caste implications via the discourses of denials and diversions. For example, by presenting caste pride as cultural and individual, caste racism was denied by

situating caste within the individual and not in the systemic inequality. In this way, the subjugation and discrimination against lower castes and Dalits are ignored, and caste racism lives on through the practices of discrimination and exclusion against them.

Through the positive representation of the government and its affirmative policies, the discrimination inherent in the caste system was ignored. Further, by reinforcing the idea of “unity in diversity,” the civic discourse concealed all internal differences and systemic inequalities within the caste system. Race lives through caste because the essence of being a Dalit (a broken person) or a member of a lower caste (inferior to the upper caste) is maintained through the very acceptance and presence of unequal caste system in India. Specifically, the dominant discourse of denial had shown that one of the meanings of *Varna* is color, although the discourse denied caste’s association with skin color.

However, in India, dark skin is almost always associated with lower castes because of the age-old perception that upper castes are fairer and more enlightened than the dark-skinned lower castes, the unenlightened. This demonstrates that just as racial categories are essentialized as immutable, inheritable, and quasi-biological behavioral attributes, caste groups are also essentialized and racialized on the basis of differences identified through quasi-biological overtones, such as fair, upper-caste Brahmins and dark, lower-caste non-Brahmins. Further, just as race is a historically and socially constructed phenomenon that has been manipulated by various social actors to mobilize specific meanings and interpretations for racial categories in order to accomplish specific political goals, caste is also utilized in India to maintain the upper caste hegemony, and to achieve specific political objectives. However, although the category of race was denied in the discourses, race lives through the caste system, and maintains the inequality of the system

through the differences, and essential qualities that are assigned to individual caste groups. This study attempted to contribute to the possibilities for social change by critically examining these discourses of denial and exposing the constitutive function of race through denial.

Second, my project extends Chatterjee's (1993) argument and demonstrated the rise of race consciousness as a movement necessary for internal decolonization and the advancement of the suppressed racialized minority. I argue that Chatterjee's model of three ideological "moments" in the historical emergence of the postcolonial nation needs to extend the inherent critique of the emergence of the postcolonial nation to include understanding of the constitutive function of race, which maintains inequality and exploitation of the lower castes and Dalits. Chatterjee's model, which explains the emergence of postcolonial nation-state, is characterized by a cultural consciousness; the mobilization of the non-passive "Oriental" population; and the hegemonic imposition of liberal state on the non-Western nation. However, Chatterjee's model does not focus on understanding of the re-institutionalization of the pre-colonial structures of domination within the newly formed postcolonial nations. Further, his model also does not explain how race functions within the postcolonial nation or how internal racism is perpetrated by the postcolonial nation's political power holders. The new power relations within the postcolonial nation are not between the old colonizers, the British and India; the main antagonism is an internal one between the political elites, the upper and upper middle castes and classes on one hand, and the lower castes and classes and Dalits and tribals on the other. So, to understand the antagonistic relations between the various constituents within the postcolonial nation, it is necessary to understand how the colonial



appropriation of the Western liberal ideals by the postcolonial nations maintains the internal unequal relation of power and discrimination and subjugation.

Considering this theoretical need for understanding the constitutive functions of race and racism within the postcolonial nation, I argue that the internal racism of the Indian nation is preventing decolonization as internal relationships of subjugation and exploitation are maintained, and covered up by simultaneous antagonism toward the West, and acceptance of and desire for new forms of western imperialism. The continuous focus on the old antagonistic relationship between the East and the West helps to maintain power of the political elites who are products of the colonial rule. My research calls for more focus on racism in postcolonial contexts, particularly India, it is necessary to ask questions that pertain to how the caste system operated in pre-colonial times, and how the re-institutionalization of pre-colonial structures of domination and caste racism took place in postcolonial India. In India, despite the fallacies and myths, racism based on caste inequality, exclusion and discrimination is a social reality that has been historically structured by the racialized caste system predating the colonial rule and the subsequent colonial racialization. These dynamics are still at work in combination with globalization pressures.

Third, the study contributed to the understanding of the complex functions of the Indian press. The Indian press denied race and racism, which served the interests of the dominant upper caste groups, and saved the face of the Indian government to the world. Ryan (1990) and Sonwalkar (1996) have argued that there is tension between two traditional roles of the Indian press: a role based in the tradition of formal opposition to the government, and the new post Independence role as an exponent of government

policy in uniting the country to work for democratic and social progress. This analysis revealed that when there is conflict between the two, the press leaned toward keeping the “unity” discourse rather than destabilizing the hegemony of national interest by advancing the Marxist political ideology that argued for class alliance and subverted social-religious and cultural dimensions of caste oppression. In other words, the Indian press forged a classist unity or alliance against the cleavages of caste and race within the nation, and subverted the discussion of the inherent inequality of position and status among different caste groups.

Fourth, although race and racism were denied, these notions entered public discourse opening up possibilities of further discussion on caste racism in the future. I argue that the apparent support of the Dalits’ claims was a strategic hegemonic foil to neutralize the opposition and charge by the Dalits. The spattering of Dalit views here and there in the news discourse served the purpose of containing an impending crisis in the interest of the dominant ideology. The newspapers disseminated information in the general interests to obscure the means by which the hegemonic order used the oppositional discourse to inscribe its version of social reality- the reality of caste oppression. Particularly, the oppositional discourse performed its decisive hegemonic function to control or transform opposition by incorporating oppositional views on the surface and creating an illusion of inclusivity of various points of view (Hall, 1980a; Hauser, 1999; Ono & Sloop, 2002; Greenberg & Knight, 2004). In effect, however, the oppositional discourse maintained the upper caste hegemony, which functioned to achieve dominance by incorporating elements of oppositional Dalit views within the wider upper caste hegemonic order, and denying the Dalit charge. However, the notion of

race and racism were introduced into the civic discourse making race less invisible, if not completely exposing its insidious working, and creating a permanent rupture in the discourses of caste, nation, and race denial. This rupture opened possibilities of further discussion of previously unacknowledged caste racism; a form of racism that has existed for centuries, yet had been denied, and has remained concealed and not seen. In so doing, the controversy permitted a vocalization of concerns and conundrums not easily addressed by politics-as-usual in the mainstream civic domain.

Fifth, this project links postcolonial work with that of critical intercultural communication field to understand the antagonistic relationship between the national power holders and a marginalized group within a postcolonial nation, and discourses of racism denial in the postcolonial nations. My research connects various theoretical strands together. Specifically, I argue that the critical lenses of postcolonial and intercultural communication theories can help in understanding the unequal relations of power within the national borders, and expose the constitutive functions of race and racism denials in the postcolonial nations.

Prominent postcolonial scholars Chatterjee (1993a, 1993b, 2001, 2006) and Comaroff and Comaroff (1999, 2001, 2004) argue that postcolonial nations are always undergoing some internal crises and research needs to focus on these “internal contradictions.” My study responded to this need to understand the internal dynamics and contestation based on unequal power relations within a postcolonial nation. Moreover, communication scholars (Hasian and Flores, 1997; Roy & Rowland, 2003; Banerji, 2006; Morus, 2007a; 2007b) have worked on constitutiveness of national discourses in various contexts, and explained how constitutive discourses create a particular collective identity

to legitimate particular ways of collective life by transcending individual differences. Specifically, Hasian and Flores, (1997) argue that it is not just the elites who constitute subjects via national discourses, but groups articulate new, temporary, or contradictory discourses by forging elements from existing discourses, or from previous constitutive rhetorics. However, these communication scholars have not addressed the specificity of the postcolonial national projects, and how the political elites and a marginalized group simultaneously attempt to reconstitute the nation occupying the same civic media space in response to an accusation of racism that could potentially “embarrass” the nation in front of the world. My study addressed the constitutive effects of the Indian media discourses by combining insights on race and discourse from intercultural communication and on nation from postcolonial writings. My study contributes to the understanding of the how the different groups with different political goals interact with each other in the civic media domain, and utilize different strategies and logics to constitute discourses surrounding race, racism and nation. Further, the critical intercultural race scholars (Omi, & Winant, 1994; 1997, 2000; Goldberg, 2002, 2006; Halualani, 2004; Flores, et al., 2006) have provided crucial directions to the study of race and racism denial. These scholars agree that the discursive construction of race needs to be analyzed within contexts, as race is an inherently contestable social and political category. Winant (1999) and Goldberg (2006) call for “constant attention and monitoring” of how race manifests in different locations since the meanings and enactment of race change with time and context. My research responded to this need for analyzing race and racism denial in different geographical contexts, particularly the postcolonial nation. The contextual framework of analyzing race enabled me to question the naturalness of race and racism

denials in the postcolonial Indian context, its relationship with caste, and how race and racism are denied as they simultaneously constitute the Indian nation. Specifically, this study contributed to the understanding of how internal racism persists and racism denial occurs within a postcolonial national context.

Combining the postcolonial and critical intercultural perspectives, my study brings a unique interdisciplinary understanding to the specificity of race and racism denials in postcolonial societies where the reinstitutionalization of pre-colonial structures of inequality is often overlooked, and focus is usually on the unequal power relations between the old colonizers and the colonized. My study argues for research that combines the critical lens of postcolonial nation theories with that of critical intercultural theories to study the constitutive function of race and racism denial within the postcolonial locations, and how these denials maintain and further re-instate the pre-colonial structures of domination and subjugation in the postcolonial nations. The on-going formation of postcolonial nation is a complicated process that requires a deep understanding of the colonial and the postcolonial historical trajectory and the cultural politics attached to it. My study also explains how the cultural logics of race and racism denials are projected onto the old colonial powers, the West, instead of looking inward, and locating the sources and functions of denials within the present structures and relations of domination. Therefore, by combining these two critical perspectives, my study attempts to broaden the approach one takes to understanding race and racism denial in specific geographical context, in this case, the context of postcolonial nations.

### *Future Directions for Studies*

The study opened up the possibilities for future studies on new forms agency of marginalized groups in a global context. As different communities resignify and reposition themselves, claim their rights and identities, and articulate their community claims and grievances, they seek possible alliances with other groups and make their claims to international organizations. The international conference on racism organized by the UN provided an opportunity for the Dalits to reach a global forum and seek support from and alliances with the international organization and communities. Scholars (Hansen & Stepputat, 2005; Speed & Collier, 2000) contend that group mobilization from below and current transnational pressures for democratization involving discourses of human rights impel states to grant rights or resist repressive measures in order not to damage their international reputation and standing within a seemingly effective international community. I contend that future research should focus on the role of the non-governmental organizations such as the UN in mediating between the contestation among the different constituents within a nation. Specifically, future studies on media discourse need to address the competing discourses of the nation-state, the UN, and the marginalized groups, and how the media discourse articulates the position of an external non-governmental organization in matters pertaining to national interest. This strategic move by the Dalits against the Indian government's position on a sensitive socially relevant issue stretched the contested zone away from the specific geographical boundaries of the nation-state of India. Further studies could focus on this contested zone where the disenfranchised subjectivities rearticulate and voice their position in their

negotiation with the national government, and the international non-governmental organization such as the UN.

Moreover, research should also look into the vernacular discourses that emanate out of the domain of marginalized groups within the postcolonial nations, and how they pose an oppositional resistance to the dominant civic discourses from the fringes. My research has shown how the vocabularies of race and racism have entered the civic domain for the first time, and opened opportunities for further discussion. I contend that more studies should focus on the interaction between the civic and vernacular discourses, and how these discourses compete with each other, interact or overlap, and attempt to reconstitute the nation, and close meanings around issues of national and international relevance.

### ***Self Reflexivity***

As I started this project, it was a challenge to analyze the conflicting discourses regarding the issue of caste, race and racism. The project enabled me to question and confront my caste and race identities, which were never part of my salient identities in India. My initial reaction to the race, caste and racism controversy was that of confusion. But the more I delved into the literature, and confronted my social status and identity in the Indian context, the more I understood the functions of race within the caste system, and how casteism is racism. The awareness of and sensitivity to the power inequality between the political and social elites and the Dalits that I have developed specifically from conducting this study will help me to promote more democratic social understandings against the denials of caste racism in social discourses. This consciousness will further enable me to understand alternative voices in competing

discourses to challenge the ongoing attempts to block new possibilities, and fight for rights for all underprivileged groups, particularly the Dalits.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., and Turner, B. (1980). *The dominant ideology thesis*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Alam, J. (1994). Tradition in India under interpretive stress: Interrogating its Claim. *Thesis Eleven*, 39, 19–38.
- Althusser, L. (1970). *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books.
- Aloysius. (1997). *Nationalism without a nation in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, J. (1996). *Communication theory: Epistemological foundations*. New York: Guilford.
- Annamalai, E. (2004). Medium of power: The question of English in education in India. In J. Tollefson, A. Tsui (Eds.) *Medium of instruction policies*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Appiah, A.K. (1990) 'Racisms', in David Theo Goldberg (ed.) *Anatomy of Racism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Asante, M. (1990). *Kemet, afrocentricity, and knowledge*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Baber (2004). 'Race', religion and riots: The 'racialization' of communal identity and conflict in India, *Sociology*, 38, 4, 701–718.
- Bagdikian, B. (1992). *Media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Balibar, E. (1991). *Race, nation and class. Ambiguous identities*. London: Verso.
- Balsamo, A. and Treichler, P. (1993). Feminist cultural studies: Questions for the 1990s. *Women and Language* 13, 1, 3–6.
- Banerji, H. (2006). Making India Hindu and male. *Ethnicities*, 6, 3, 362-390.
- Banton, M. (1987). *Racial theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barker, M. (1981). *The new racism*. London: Junction Books.
- Basu, A. (1995). Why local riots are not simply local. *Theory and Society*, 24, p.35–78.

- Basu, T., Sen, S., Sarkar, T. & Dutta, P. (1993). *Khaki shorts and saffron flags. A critique of the Hindu Right*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Beck, U. (1995). *Ecological politics in the age of risk*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bell, A. & Garrett, P. (1998). *Approaches to media discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bennett, W. (1990). Toward a theory of press-state relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, 40, 103–25.
- Bennett, W. (2003). *News: The politics of illusion*, 5th ed. New York: Longman.
- Beteille, A. (2006). *Ideology and social science*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India.
- Bhan, S. (1993). Resolution to hasten social equality. Organiser, 18 July.
- Bishop, H., Jaworski, A. (2003). Press reportage of Germany versus England during Euro 2000 We Beat 'em': Nationalism and the hegemony of homogeneity in the British *Discourse & Society*, 14, 3, 243-271.
- Bhabha, H. (1990). DissemiNation : time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation, In Homi K. Bhabha (Ed.), *Nation and narration*. New York: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. (1992). The world and the home. *Social Text*, 31/32, 141-153.
- Blumler, J. & Gurevitch, M. (1995). *The crisis of public communication*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Blumler, J., and Gurevitch, M. (2001). “‘Americanization’ reconsidered: U.K.-U.S. campaign communication comparisons across time.” In *Mediated politics: communication in the future of democracy*, ed. W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brookes, R. (1999). Newspapers and national identity: The BSE/CJD crisis and the British press. *Media, Culture & Society* 21,2, 247-264.
- Burnell, O., Randall. (2005). *Politics in the developing world*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Cambell, A., Converse, P., Miller, W. & Stokes, D. (1960). *The American voter*. New York: Wiley.
- Calafell, B. M., & Delgado, F. P. (2004). Reading Latina/o images: Interrogating Americanos. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21, 1–21.

- Carroll, W. (1992). Social movements and counter-hegemony: Canadian contexts and social theories. In *Organizing dissent: Contemporary social movements in theory and practice*. William Carroll. (Ed.). Toronto: Garamond Press.
- Castells, M. (2001) *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, business and society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chalam, K. (1990). Caste reservation and equality of opportunity in education. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 25, 41.
- Charland, M. (1987). Constitutive rhetoric: The case of the "People Quebecois." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 73, 2, 133-50.
- Chakraborty, D. (1994). Provincilizing Europe: Postcoloniality and the critique of history. *Cultural Studies*, 6, 337-57.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2004). Where is the now? *Critical Inquiry*, 30, 458\_462.
- Chatterjee, P. (1993a). *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chatterjee, P. (1993b). Nationalist thought and the colonial world: A derivative discourse? Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Chatterjee, P. (2006). *The politics of the governed: Reflections on popular politics in most of the world*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chen, K. (2001). Intellectual/political commitments: an interview with Partha Chatterjee. *Inter Asia Cultural Studies*, 2, 1, pp. 23-34.
- Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Chuang, R. (2003). A postmodern critique of cross cultural and intercultural communication research: Contesting essentialism, positivist dualism, and eurocentricity. In *International and Intercultural Communication Annual: Vol.26. Ferment in the intercultural field* (pp. 24-56). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cobb, R., & Elder, C. (1972). *Participation in American politics: The dynamics of agenda building*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Collier, M. (1998). Researching cultural identity: Reconciling interpretative and postcolonial perspectives. In *International and intercultural communication annual: Vol. 21. Communication and identity across cultures* (pp. 122–147). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Collier, M. (2001). Constituting cultural differences through discourse. In *International and intercultural communication annual: Vol. 23. Constituting cultural difference through discourse*. (135-157). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Collier, M., Hegde, R., Lee, W., Nakayama, T., & Yep, G. (2001). Dialogue on the edges: Ferment in communication and culture. In *International and intercultural communication annual: Vol. 24. Transforming communication about culture* (pp. 219–280). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Collier, M. (2005). Context, privilege, and contingent cultural identifications in South African group interview discourses. *Western Journal of Communication*, 69, 4, 295-318.
- Comaroff J., & Comaroff J. (1997). Postcolonial politics and democracy discourses. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 53, 2, 123-146.
- Comaroff, J. (1998). Reflections on the colonial state, in South Africa and elsewhere. *Social Identities*, 4, 321-361.
- Comaroff J., Comaroff J. (2001). Naturing the nation: Aliens, Apocalypse and the postcolonial state. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27, 3, 627-651.
- Comaroff, J. (2004). The end of history, again? Pursuing the past in the postcolony. In S. Kaul, A. Loomba, M. Bunzl, A. Burton, J. Esty (Eds.), *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Connolly, W. F. (2006). Europe: A minor tradition. In D. Scott & C. Hirschkind (Eds.), *Powers of the secular modern: Talal Asad and his interlocutors* (pp. 75-92). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Craig, R. (1999). Communication theory as a field. *Communication Theory*, 9,2, 199-161.
- Croucher, S. (2004). *Globalization and belonging: The politics of identity in a changing world*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Das, V. (1989). Differences and division as designs for life, in Carla Borden (ed.) *Contemporary Indian Tradition: Voices on Cultures, Nature and the Challenge of Change*, pp. 45–56. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Davis, J. & Gandy, O. (1999). Racial identity and media orientation. Exploring the nature of constraint. *Journal of Black Studies*, 29, 3, 367-397.
- Davis, O., Nakayama, T., and Martin. J. (2000). Current and future directions in ethnicity and methodology. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 5, 525-539.

- Delgado, F. (1995). Chicano movement rhetoric: An ideographic interpretation. *Communication Quarterly*, 43, 446-455.
- Delgado, F. (1998). When the silence speak: The textualization and complications of Latina/ o identity. *Western Journal of Communication*, 62, 420-438.
- DeLuca, K. & Peeples, J (2002). From public sphere to public screen: Democracy, activism, and the violence of Seattle. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19, 134-159.
- Derrida, J. (1970). Structure, sign and play in the discourse of human sciences. In MacKesy, R. & Donato, E. (Ed.). *The structuralist controversy: The language of criticism and the sciences of man*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Diawara, M. (1993). *Black-American cinema: Aesthetics and spectatorship*. NY: Routledge.
- Dickens, F., & Dickens, J. (1992). *The black manager: Making it in the corporate world*. New York: Amacom.
- Downs, A. (1972). Up and down with ecology: The issue-attention cycle. *Public Interest*, 28, 38–50.
- Drzewiecka, J. (2002). Reinventing and contesting identities in constitutive discourses: Between diaspora and its others. *Communication Quarterly*, 50, 1, 1-23.
- Dumont, L. (1988). *Homo hierarchicus. The caste system and its implications*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology*. London: Verso.
- Eaton, (1989). Agenda setting with bi-weekly data on content of three national media. *Journalism Quarterly*, 66, 942-959.
- Entman, R. (1990). Modern Racism and the Images of Blacks in Local Television News. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 7, 4, 332–45.
- Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 4, 51-58.
- Entman, R. (1994). Representation and Reality in the Portrayal of Blacks on Network Television News. *Journalism Quarterly*, 71,3, 509–20.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *Archaeology of knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.

- Foucault, M., (1977). *Discipline and punish. The birth of the prison*. London: Penguin Books.
- Fairclough, N.(1989). *Language and Power*. Essex: UK.
- Fairclough, Norman (1992). Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 3, 2, 193-217.
- Fairclough, Norman (1995a): *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London/New York: Longman.
- Fairclough, Norman (1995b): *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, N. (1998). Political discourse in the media: An analytical framework. In A. Bell & P. Garrett (Eds.), *Approaches to media discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing discourse: textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2004). Critical discourse analysis and change in management discourse and ideology: a transdisciplinary approach to strategic critique. Retrieved January 11, 2006 from <http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/norman/paper5.doc>.
- Ferguson, R. (1998). *Representing "race."* London: Arnold.
- Fernandes, L. (2000). Restructuring the New Middle Class in Liberalizing India *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 20, 1&2, 2000, pp. 88-104
- Fiske, J. (1989). *Reading the popular*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.
- Flores, L. & Hasian, Jr. M. (1997). Returning to Aztlan and La Raza: Political communication and the vernacular construction of Chicano/ a nationalism. In A Gonzalez and D.V. Tanno (Eds.), *Politics, communication and culture* (pp. 186-206). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Flores, L., Moon, D. (2002). Rethinking race, revealing dilemmas: Imagining a new racial subject in race traitor. *Western Journal of Communication*, 66.
- Flores, L., Moon, D., & Nakayama, T. (2006). Dynamic rhetorics of race: California's racial privacy initiative and the shifting grounds of racial politics. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 3, 3, 181-201.
- Fortier, A. (2005). Pride politics and multiculturalist citizenship. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28, 3 p. 559-578.

- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. C. Gordon (Ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gamson, W., Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 95, 1, 1-37.
- Gamson, W., & Meyer, D. (1996). Framing political opportunity. In D. McAdam, J. McCarthy, and M. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 275-90) New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gandy, O., & Matabane, P. (1989). Television and Social Perceptions Among African Americans and Hispanics. In M. K. Asante & W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication*, p. 318-348.
- Gandy, O. (1998). *Communication and race. A structural perspective*. Edward Arnold and Oxford University Press.
- Gans, H. (1979). *Deciding what's news*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. London: Basil Blackwell.
- Gilroy, P. (1992). *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Cambridge: Harvard, UP.
- Giroux, H. (1998). The politics of national identity and the pedagogy of multiculturalism in the USA. In D. Bennett (Ed.), *Multicultural states: Rethinking difference and identity* (pp. 178-194). London: Routledge.
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the New left*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ghose, S. (2003). The dalit in India: Caste and social class. *Social Research*., 2, 3, 45-68.
- Goldberg, D. (2002). *The Racial State*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Goldberg, D. (2006). Racial europeanization. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29, 2, 331-364.
- Golwalkar, G. (1947[1938]) *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*. Nagpur.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowel Smith. New York: International.
- Gray, H. (1995). *Watching race: Television and the struggle for "Blackness."* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

- Greenberg, J., Knight, G. (2004). Framing sweatshops: Nike, global production, and the American news media. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, p. 151 – 175.
- Gupta, D. (1995). *Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Gupta, D. (2005). Caste and politics: Identity over system.. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34, 317-341.
- Gurevitch, M., & Levy, M. (1985). *Mass communications review yearbook* (Vol. 5). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Guru, G. (1997). Understanding Dalit protest in Maharashtra. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32, 30, p. 1879-1880.
- Jensen, K. (1995). *The social semiotics of mass communication*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Keer, D. (1990). *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Kellner, D. (2005). *Media spectacle and the crisis of democracy: Terrorism, war, and election battles*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press.
- Khan, R. (1991). *Rethinking Indian federalism*. New Delhi: Saujanya Books.
- Kosambi, D. (1987). *The culture and civilization of ancient India*. Delhi.
- Kothari, R. (1994). *Politics in India*. Orient Blackswan.
- Kothari, R. (1995). *Caste in Indian politics*. Gordon & Breach Publishing Group.
- Hall, S. (1979). Culture, the media and the ideological effect. In J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, & J. Woollacott (Eds.), *Mass communication and society* (pp. 315-348). Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Hall, S. (1980a). Race, articulation and societies structured in domination. In UNESCO (Eds.), *Sociological theories, race and colonialism*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Hall, (1980b). Encoding and decoding the TV message. In S. Hall et al, *Culture, Media Language*. London: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1982). The recovery of ideology: Return of the repressed in media studies. In Curran, J. et.al. (eds.), *Culture, society and the media*. London: Methuen.



- Hall, S. (1986). The problem of ideology: Marxism without guarantees. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10, 2, 28-44.
- Hall, S. (1986). On postmodernism and articulation: An interview with Stuart Hall. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10, 45-60.
- Hall, S. (1988). *The hard road to renewal: Thatcherism and the crisis of the left*, London, Verso.
- Hall, S. (1994). Culture, Community, Nation." *Cultural Studies*, 7,3, p. 357- 363.
- Hall, S. (1996). 'Introduction: Who needs "identity"?' In S. Hall and P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, (pp.4.). London: Sage.
- Halualani, R. (2000). Rethinking "ethnicity" as structural-cultural project(s): notes on the interface between cultural studies and intercultural communication. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 5, 579-602.
- Halualani, R. (2002). *In the name of Hawaiians: Native identities and cultural politics*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.
- Halualani, R., Fassett, D., Morrison, J., Shaou-Whea Dodge, P. (2006). Between the structural and the personal: Situated sense-makings of "race." *Communication and Critical/ Cultural Studies*, 3, 1, 70-93.
- Hansen, T. (1993). RSS and the politicization of Hindutva. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXV111, 42, p. 2270-72.
- Hansen, T. (1999) *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hartmann, P., & Husband, C. (1974). *Racism and the mass media*. London: Davis Poynter.
- Harvey, D. (1996). *Justice, nature and the geography of difference*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Hasian, M. & Flores, L. (1997). Children of the Stones: The intifada and the mythic creation of the Palestinian state. *The Southern Journal of Communication*, 62, 89-106.
- Hauser, G. (1999). *Vernacular voices: The rhetoric of publics and public spheres*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Hecht, M., Collier, M. & Ribeau, S. (1993) *African American Communication: Exploring Identity and Cultural Interpretation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Hegde, R. (1996). Narratives of silence: Rethinking gender, agency, and power from the communication experiences of battered women in South India. *Communication Studies, Winter*.
- Hegde, R., Shome, R. (2002). Postcolonial scholarship: Productions and directions: An interview with Gayatri Spivak. *Communication Theory, 12*, 271-286.
- Herman, E. & McChesney, R. (1997). *The global media: The new missionaries of global capitalism*. London: Cassell.
- Hess, S. (1996). *News and newsmaking*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Hilgartner, S., & Bosk, C. (1988). The rise and fall of social problems: A public arenas model. *American Journal of Sociology, 94*, 53-78.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1990). *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Hochschild, J., Powell, B. & Weaver, V. (2008). Political discourse on racial mixture: American newspapers, 1865 to 1970. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the MPSA Annual National Conference, Palmer House Hotel, Hilton, Chicago, IL*.
- Housel, T. (2007). Australian nationalism and globalization: Narratives of the nation in the 2000 Sydney Olympics' opening ceremony. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 24*, 5, 446-461.
- Ignatiev, N. (1995). *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge.
- Jaffrelot, C. (1995). 'The Idea of Hindu Race', in Peter Robb (ed.) *The Concept of Race in South Asia*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (1996) *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Katz, E & Lazarsfeld, P. (1955). *The personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. New York: Free Press.
- Khan, R. (1994). *Bewildered India: Identity, pluralism, discord*. New Delhi :Har Anand Publications,
- Kothari, R. (1998) Integration and exclusion in Indian politics. *Economic and Political Weekly, 22*, 2223-2227.
- Keer, D. (1990). *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

- Kellner, D. (1990). *Television and the crisis of democracy*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview.
- Kellner, D. (1998) Multiple Literacies and Critical Pedagogy in a Multicultural. *Society, Educational Theory*, 48, 103-122.
- Kincheloe, J., & McLaren, P.. (1994). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 138–157). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kluver, A. (1997). Political identity and the national myth: Toward an intercultural understanding of political legitimacy. In A Gonzalez and D.V. Tanno (Eds.), *Politics, communication and culture* (pp. 48-75). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Lawrence, R. (2000). *The politics of force: Media and the construction of police brutality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lee, W. (1998). Patriotic breeders or colonized converts: A postcolonial feminist approach to antifootbinding discourse in China. In *International and intercultural communication annual: Vol. 21. Communication and identity across cultures* (pp. 11–33). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Linsky, M. (1991). *Impact: How the press affects federal policy making*. New
- Lowe, L. (1996). *Immigrant acts: On Asian American cultural politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Maclean, K. (1999). Embracing the untouchable: The BJP and the scheduled caste vote. *Asian Studies Review*, 23, 4, 488-509.
- Macdonell, D. (1986). *Theories of discourse*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Malhotra, S. and Crabtree, R. (2002). Gender, (inter) nationa(alization), and culture: Implications of the privatization of television in India. In *International and intercultural communication annual: Vol. 24. transforming communication about culture*. (pp. 60–84). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mankekar, P. (1999). *Screening culture, viewing politics*. Duke University Press.
- Manor, J. (1996). Ethnicity and politics in India. *Ethnicity and International Relations*, 72, 3, 459-475.
- Manzo, K. (1998). *Creating boundaries: The politics of race and nation*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

- Marcussen, M., Risse, T., Engelmann-Martin, D., Knopf and Roscher, K. (1999). Constructing Europe? The evolution of French, British and German nation state identities. *Journal of European Public Policy* 6, 4, p. 614-633.
- Martin, J. and Flores, L. (1998) Colloquy: Challenges in contemporary culture and communication research. *Human Communication Research* 25, 293–299.
- Martin, J. and Nakayama, T. (1999) Thinking dialectically about culture and communication. *Communication Theory* 1, 1–25.
- Martin, J. & Nakayama, T. (2000). *Intercultural communication in contexts*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- McCombs and Shaw (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-187.
- Mendelsohn, O. & Vicziany, M. (1998). *The untouchables: Subordination, poverty and state in modern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mendoza, L., Halualani, R., Drzewiecka, J. (2002). Moving the discourse on identities in intercultural communication: Structure, culture, and resignification. *Communication Quarterly*, 50, 3, 312-327.
- Mathes, R., & Pfetsch, B. (1991). The role of the alternative press in the agenda-building process: Spill over effects and media opinion-leadership, *European Journal of Communication*, 6, 33–62.
- McCombs, M., and Shaw, D. (1993). The evolution of agenda setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 2, p. 58-67.
- McCombs, M., & Zhu, J. (1995). Capacity, diversity, and volatility of the public agenda—Trends from 1954 to 1994, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 59, 495–525.
- McClintock, A. (1995). *Imperial leather*. New York: Routledge.
- McGee, M. (1975). In the search of “The people”: A rhetorical alternative. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 61, 235-249.
- McGee, M. (1980). The “ideograph”: A link between rhetoric and ideology. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 66, 1-16.
- McGee, M. (1990). Text, context and fragmentation of contemporary culture. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 54, 274-89.

- Mendoza, L. (2001). "Nuancing Anti-Essentialism: A Critical Genealogy of Philippine Experiments in National Identity Formation." In *Between Law and Culture: Relocating Legal Studies*, eds. David Theo Goldberg, Michael Musheno and Lisa S. Bower. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press.
- Mendoza, L. (2002). *Between the homeland and the diaspora: The politics of theorizing Filipino and Filipino American identities*. New York: Routledge.
- Mertus, J. (1999). *Kosovo: How myths and truth started a war*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Michael, S. (1999). *Dalits in modern India*. New Delhi: Vistar Publication.
- Miles, R. (1991) *Racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Miles, R. (1993) *Racism after Race Relations*. New York: Routledge.
- Mukherji, U.N. (1909) *Hindus: A Dying Race*. Calcutta.
- Moon, D. (1996). Concepts of "culture": Implications for intercultural communication research. *Communication Quarterly*, 44, 70-84.
- Moorti, S. (2001). Queering the nation: Diasporic cinema and media definitions of Indian femininity. In *International and intercultural communication annual: Vol. 24. Transforming communication about culture*. (pp. 132-161). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morus, C. (2007a). The SANU Memorandum: Intellectual authority and the constitution of an exclusive Serbian "People". *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 4, 2, 142-165.
- Morus, C. (2007b). Sloba the redeemer: The rhetoric of Slobodan Milosevic and the construction of the Serbian "People". *Southern Communication Journal*, 72, 1, 1-19.
- Mumby, D. (1997). Modernism, postmodernism and communication studies: A rereading of an ongoing debate. *Communication Theory*, 7, 1-28.
- Mumby, D. (1989). Ideology and the social construction of meaning: A communication perspective. *Communication Quarterly*, 37, 4, 291-304.
- Mumby, D. & Spitzack, C. (1983). Ideology and television news: A metaphoric analysis of political stories. *Central States Speech Journal*, 34, 162-171.
- Nakayama, T. & Altman, K. (1992). Rhetorics of culture. Paper presented in New Approaches to Intercultural Communication (W.S. Lee & P. Wanders, Chairs)

seminar conducted at the annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago.

- Nakayama, T. (1997). Dis/orienting identities: Asian American, history, and intercultural communication. In A. González, M. Houston, V. Chen (Eds.) *Our voices: Essays in culture, ethnicity, and communication* (pp. 14-20). Los Angeles: Roxbury.
- Nakayama, T., & Martin, J. (1999). *Whiteness: the communication of social identity*. Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications.
- Narain, I. (1976). Cultural pluralism, national integration and democracy in India. *Asian Survey* 16, 10, p. 903–917.
- Nigam, A. (2000). Secularism, modernity, nation. *Centre for the Study of Developing Studies*.
- Nimmo, D., & Combs, J. (1980). *Subliminal politics: Myths and mythmakers in America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in United States to the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.
- Omvedt, G. (2001). The UN, racism and caste. In S. Thorat and Umakant (Eds.) *Caste, Race and Discrimination*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Ono, K. (1998). Problematizing “nation” in intercultural communication research. In D. V. Tanno & A. González (Eds.), *Communication and identity across cultures* (pp. 193-202). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ono, K., & Sloop, J. (1995). The critique of vernacular discourse. *Communication Monographs*, 62, 19–46.
- Ono, K. & Sloop, J. (2002). *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, immigration, and California’s Proposition 187*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Orbe, M. (1998). *Constructing co-cultural theory: A explication of culture, power and communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Pankaj, A. (2007). Engaging with discourse on caste, class and politics in India. *South Asia Research*, 27, 3, 333-358.
- Parameswaran, R. Western romance fiction as English language media in postcolonial India. *Journal of Communication*, Summer, 84-105.
- Paletz, D. & Entman, R. (1981). *Media, power, politics*. London: The Free Press.

- Parenti, M. (1986). *Inventing Reality*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Pinto, A. (2001). UN conference against racism: is caste race? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36, 30, 2817-2820.
- Jørgenson, M. & Philips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: Sage.
- Rajagopal, A. (2001). Technologies of Perception and the Cultures of Globalization: Introduction. *Social Text*, 19, 3, pp. 1-8.
- Rajagopal, A. (2001). *Politics after television*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Publication.
- Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (2001). *Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and anti-semitism*. London: Routledge.
- Reddy, D. (2005). The ethnicity of caste. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 78, 3, 543-584.
- Ricento, T. (2003). The discursive construction of Americanism, *Discourse & Society*, 14, 5, 611-637.
- Ross, S., & Bantimaroudis, P. (2006). Frame shifts and catastrophic events: The attacks of September 11, 2001, and New York Times' portrayals of Arafat and Sharon. *Mass Communication and Society*, 9, 1, 85-101.
- Roy, A. (2001). Indian press's response to international satellite television in India: A textual analysis. In *International and intercultural communication annual: Vol. 24. Transforming communication about culture* (pp. 219-280). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Roy, A. & Rowland, R. C. (2003). The rhetoric of Hindu nationalism: A narrative of mythic redefinition. *Western Journal of Communication*, 67, 225-248.
- Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Sarda, H.B. (1906) *Hindu Superiority: An Attempt to Determine the Position of the Hindu Race in the Scale of Nations*. Ajmer: Rajputana Press.
- Sarkar, S. (1996) 'Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva', in David Ludden (ed.) *Contesting the Nation*, pp. 76-89. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Savarkar, V.D. (1969) *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* Bombay:

- Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*. London: Temple Smith.
- Sen, A. (1996) Secularism and its Discontents, in Kaushik Basu and Sanjaya Subramaniam (eds) *Unravelling the Nation: Sectarian Conflict and India's Secular Identity*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- Schlesinger, P. (1991). *Media, state and nation: Political violence and collective identities*. London: Sage.
- Schiller, H. (1992). *Mass communication and the American empire*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview.
- Semetko, H. (1996). Political balance on television: Campaigns in the United States, Britain, and Germany. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 1, 51–71.
- Semetko, H., Blumler, J., Gurevitch, M. & Weaver, D. (1991). *The formation of campaign agendas: A comparative analysis of party and media roles in recent American and British elections*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sen, A. (2001). *Development as freedom*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Shields, P., Muppidi, S. (1996). Integration, the Indian state and STAR TV: Policy and theory issues. *International Communication Gazette*, 58, 1-24.
- Shoemaker, P., & Reese, S. (1991). *Mediating the Message: Theories of influences on mass media content*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Shome, R. (1996). Postcolonial interventions in the rhetorical canon: An 'other' view. *Communication Theory*, 6, 1, 40–59.
- Shome, R., & Hegde, R. (2002). Postcolonial approaches to communication: Charting the terrain, engaging the intersections. *Communication Theory*, 12 (3), 249–270.
- Siebert, F., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1963). *Four theories of press*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Slotkin, R. (1985). *The fatal environment: The myth of the frontier in the age of industrialization, 1800-1890*. New York: Atheneum.
- Srinivas, M. (1962). *Caste in modern India*. New Delhi: Asia Publishing House.
- Steyn, M. (2003). The two nations talk: An analysis of rapprochement and alienation in two South African national radio talk shows. In M. J. Collier (Ed.), *International*



*and intercultural communication annual: Vol. 25. Intercultural alliances* (pp. 107–136). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Teltumbde, A. (2005). *Hindutva and Dalits: Perspectives for understanding communal*. Kolkata: Samya.
- Tharoor, S. (1997). *India: From midnight to the millennium*. New Delhi: Viking.
- Thorat, S., & Umakant. (2004). *Caste, race and discrimination*. New Delhi: Rawat Publication.
- Triandafyllidou, A. (1998). National identity and the “other.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21, 4, 593 -612.
- Tritscher, S., Wodak, R., & Vetter, E. (2000). *Methods of text and discourse analysis*. London: Sage
- Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news*. New York: The Free Press.
- Uberoi, P. (2002). “Unity in diversity?” Dilemmas of nationhood in Indian calendar art. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 36,1-2, 191-232.
- Vakil, A. (1985). *Reservation policy and scheduled castes in India*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- van Dijk, T. & Kintsch, W. (1983). *Strategies of discourse comprehension*. New York: Academic Press.
- van Dijk, T. (1988a). *News as discourse*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- van Dijk, T. (1988b). *News Analysis*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- van Dijk, T. & Wodak, R. (1988c). Introduction. *Text*, 8, 1-2, 1-4.
- van Dijk, T. (1991). *Racism and the Press*. London: Routledge.
- van Dijk, T. (1992). Discourse and denial of racism. *Discourse and Society*, 3, 1 , 87-118.
- van Dijk, T. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- van Dijk, T. (1995a). Discourse semantics and ideology. *Culture Psychology*, 1, 3, 315 - 342.
- van Dijk, T. (1995b). Elite discourse and the reproduction of racism. In R.K. Willock & D. Slayden (Eds.) *Hate speech* (pp. 1-27). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- van Dijk, T. (1997). Discourse as interaction in society. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as social interaction: Vol. 2. Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary Introduction* (pp. 1–35). London: Sage.
- van Dijk, T. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. London: Sage.
- Varshney, A. (1993). Contested meanings: India's national identity, Hindu nationalism, and the politics of anxiety. *Daedalus*, 122.
- Varis. The international flow of television programs. *Journal of Communication*, 34, 1, 143-152.
- Yep, G. (1998). My three cultures: Navigating the multicultural identity landscape. In J.N. Martin, T.K. Nakayama, & L.A. Flores (Eds.), *Readings in cultural contexts* (pp. 79-85). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Wacquant, L. (1997). Toward an analytic of racial domination. *Political Power and Social Theory*, 11: 221–34.
- Wetherell, M. & Potter, J. (1988). *Discourse analysis and interpretative repertoires*. London: Sage.
- Weiss, G. & Wodak, R. (2002). *Critical Discourse Analysis: Critical concepts in linguistics*.
- Wieviorka, M. (1995) *The Arena of Racism*. London: Sage.
- Wiley, S. (2004). Rethinking nationality in the context of globalization. *Communication Theory*, 14, 1, 78-96.
- Winant, H. (2000). Race and race theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 169-185.
- Wilson, C., & Gutiérrez, F., (1985). *Minorities and the media*. Beverly Hills, Ca., & London: Sage Publications.
- Wodak, R. (1989).ed., *Language Power and Ideology: Studies in Political Discourse* London: Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Wolcott, P. & S. Goodman (2003). Global diffusion of the Internet I: Is the elephant learning to dance?’, *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* 11, 560–646 (available at: [http://mosaic.unomaha.edu/India\\_2003.pdf](http://mosaic.unomaha.edu/India_2003.pdf)).
- Wolfsfeld, G. (1997). *Media and political conflict: News from the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wolfsfeld, G. (2001). Political waves and democratic discourse. Terrorism waves during the Oslo Peace Process., In W.L. Bennett & R. Entman (Eds.), *Mediated politics: Communication in the future of democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wolfsfeld, G & Sheaffer, T. (2006). Competing actors and the construction of political news: The contest over waves in Israel. *Political Communication*, 23, 3, 333-354.

### **Newspaper Articles**

Beteille, A. (30 August 2001). Caste consciousness. *The Times of India*.

Beteille, A. (2001, March 10). Race and caste. *The Hindu*. p. 4.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2001, 29 July). Battling caste. *The Hindu*, p. 7.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2001, May 23). Beneficiaries of reservation policies. *The Hindu*, p. 8.

Gupta, D. (2001, August 18). Caste is not race. *The Times of India*. p. 5.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2001, March 19). Caste and the Durban conference. *The Hindu*., p.4.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2001, September 25). Caste, race and Durban. *The Hindu*, p. 5.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2001, June 25). Caste and the UN. *The Indian Express*, p. 5.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2001, March 3). Caste away. *The Hindu*, p. 7.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2001, August 16). Going to Durban. *The Times of India*, p. 5.

Ilaiah, K. (2001, August 21). Caste and the U.N. meet. *The Hindu*, p.4.

Ilaiah, K. (2001, June 11). Durban, caste and Indian democracy. *The Hindu*, p. 5

Kannabiran, K. (2001, June 20). Caste, the academy and Dalit women. *The Hindu*, p. 4.

Mehta, P. (2000, September 5). Dalits and economic liberalization. *The Hindu*, p. 4.

Menon, N. (2001, August 3). Tackling discrimination. *The Hindu*, p. 3.

Nauttial, S. (2001, July 15). They hurt them without touching them. *The Indian Express*, p. 7.

Omvedt, G. (2001, April 4). The U.N., racism and caste. *The Hindu*, p. 5.

Setalvad, T. (2001, August 28). Demons in their mind. *The Hindu*, p. 6.