Racial Fantasies

– A Multicultural Study of the Phenomenon

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1. Introduction:

The topic of this project is racism and the problem that it addresses concerns and the factors that shape it and contribute in the persistence of its existence. This investigation will be conducted by exploring the relation, if there is any, between racism and nationalism. The point of departure will be Ghassan Hage’s book *White Nation: the Fantasies of White supremacy in a multicultural society* (1998) in which he suggests that racist attitudes take form and are expressed within the discourse of nationalism. In order to evaluate this claim, we will carry out a critical analysis by employing a number of theorists who have been writing on this subject. Firstly, it is necessary to define the concept of racism and study how it has changed over time. Secondly, we will present Ghassan Hage’s argument at length, for it is the starting point of our investigation and our primary theory. Subsequently, we will shortly present different approaches to the analysis of racism and evaluate each one of them in order to conclude whether it is the economy, or culture, that is more significant for the genesis and the reproduction of the social phenomenon of racism. The concept of ‘cultural hegemony’ will be utilized during the discussion in order to explain some of the ways that reinforce the reproduction of racist discourses. This project aims to create a balance between the cultural aspect and the economic aspect of racism and how it is still a part of the everyday discourses.
2. Problem definition:

- Is culture or economy more significant for the genesis and the reproduction of the social phenomenon of racism?

3. Research questions:

- How do we define racism through its historical development?
  
  *For the purpose of our study it is absolutely necessary to attempt to define the concept of racism in relation to its historical development.*

- In what way, in Hage’s opinion, is nationalism connected to racism?
  
  *To answer this question we will thoroughly examine Ghassan Hage’s book White Nation in order to evaluate his theory, which analyses racism through the prism of nationalism.*

- How important role does economy play in the reproduction of the discourse of racism?
  
  *This paper aims at investigating more than one aspect of racism in order to get a more holistic understanding of this phenomenon.*

- What is cultural hegemony and how is it related to racism?
  
  *Finally, after the presentation of the theory, we aspire to present the notion of cultural hegemony and discuss its contribution to the sustaining and reproduction of racist discourses.*
4. Dimensions

4.1 History and Culture

The topic of this project is very clearly situated within the History and Culture dimension. The study of history focuses on events and developments that occur throughout time, often with the purpose of providing explanations for a contemporary situation. Hence, in order to understand the phenomenon of racism, we find it relevant to learn about its historical background. For that reason we include a history of the concept by Ali Rattansi in *A very short introduction to Racism*. (2007) In his work, he analyses the development of racism over time, emphasizing the shift from biological to cultural explanations and the conflicting aspects of the symbolic and the material conditions that favour the creation and sustaining of the racist discourses.

At the same time, the study of cultures looks into the racist/national practices of everyday life and involves the examination of the so-called dominant/dominated cultures within the borders of the nation-state. The dimension of History and Culture is crucial in understanding how the people but also the societal structures and the apparatuses of the State reproduce racism in the contemporary Western society. This project’s aim is also to anchor the subject of Cultural Encounters and in order to achieve this, concepts such as ‘culture’, ‘cultural capital’ and ‘cultural hegemony’ will be thoroughly investigated in an effort to understand their function in sustaining and reproducing racist attitudes.
5. Methodology

5.1 Motivation and relevance of subject

Racism and nationalism are phenomena that everyone encounters in their daily lives, as they are embedded in the structures of society and have historical courses. Hence, they affect everyone directly or indirectly and therefore we argue that studying them is academically relevant. In the beginning of this semester Ghassan Hage, visited and gave a guest lecture at Roskilde University. This, and suggestions from our supervisor, gave us an idea to use him as a starting point for our work. Furthermore, in November, Amnesty International held the Impact Conference in Copenhagen, which handled the topical issues of racism. The main concern was how the current economic situation most likely will fuel the xenophobic attitudes. Moreover, the questions of rhetorics and how we address these issues were also raised. As the argument in both Hage’s work and at the conference, was that racism is still very much alive as it is part of the daily discourses, we were very interested to embark the study of this phenomenon.

5.2 Progress frame

The project takes its point of departure in Ghassan Hage’s *White nation*, of which we made a critical content analysis. By employing the theory of Fenton and Bradley, and examining shortly economic aspect in analysis of racism, we conducted criticism of Hage leaving vital dimensions out of his analysis as he disregards social classes. Furthermore, we studied secondary theories such as Benedict Anderson’s notion of nationalism and Pierre Bourdieu’s capitals in order to be able to analyse Hage’s theory, since he employed them himself. Also, we introduced a critique of the academic development of postmodernity for taking a cultural turn and leaving out class from the discussion of nationalism/racism. By
this approach we derive at a valid and more socio realistic conclusion than what Hage proposes by leaving out the economic perspective. Our selected sociological theory of knowledge is that of social constructivism, because we believe that knowledge, and therefore attitudes such as racism are not objective or inherent, but instead they are socially constructed. In this sense, we are opposed to essentialism, as it is expressed in the idea of racism as being an inherent xenophobic attitude. Also, essentialism, when related to the idea of race, contains the notion of certain characteristics being common property of the people who supposedly belong to one ‘race’. This disregards the differences that exist within individuals.

In addition, this semester’s progression frame was ‘theory of science’ and we feel that we have handled it successfully since we have become familiar with the theories of postmodernity, modernity, social constructivism, essentialism and Marxism. We believe that this project has fulfilled the professional standard of writing a credible academic paper by using valid theoretical references and examining the subject of racism from several standpoints.

5.3 Delimitations

To start with, it should be mentioned that this project overlooks at some extent the significance of biological racism, that is, the belief in the existence of races that posses distinguishable physical characteristics, such as skin colour, size and shape of head and more. The reason for this is the definite number of pages which did not allow for more expansion; and also the fact that we regard biological racism as an outdated scientific topic, since it is widely held by scientists today that there are not separate races in the species of Homo Sapiens, and that all human beings are a part of this species. However, we do recognize that there are still a number of scientists who are utterly in favour of supporting the idea of races and they are very
outspoken regarding their convictions. In addition, the biological discrimination has changed into a form of research concerning not the peoples’ outside characteristics, but their inner biology, classifying people according to their DNA genes. Now, newly found -although still disputed- genes of aggressiveness, homosexuality and other socially acquired attributes are being ascribed to specific genes, leading to biological determinism regarding the social behaviour of individuals. The extensions of this kind of thought are scary: they illustrate a future where the idea of blood as shaping the individuals’ behaviour prevails; and that ‘desirable’ or ‘undesirable’ attributes can be eliminated by genetic intervention. Thus, although this new type of biological racism should not escape our attention, we have chosen to focus on discrimination based on the encounter of different cultures and ethnicities.

Our project is based on racial or ethnic discriminations as they occur only in multicultural societies. The reason for this is that all the empirical data collected by our theorists were gathered in multicultural societies with increased number of immigration such as Australia, USA and Britain.

Moreover, defining ‘modernity’ and ‘post-modernity’ was a challenging part of this project because they are both very fluid concepts and they vary from discipline to discipline. Ali Rattansi in Steve Fenton and Harriet Bradley’s book *Ethnicity and Economy Race and Class Revisited* (2002) discusses the reasons why post-modernity is a problematic term, and so we have borrowed his definition in order to unfold our perception of the different approaches to racism, namely the symbolic approach which is located within a post-modern frame of social thought, and the material approach which is closely related to modernity. In addition, although we find the economic perspective very interesting, we will introduce it only shortly
because of limited space, but also because our main focus is on Hage’s cultural point of view, which happens to be the most prevalent approach today.

Another problematic term was the term ‘race’ itself for as it is said above, it is a biological term used nowadays in order to describe the socio-cultural phenomenon of racism. We think that for our purpose, which is to define the reasons for the discrimination and ‘othering’ of foreigners in multicultural societies the term ethnicity would be more suitable and more accurate. However, because almost all of our theorists employ mostly the term ‘race’, we chose to use the same in order to avoid confusion. Nevertheless, it is our major consideration whether the use of the word ‘race’ and in fact, even the word ‘racism’ – which presupposes the existence of races in order to be an accurate description of a phenomenon – do more harm then they do good. According to Derek Robbins “concepts are objects” (Robbins: 2000: 25) and therefore by conceptualizing the word race we actually give it a shape, an essence, in other words we make it exist; and thus, we sustain the differences and calibrate the distances between falsely divided groups of people.

The last delimitation of this study is that racism is a phenomenon strongly connected with other types of discrimination. Gender, sexual orientation, religion and political beliefs, are all attributes which have been used in order to classify, mistreat and even kill people. Although we find the study of these subjects very interesting, we nonetheless decided to focus only in racism in this project. We hope by doing so that we get a deep and holistic understanding of the topic, before we are able to expand and make further connections with other types of discrimination in the future.
6. Theory

6.1 Historical Overview of Racism

As emphasized by the term itself, racism is a concept, which is used to distinguish between different ‘races’ through the use of hegemonic power structures. Nevertheless, racism is not only bound to the notions of black and white, dark and light skin, but is often also a question of class and gender, which are factors, often ignored by academics attempting to describe racism. (Rattansi, 2007:2) This will be elaborated later in the project. Ali Rattansi is a professor of sociology at City University in London and is the author of *A Very Short Introduction to Racism*, (2007) which is used in this project to account for the important developments of race and racism. It is argued that racism began as a biological distinction between people, more simplistic, than the way racism is exercised today, as it has taken a cultural turn, and became a cultural and, or, economic phenomenon.

In early racism blacks were considered inferior to the superior whites, as we see in the statement of Rudyard Kipling’s: *The White Man’s Burden* from 1899. The burden of the white man was to civilize the black savages, who by their blackness were biologically- but also culturally inferior. This shows, that there existed a cultural dimension to the biological racism, but with less importance at the time being. Nonetheless, as humans have acquired more scientific knowledge, the idea of a biological division of races has been widely dismissed by science. As it is now seen that there exist no sub-species to the human race, the traditional conception of racism as a biological distinction between races is mostly discharged in academia. As this became common sense for most academics, biological racism has become an illegitimate point of view.

But in spite of the scientific evidence, the racist discourse has only changed form.
There still exist notions of race in racism and xenophobia, because the discourse, the idea of the division of human races, is continuingly reproduced in everyday life. The racist discourse has undoubtedly taken ‘a cultural turn’, however, the hegemonic structures continue to exist.

Due to the notion of discourse the discussion for the social constructivist perspective opens up. As said, biological racism has been dismissed by science, however, the discourse is kept alive in everyday interactions. This means, that racism has become a combination of several factors: biological racism, cultural racism, and radicalisation, along with class and gender aspects as well. Radicalisation is a prejudice that valorise through ethnicity or race, either positive or negatively. Social constructivism argues that our perception of the world is constructed by daily interactions and that words create our realities. Therefore it is seen, that although the concept of race contradicts the scientific knowledge on the subject, it will remain present, as long as people exercise the discourse of scientific distinctions within the human race and treat it as objective reality. As a result of the cultural turn, it is difficult to define a racial group with a entirely cultural definition of racism because the concept of racism blurs into the concept of ethnicity.

**The historic perspective:**

One of the first documented incidents of racism is ‘theological anti-Semitism’ found from the fourth century and onwards. This particular type of ‘racism’ was aimed against the Jewish minority, who had ‘killed the lord’. (Rattansi, 2007:15) This is rather a racialisation of an ethnic group than racism, however, as the project tries to depict, the definition of racism is limited and vague.
Often, encounters between different cultures, races and more have consequently ended with racism, but not just negative encounters between cultures take place, as Rattansi puts it:

"Columbus however was not completely negative about the locals of Caribbean islands; he oscillated between seeing the natives as either completely and extraordinarily good or essentially wicked. For the subsequent history of racism, it is vital to note this constitutive duality and ambivalence” (Rattansi, 2007:21)

This encounter shows that it is not determined that strangers are savages and therefore viewed negatively, but also, in some cases are seen in positive perspectives as exotic, noble savages who respect nature. The importance lies in the duality and ambivalence that Rattansi mentions there exist in the relationship between ‘us’ and ‘them’. As a result, the white coloniser legitimise their abusive actions by dehumanised the colonised. As a result, they became rich and became the centre of the world, which continue as long the hegemonic structure of racism was kept intact. If the colonised possessed humanity the west could not maintain the role as the controller, abuser and exploiter, and if they were equal it was no longer the white man’s burden and the white coloniser could no longer legitimise their supremacy over the savages. The white colonisers therefore perceived the indigenous cultures the way they had ‘expected to’ and the ‘us and them’ relation enforced the roles of ‘the colonisers versus the colonised’.

It is important to notice that there is a large difference between prejudice and racism. As Rattansi notes, prejudice has always existed in the ‘us and them’ discourse that subsist because humans always have lived in social groups, and hence, shared certain commonalities and therefore were separated from other
groups. This feeling of belonging to a specific group or community is normal, according to Rattansi, and it does not necessarily presuppose racist or xenophobic attitudes.

The idea of race and racism began as an essentialist term that suggests that everything has a fixed essence. For humans this supposes that biological characteristics as colour of skin, shape of nose, type of hair, size of skull were essential human traits that defined which race one belonged to and ‘what type of person one was’. The two great philosophers of the 18th century Immanuel Kant and David Hume connected the moral and intellectual worth of different people classified by skin colour, a very essentialist conception. And as Kant proclaimed in 1764: “This fellow was quite black . . . a clear proof that what he said was stupid.” (Rattansi, 2007: 27) Also the Swedish biologist Linnaeus exercised essentialism in the 18th century the as he extended the classification of plants and animals to include four races of Homo sapiens with distinct essentialist features. Rattansi continue the explanation of essentialism as the science of race beginning in the 19th century as he mentions Robert Know (1850), Race is Everything and Count Arthur de Gobineau Inequality of Human Races (1854) are mainstream examples:

...”Such views were united by a variety of assumptions. Firstly, that humankind could be divided into a limited number of distinct and permanent races, and that race was the key concept for an understanding of human variation. Secondly, that there were distinct physical markers that characterized the different races, especially skin colour, facial features, texture of hair, and, with the growing influence of phrenology, size and shape of skull. Thirdly, that
each race was innately associated with distinct social, cultural, and moral traits. Fourthly, that the races could be graded in a coherent hierarchy of talent and beauty, with whites at the top and blacks at the bottom.” (Rattansi 2007: 31)

**German nationalism versus the French:**

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) is famous for creating a contrast between *nation* and *race*. He argued that a nation is made up by numerous races and over a long period of time. The nation had developed over time and created its own unique culture and civilization, language, myths, songs along with the way of living. Herder is argued to have created the ‘kulturnation’ that emphasises ethnicity as the bound between people of the nation. The German model is in contrast to the French model. After the Revolution in 1789, the French enjoyed the community of the *nation*, simply by living in and taking part in the national terrain, not paying attention to ethnicity or religion. (2007: 36)

**Racism becoming a class conflict:**

Rattansi argues, “It is now generally acknowledged that the term ‘race’ entered English early in the 16th century. Race began to refer to family, lineage, and breed. In this there was some continuity with the later Middle Ages, for the term had come to signify continuity over generations in aristocratic and royal families. It was in the 18th-century period of great intellectual fervour and social change, generally referred to as the Enlightenment that the idea of race began to be incorporated into more systematic meditations on the nature of the world.” (2007:23)
As the hierarchical aristocratic order collapsed and industrialization took off, upper class society became worried about the workers flooding the cities. This became the take off for ‘internal racism’, in which class became racialised as consequence of the changing social order. Therefore, it is seen that notion of race became intricate and much more complex than the “white superiority and non-white inferiority” (2007:45)

As we have seen there is a variety of racisms, and to a certain extent, more than a single way to be a racist: xenophobic, nationalistic or ethnocentric. Further more, racism consists of contradictions and ambivalence. Rattansi argues, that this is because of the different roles and different contexts subjects navigate in. One of the problems of the term is that: “Explanations of racism that rely on innate biopsychological characteristics thus presuppose the existence of race, and even then rely on questionable reasoning to establish connections between them” (2007:130) In other words, racism is an indefinite term that presupposes an existences of races, and also, an inequality amongst the proclaimed races. Consequently, racism is a problematic term as it reproduces ambiguous structures that are no longer acknowledged by most scientists.

6.2 Cultural Analysis of Racism

Introducing ‘White Nation’

This project’s theoretical cornerstone is Ghassan Hage’s book White Nation, published in 1998. Ghassan Hage is a professor of anthropology in the University of Melbourne, Australia, and has published widely on multiculturalism. He has based a lot of his theory on Whiteness studies, while he has borrowed concepts
from Pierre Bourdieu’s *Distinction, A Social critic of the Judgment of Taste* (1979) and *The State Nobility* (1996) and Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1983) in order to produce his theory. For this reason, both Anderson’s notion of ‘imagined communities’ and Bourdieu’s notion of ‘capitals’ will be presented in this chapter as well. In addition, it is worth noting that Ghassan Hage takes as his field of study the nation-state of Australia; however, he aims at creating a theory that will be applicable and thought provoking with regard to all multicultural societies.

Hage argues that nationalism is the new racism. This is demonstrated by the hegemonic views of the dominant group over the national space. He distinguishes between white racists and white multiculturalists: the commonality between the two is conceptualized in the term ‘tolerance’: One has the power to choose to tolerate, thus he is, or feels he is, in a state of power to decide. This choice of tolerance, and therefore the sense of control over the national space, revolves around the ‘white fantasy’, which Hage sees as the dominant yet subconscious attitude of both the white racists and the white multiculturalists. The white fantasy is the illusion of hegemony bound to the ‘Anglo-ness’ of the subject, which places white Australians in a power position above immigrants. Groundbreaking for this theory is that this illusion, hence fantasy, exist for multiculturalists as well. Hage hence considers both racists and multiculturalists as nationalists, for they assume that they are in a power position to accept or reject newcomers and subsequently, racism is in reality a form of expression of nationalistic feelings.

**Whiteness studies**

Dr. Gregory Jay, Professor of English in University of Wisconsin, USA, introduces Whiteness studies as a critical multiculturalism; its purpose is to analyse the inequalities of powers within multicultural societies. These inequalities are
considered to both influence and result from racially, socially, sexually
discriminative practices. According to Jay, Whiteness Studies aim at challenging
the so-called white privilege and trace what is the concept of whiteness that has
been economically and politically created. In addition, whiteness studies academics
endeavour to examine the cultural practices that create and propagate the narrative
of "whiteness". The idea is not to study a certain group based on the skin colour but
the way of thinking; how the idea and idealisation of whiteness has been
systematically, structurally, and at times unintentionally used as an instrument to
dominate others and as a something to pursue. The international character of white
privilege originates from the European colonial imperialism, consequently, the
studies are interrelated with postcolonial and globalisation studies. Whiteness
studies originate from analysing the white hegemony as a historical process and
contemporarily occurring domination. (https://pantherfile.uwm.edu/gjay/www/Whiteness/introwhite.htm)

**Anderson’s view of the nation as ‘imagined community’**

In his widely acknowledged book *Imagined Communities*, which was first
published in 1983, Anderson attempts to explain the origins of nationalism and
provide a definition for the concept of nation. To begin with, the author finds
intriguing the fact that in today’s politics, terms difficult to define such as ‘nation’,
‘nationality’ and ‘nationalism’ play a fundamental role in shaping the dominant
discourse of this area. In addition, he cites that “nation-ness is the most universally
legitimate value in the political life of our time” (2006: 3). More specifically,
Anderson mentions three paradoxes which according to his view have long
confused the scientists attempting to define nation and nationalism: 1) the objective
modernity of nations to the historian’s eye versus their subjective antiquity in the
eyes of nationalists. 2) The belief that nationality is a universal socio-cultural
concept that everyone in the modern world can, should or will have (therefore an acquired quality) versus the permanent particularity of its specific demonstrations such as that ‘Greek’ nationality is ‘sui generis’ (and therefore inherent). 3) The political power of nationalism versus their philosophical poverty and even incoherence, meaning that nationalism, as an ideology has not produced, according to Anderson, any grand thinkers. (2006: 5)

Anderson’s main argument is that the nation is an imagined political community that is imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (2006: 6). He explains the term “imagined” from the point of view that the members of the nation, which might number from several thousand up to many millions, who do not know each other, and yet they uphold feelings of solidarity and brotherhood towards each other, since they are convinced that they belong to the same group. He then proceeds to explain the word “community” as such: “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship” (2006: 7). Besides, he believes that the nation-state is based on a specific philosophy about political legitimacy with roots in the 18th and 19th century’s cultural homogenisation created by industrialization and the subsequent transition from monarchic dynasties to the bureaucratic state. The author dedicates the first seven chapters of his book to describe “the processes by which the nation came to be imagined, and, once imagined, modelled, adapted and transformed” and the following four chapters endeavouring to explain the reasons “for the attachment that peoples feel for the inventions of their imaginations – or...why people are ready to die for these inventions” (2006: 141).

Mentioning briefly some of the reasons that led the nation to be imagined as community, Anderson suggests that print-capitalism gave the people access to the previously inaccessible Latin scripts, destroying in this way the right of the church
and the aristocracy to claim a monopoly on knowledge. This had as a result (altogether with the impact of the Enlightenment) the cessation of the belief in the divine right of monarchy to rule. Hence, the need of re-legitimization and the consequent diffusion of power from the dynastic monarchies to the bourgeoisie was, in a great extent, a direct result of print-capitalism. Secondly, the “development of print-as-commodity” made possible the establishment of a “horizontal-secular, transverse-time” type of community (2006: 37). That is, a community that is united in time even though is very spatially extended, creating thus a sense of “simultaneity” (2006: 145), and the feeling of belonging into the same group. Thirdly, print-capitalism together with the protestant Reformation and the administrative centralization (a more or less direct result of the industrial Revolution and the urbanization which followed) led to the discarding of Latin and the emergence of “national-print languages” (2006: 46), which also suppressed the local dialects in favour of the national. In Anderson’s words,

“What made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print) and the fatality of human linguistic diversity.” (2006:43)

More specifically, in the chapter “Patriotism and Racism” the author explains how people think of their nation as pure, and how they respond to the national anthems and national emblems in general. He calls this respond unisonance, which describes the sensation of “simultaneity” which was mentioned earlier and which produces this feeling of brotherhood for a distant person we never heard of. Through educating the subjects of the nation-state to identify themselves with the national emblems, the nation-state naturalizes itself and reproduces the discourse of
nationalism. Subsequently, one can draw the conclusion that both Anderson and Hage believe that nationalism is unavoidable at the moment that a person, being a subject of a constructed (or “imagined”) nation, learns to identify himself with a specific group of people and to distance himself from the “other”. However, Anderson does not only criticize nationalism; he also mentions that the love for nation can be a very selfless emotion and that there are historical examples of sacrificing one’s self for the nation. In addition, a point of difference between Anderson and Hage is that Anderson sees the ideology of the nation as something that unifies the people within the boundaries of a nation-state and alienates them from the people outside these boundaries. Hage, on the other hand, thinks of nationalism as a cause for division within the territory of the nation-state.

**Bourdieu’s notions of capitals**

In an article published in 1986 as a part of J. E. Richardson’s book *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*, Pierre Bourdieu explains the different types of capitals and their attributes. He begins by writing that “the social world is accumulated history” (Bourdieu in Richardson, 1986: 46) and that this happens because the capital is accumulated over time, leading to the formation of specific power structures within the society. The result, he argues, is that the existence of a situation where every moment is independent from its previous one, and where there is perfect competition and equality without accumulation, heredity or acquired properties, is impossible. (1986: 46) In relation to the capital’s qualities, Bourdieu writes that it is accumulated over time and it has the capacity of producing profit and reproducing itself in a persistent manner. In addition it reproduces the structure of the distribution of various forms of capitals indicates the inherent structure of the social world (1986: 46). He argues that there are three
main types of capital:

“... capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital which is immediately and directly convertible into money and maybe institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital which is convertible, on certain conditions into economic capital and maybe institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and maybe institutionalizes in the form of a title of nobility.” (1986: 47)

Social capital

The social capital reflects the valuable connections of a person with other people. These could be family relations, membership in a political party, being part of a class, of a tribe, of an organisation, of a sports club or other associations. In order to maintain the social capital someone has to invest time, and probably economic capital, as exchange (sometimes material) is a crucial aspect of social relations. Apart from that, sociability and vast amount of energies to be invested in the social relations are necessary. (1986:51-53) Some people inherently own great social capital, when they happen to come from a family with a good/well-known name, or, in the best of occasions, to come from a noble family. Others acquire social capital by assimilating into a prestigious/dominant group.
Cultural capital

According to Bourdieu, the cultural capital “can exist in three forms: the embodied state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc), which are the trace of realization of theories or critics of these theories, problematics etc; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee.” (1986: 47) The embodied cultural capital is for Bourdieu what he has calls ‘habitus’, the culture that one has within him, unconsciously accumulated since he was born, since “all humans inherit dispositions to act in circumscribed ways” (Robbins, 2000: 26) He describes it as “external wealth converted into integral part of a person” (1986: 48) which cannot be purchased or exchanged.

The objectified state of cultural capital is various material cultural goods that have a material value as well as a symbolic value. However, the objectified cultural capital’s symbolic value is seized only when there exists in relation with the embodied form. (1986: 50) This means that a person cannot make use of for example the symbolic value of a very famous artist’s painting (capital in objectified form), if he does not possess the embodied cultural capital to recognize the artistic value of the painting, apart from its economical one.

Bourdieu defines the institutionalised state of cultural capital as “academically sanctioned by legally guaranteed qualifications, formally independent of the person of their bearer...a certificate of cultural competence...” (1986: 50). In other words, the institutionalised state is the legitimate recognition of cultural capital by the institutions of the state.
Bourdieu bases his theory of cultural capital on empirical research in education institutions, where he realised that even within the same social classes the levels of academic success varied significantly, and he criticizes the fact that the functionalist definition of education overlooks the contribution of the educational system in reproducing the already existing social relations of power by “sanctioning the hereditary transition of cultural capital”. (1986:48)

Regarding the concept of ‘taste’ and of dominant taste, Bourdieu explains that of all objects offered for consumers’ choice, none are more classifying than legitimate works of art, which, distinctive in general, enable the production of distinction to the infinite by playing on divisions and sub-divisions into genres, periods, styles, authors and more. Within the position of particular tastes, which can be created by successive divisions, it is then possible, still keeping the major oppositions, to create three zones of taste, which correlate to the education levels and social classes. This means, there exists a span of ‘tastes’, equal to the social classes, but also, there exists a dominant taste aspired for through distinction, hence through distinctive consumption. (Bourdieu, 1979:16)

To conclude, it has to be noted that the economic capital can function as a means of acquiring social and cultural capital, however, as Bourdieu argues (1986: 53) at a great expense, because of the size of effort and time that one has to invest in this procedure. Despite of this, the value of social and cultural capital in a society that would value higher the possession of economic capital is debatable.

**Evil nationalists, good nationalists, and the ‘White Nation’ fantasy**

Now that we have explained the academic influences on Hage’s theory, we will examine in what way Hage claims that racism is actually maintained within the context of nationalism. In the first part of his book, he writes mostly about the
“cultural political scene” in Australia and the blurry zone of indistinction in which he believes that the political rhetorics for and against multiculturalism are located. More specifically, Hage distinguishes between the “evil nationalists” who are using racist and xenophobic discourses when addressing the issue of immigration; and the “good nationalists” who support controlled immigration, integration and tolerance. (1998: 22-23) According to the author, both types share a common characteristic: that they view themselves as rightful owners and managers of the national space. Thus, by having the ability to choose whether or not to tolerate and whether to engage in racist acts or not, the nationalists, no matter from which political spectrum they come, place themselves in a higher position than the immigrants. And it is from this superior position where they judge whether the newcomers are worthy to become accepted in Australia’s White nation.

Moreover, both these groups share a ‘White nation’ fantasy which Hage defines as “a fantasy of a nation governed by White people, a fantasy of White supremacy” (1998: 18) though it is expressed differently from each of the groups. The evil nationalists engage in speeches and actions of White racism; while the good nationalists express their fantasy of White supremacy through the tolerant practices of White multiculturalism. It has to be noted here that Hage uses the terms ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in order to highlight the way that the majority of the people usually perceive the different strategies and discourses employed by multiculturalists and racists respectively. His aim is to expose the disguised nationalistic discourses of the White multiculturalists.

**National capital**

Hage’s second chapter asks, “How do some people inhabiting the nation manage to take up such a managerial position within it and not others?” (1998:49) The answer to this is by accumulating the attributes acquired to possess the feeling of
governmental belonging and this is achieved by accumulating enough national capital.

As mentioned earlier, Bourdieu argued that the accumulated cultural capital within a field is converted into symbolic capital. Hage takes this theory further by arguing that within the boundaries of the nation-state, symbolic capital is translated into national capital. The desired result is that the people within a nation will achieve recognition from the dominant cultural group, therefore they would be able to feel national belonging (1998:51) He then proceeds to argue that immigrants find it hard to acquire national capital because “The extent to which they can accumulate national capital is linked to the cultural possessions and dispossessions (what Bourdieu calls ‘habitus’-one’s historically acquired structure of the personality) they bring with them.” (1998:54) Hage also supports that in Australia and in any other multicultural society “this ruling class as itself constituted by a field in which various people hold various capitals which give them power vis-à-vis the rest of the society, but which are not of equal value in the field of power itself” (1998:55), thus, he recognizes that within the dominant group (similarly as in the dominated) there is still inequality and competition for power.

In Australia’s case accumulated national capital is accumulated whiteness. Whiteness is defined from Hage as such: “[It is] a fantasy position of cultural dominance born out of the history of European expansion”. (1998: 20) In the same page he states that Whiteness is an ‘aspiration’ and not an ‘essence’ that someone has within him, which apparently means that not everyone shares this ideal.

**National belonging and governmental belonging**

We are hereby going to explain in more detail what the aforementioned concepts of national and governmental belonging mean. The accumulation of national capital
is, according to Hage, unbreakably connected with the feelings of national belonging and governmental belonging. Hage here distinguishes between the acquisition of citizenship which is the “institutional-political acceptance” (1998: 51) and also “the main formal indicator of national belonging” (1998:49) and the practical national belonging, which includes qualities such as the mastering of the national language, accent, the length of stay, the comprehension and exercise of the local cultural practices among other things. In other words, the practical national belonging is achieved through assimilating into the dominant group’s “taste”, and in this case, the cultural dispositions of each migrant group (their habitus) is determining the degree up to which the assimilation can take place (1998:54). Therefore, the national belonging is not connected as such with the obtaining of citizenship, since it is determined mostly from the level of acceptance by the dominant cultural community.

In addition, he criticizes the common notion that the people who are granted (or forced to get, in cases of nomadic people) a national citizenship have automatically gained the acceptance of the community (1998:49) At the same time Hage states that it is exactly this acquisition of the citizenship that one gets later in life that separates him from those who were born with it because of Australian descent (1998: 50- 51). This is one more point which Hage’s inspiration from Bourdieu’s writing is clear, because Bourdieu in his State Nobility argues that the dominant taste when shared by the dominated classes loses its value; therefore, even though the dominated group is trying to assimilate into the dominant class’ ideas and habits, they will still be treated as inferior. Migrants, especially when they are Third World-looking, deploy some attributes, such as Christianity, to be appreciated by the dominant culture, nevertheless, “No matter how much national capital a ‘Third World-looking’ migrant accumulates, the fact that he or she has
acquired it, rather than being born with it, devalues what he or she possesses compared to the ‘essence’ possessed by the national aristocracy.” (1998:62)

Governmental belonging, on the other hand, takes the inclusion of the subject of the nation-state one step further. The people who feel governmental belonging within a country are exactly the nationalists described above (both racists and multiculturalists) for they feel that their national belonging allows them to contribute in the management of the national space. In other words, the belief that “one has rights over the nation” and can have a “legitimate opinion with regard to the internal and external politics of the nation” (1998: 46). This attitude is exactly what constitutes the difference between passive belonging and active belonging, meaning that the one who passively belongs to the nation is included in the laws and maybe has the acceptance of the locals up to some degree -for example the Aboriginals- because he has accumulated some national capital. At the same time, however, they do not possess the governmental belonging that would enable them to actively participate and try to influence the politics of the nation-state. It is necessary to emphasize that governmental belonging, similarly to national belonging, is strongly based on the accumulation of national capital, and therefore, Whiteness.

**National practices**

**Racist practices**

With regards to the connection between racism and nationalism, Hage writes that what we usually perceive as racially motivated practices is in reality nationalist practices. He explains this on the ground that the belief in the existence of races and in the superiority or inferiority of some of them “does not carry within it an imperative for action” (1998: 32). It is only when people start worry about where
these ‘races’ are located, when they are ‘too many’ or when they threaten the privileged mode of inhabiting a specific place that hateful or discriminative actions take place. Therefore he argues, “such practices are better conceived as nationalist practices than as racist practices, even if racist modes of thinking are deployed within them.” (1998:32)

In addition he cites that the nationalists have an idea of how the nation ‘should be’ or how ‘it used to be’ connecting homely feeling with the national territory. Benedict Anderson’s theory of the imaginary of the nation accounts as a clear explanation of these feelings of homely belonging and connections of solidarity between the fellow nationals. According to Hage one not only considers nation, the home, as one’s own, but also thinks he has a privileged mode of inhabiting it and is spatially empowered to position/remove others. (1998:42) In Hage’s words: “Just as much as the nation is imagined as a homely construct, the nationalist body is also imagined to inhabit it in specific way such as it can cast its managerial gaze on the home.” (1998:45) The immigrants thus become the reason for the loss of home, familiarity, security and the image of the nation as it used/ought to be.

In this sense, racist actions against, for example, Muslim women who wear religious symbols, happen because of them representing something undesirable rather than them being conceived as inferiors for the attacker. This is to be defined as a violent nationalist act of exclusion, rather than racist violence. (1998:48) Furthermore, Hage considers that “The classification of these practises as ‘racist’ has often helped to construct them as if they belonged to a minority mode of thinking totally alien from that held by the majority.” (1998:76), however, if we were to view these practices as nationalistic, we would soon arrive to the conclusion that these actions are not so marginal after all.
When it comes to tolerant practices, Hage argues that they are in fact nationalist practises such as ones perceived as racist violence, for they are structurally similar. They share and inhabit the same imaginary position of power within a nation imagined as ‘theirs’ and enact the same fantasy of the White nations superiority. (1998:78) Hage asks, “What does one do when one tolerates?” (1998: 88); the answer to this question is that tolerance is yet another strategy to manage the national space. (1998:20) While the ‘evil’ nationalists practise exclusion, the tolerant nationalists (the multiculturalists) practice inclusion while controlling it, so that the limits are set and well defined from the beginning.

Quite often the tolerant nationalist regards migrant cultures, as something that enriches the ‘native’ culture, yet does not change it in a profound level. The discourse of enrichment depicts quite clearly the superiority aspect of the White nation fantasy for Hage, as he argues that it makes the inherent opposition between enriched and enriching cultures. (1998:118) The Whites aim to remain the ones who value negatively or, in multicultural fantasy, positively the other cultures and are enriched by them. Thus, the migrant cultures exist for the purpose of ‘productive diversity’ and they are objects of evaluation so that “…their value derived from their services, not from them inhabiting the area.” (1998:122)

**Why nationalism is the new racism**

To conclude the presentation of Hage’s theory, we will return to the question of how it is possible to analyse racism through the prism of nationalism and in what way nationalism is connected to racism. To understand Hage’s connection between nationalist racists and nationalist multiculturalists, one must comprehend the premise of the nationalist person who makes the categorization of ‘us and them’
into a question of the sovereign rights of the nation. Racist conceptions have evolved over time, *thus*, it is no longer adequate to merely force racist ideas into boxes of biological prejudices to understand the executing of such opinions and actions.

Hage agrees with other theorists (1998:33) that racism is strongly connected to power; although everyone is capable to stereotype others, only the dominant group within a society has actually the ability to act in a discriminative way. So within a country where the symbolic capital equals national capital, only those who have the governmental belonging and aspirations over the managerial control of the national space can exercise racism. The racialisation and the managerial position within the nation is what Hage argues possess racist fragments but is better perceived as nationalism, because the aim of having this power is the ownership and the control of the national territory. Hence, “*...it is about establishing the way in which the racist classifications of the powerful distinguish themselves from the other racist classifications and reveal themselves to be forms of empowered practical prejudice.*” (1998:36)

Drawing from the discipline of Whiteness studies, Hage seems to think that the reason someone engages in racist attacks, which in reality are nationalistic acts of exclusion, is the fear of losing the White privilege. Especially threatened from this loss of privilege are the working-class Whites who do not own any other form of capital apart from their symbolic capital thus, they tend to be more attached to the ‘White nation fantasy’. Hage explains that Whites “*...are destined to go on struggling to maintain such a symbolic violence for the fear of losing such a dominant position is inherent. This position of dominance is even more tenuous in the case of those who engage in acts of racist/nationalist violence.*” (1998:69)

However, this idea creates the problem of how is it possible that the fear for the
loss of a construction such as “Whiteness” is inherent.

Finally, Hage considers that nobody wants to identify himself or herself with the adjective ‘racist’ (1998:186) thus, despite the fact that racist attitudes have not changed over time, the racist rhetoric has changed drastically. Since after the World War II it became unsuitable to talk about superior and inferior races and even superior and inferior cultures, the racist discourses have been evolved into discourses of controlled immigration, preservation of the traditional values and policies of integration and assimilation. In this way, both the ‘evil’ and the ‘good’ nationalists maintain racist attitudes under the seemingly contrary political stances they hold.

6.3 Economic analysis of Racism

In the previous chapter, we have elaborated on how Hage takes a cultural approach when investigating racism. Furthermore, in order to arrive at a better understanding of how complex phenomenon racism is, we will now introduce shortly another view, material approach. This will be done by introducing theories from Michael Reich and Michael Parenti.

To start with, their economic aspect of racism originates from the Marxist theory of capitalism. The Marxist approach regards the division in capitalistic society as between proletarians and bourgeois; those who work and those who enjoy the results of the work of others. Within these groups, there are multiple divisions according to the social and economic status. The ones in power aim to preserve their dominant position by regulating the superstructure of a given society. Their power position is justified by supporting their ideology as the established one and this leads to a false perception of reality among the dominated classes. This is
known as a false class-consciousness, when having the illusion that this relationship works for common interest benefiting both parties. The exploitation of the masses is covered up, because this way it receives consent from the exploited party. (http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/lukacs3.htm)

To continue this approach, Michael Reich, who is a professor of economics in University of California at Berkeley (http://elsa.berkeley.edu/~webfac/reich/index.shtml), argues “… racism is a key mechanism for the stabilization of capitalism and the legitimization of inequality.” (Reich 1974:1) His article that will be elaborated here, Economic of Racism (1974), was prior research to his book Racial Inequality, published in 1981. In his work, he points out the division between blacks and whites in the United States of America in various areas from education to housing and labour market. He regards that subjugation of blacks has an economic motive even when occurring in other areas, such as in social dimension and it influences conditions of the white working class and the capitalists as well.

Reich points out in the article that in many cases blacks have lower income than whites even when both parties have the same level of education. According to him, blacks are systematically discriminated and it occurs e.g. in a way that better paid jobs are often located far from poor blacks’ neighbourhoods, their housings are inferior while the prise is high compared to the quality, schooling is poorer in quality and in the job market blacks often face social and economic discrimination based on the employer’s racist prejudices (1974:2-4). While he mentions that as no particular formula can be used solely to measure racism “…in all its social, cultural, psychological, and economic dimensions…racism is far more than a narrow economic phenomenon, it does have very definite economic consequences: blacks have far lower incomes than whites.” Moreover, racism also has an effect of
lower incomes among the white workers and higher incomes among the capitalist classes. (1974:2)

Furthermore, he argues that while the aim of economic benefits cannot solely explain racism’s existence, e.g. when a person gains no economic benefits by racist practises, yet feels passionate about it, it works as a tool to legitimatise inequality, alienation and a lack of power, which in turn are required in order to legitimate the capitalist system. (1974:5) Racism is moreover used for scapegoating in a way that the poor white classes blame blacks for the state of society and the focus from the capitalist system, which is the cause for this inequality, is moved away: “... by transferring white resentment toward blacks and away from capitalism, racism continues to serve the needs of the capitalist system.” (1974:3). Hence, through racism criticism and demands for the changes by the working class whites are prevented. This is also caused as the poor white see the poor black people, who are systematically located close to them, living in the ghettos and managing worse, thus, they will hold the illusion of having a more powerful position in society than what it in reality is. Moreover, in the fear of losing their jobs for the “...cheaper and underemployed black labor supply in the area”, the white labour accepts to work for low salary as well. This way, wages are generally kept down and disunity among poor classes is supported. (1974:5) “...Thus, racism is likely to take firm root in a society that breeds an individualistic and competitive ethos...These non-economic factors thus neatly dovetail with the economic aspects of racism...in their mutual service to the perpetuation of capitalism.”(1974:6)

Furthermore, Michael Parenti, a political scientist, also holds this viewpoint as he argues that racism is systematically used as an instrument to exploit people and to maintain the prevalent domination of given groups in capitalistic society. He has given numerous lectures and speeches on this matter and one of them, *Racism and
The Ideology of Slavery, will be elaborated here. This particular speech was given in Berkeley California, in 1992. In the speech, while he focuses mainly on the United State of America as an example, he points out the imperialism and exploitation that have been deploying racism and have been occurring around the world. He discusses how slavery became an important source for additional economic growth for society. According to him, racism and slavery are connected as the racist ideology has justified exploitation of humans, as the victims of cruel exploitation are dehumanised and demonised. Moreover, both are important part of the notion of class oppression and thus, work for the interest of the capitalistic system. Slavery was explained to serve both parties’ purposes and to be a natural arrangement and at the same time race entered into the law and became an ideology. He claims that the labour force in third-world countries is modern day slavery and it seems that Parenti regards them being the new oppressed working class as the ruling powers exploit the third-world countries’ labour markets via various legislations. This becomes clear when Parenti claims that as in history, the slavery and the domination of other groups were explained as natural and beneficial for both parties, now the promotion for free trade enables the access to other countries’ labour markets and to exploit them.

Additionally, he perceives racism to be a by-product of imperialism as the colonisers exploited others for their own purposes by dehumanising their victims. According to him, today as these overseas expansions continue, they are justified by political leaders as the duties of the democratic countries to uplift others while the same dehumanising of the inhabitants of other countries occurs. Thus, Parenti regards racism as a systematic tool, especially deployed by the economic elites and other business owners who play the minority groups against each other. This in turn will prevent them from uniting and focusing to the real problem; the capitalist
system exploiting and oppressing them. Furthermore, by having the surplus workforce, which Marx called ‘the reserved army of labour’, wages can be kept down while the competition for these low paid occupations turns the poor groups against each other as the hostility among them is promoted by the managers.

Hence, as he argues “…in modern day capitalistic society, racism serves a number of systemic functions” (Parenti, 1992), he regards racism as being promoted from above to lower classes in order to disunite them which serves the elites’ own interests and it used as a distraction from capitalist system. Moreover, he considers the racist ideology being used for justifying class oppression and as the naturalisation of the class hierarchy. As an example for this, he mentions how the race legislations prohibited relationships among different races and how blacks are still been systematically used as scapegoats for poverty and instability in society while they are doing the ‘dirty works’ of the given society. Hence, via racist practises super-exploitation of ethnic groups takes place. As an example for the racist beliefs being manufactured from above to lower classes, he mentions how the notoriously famous Ku Klux Klan was originally founded by the economic elite. The first members of this group were bankers, land owners, shopkeepers and from other higher occupations, which then disseminated fear among lower classes turning them against each other. Promoting hostility among the lower classes and the minority groups has been a conscious policy, which still exists according to him. By using racist beliefs the minority groups are played against each other and the poor whites are turned against them.

As the slaves were emancipated in the United States of America, there were arguments that they can only be freed gradually as they are not fit for immediate freedom. According to Parenti, today this is translated as not fit for equality; whites have to teach blacks and they have to be worthy of the equality which white are
born into. This means that the same discourse of domination is still very much alive as only the wordings seem to be changed. His argument is that “…to this day, racist beliefs have persisted both as a cause and justification of class-race – conditions... it's used to explain...discrimination in all areas of life...in another words, racism is not just an internalised personal attitude, it’s externalised social relation that can continued both its very conditions that make it so functional…” (Parenti, 1992) While he proposes that racism is also used for many non-economic issues, he argues that its main function is to justify the capitalistic exploitation and super-exploitation and to distract the focus from it.

Both Reich and Parenti seem clearly to be inspired by Marxism and take the quite strong stands when discussing the reasons for the existence of racism or the motives behind the racist practices. As both of them take different aspects of the notion of racism under consideration, such as the social discrimination, they regard that the ultimate benefiter by means of racism is the capitalistic system. Furthermore, they regard that racism is more than attitudinal phenomenon, and it is deeply rooted in economic system, even if not originating from the capitalism. Also, this theory is supported by e.g. Immanuel Wallerstein, who regards racism as progress of capitalism and expresses the essence of this viewpoint compactly in his article A Racist Albatross: Social Science, Jörg Haider and Widerstand (2000): “The object of racism is to keep people within the system, but as Untermenschen, who can then be exploited economically and used as political scapegoats...Since Las Casas, we have constructed a capitalist world-economy, which then expanded to encompass the entire globe, and which has always and at every moment justified its hierarchies on the basis of racism.” (Wallerstein 2000: 7-11)

As we have now investigated the main features of the material aspect of racism, we have gained a broader understanding of these two aspects that seems to be a rather
different from each other; the cultural one that Hage is representing and the economic one that was elaborated above. Furthermore, in the following chapter we will take Fenton and Bradley’s work as a device to criticise the one-sided way to investigate such a vast and multifaceted phenomenon as racism.

6.5 The ‘middle ground’

Fenton’s and Bradley’s anthology- The point of the book

Steve Fenton’s and Harriet Bradley’s book *Ethnicity and Economy: ‘Race and Class’ Revisited* published in 2002, is a collection of articles by various academics, including Fenton, Bradley and Rattansi whose book on introducing racism we have presented earlier. Fenton and Bradley are both professors of Sociology in the University of Bristol.

The book is divided in two parts: The first part, which is titled “Theoretical Interventions”, is consisted of six articles which discuss theoretically the issues of class and race as interlinked with each other, and some of them expand on issues such as gender and religion as well. The second part provides four different empirical studies, which endeavour to prove the connection discussed in the previous part; namely by fieldworks conducted between Ugandan Asian refugees in Sweden, Turkish-speaking youth in London, Tunisian workers in Modena (Italy) and Gypsies in Britain. In this theoretical part of the project, we will use mainly the first part of the book, which too provides empirical examples as references. The purpose of using this book in our project is to offer a different point of view on the argument, or perhaps a different point of view on racism than the view of Hage, Parenti and Reich that was presented in the previous chapters. By doing so, we hope to acquire a deeper and more holistic understanding of the subject.
The point of the book becomes clear already from the introduction where it argues that the phenomenon of racism cannot be explained solely by the means of culture; on the contrary, it takes both economy (the material conditions) and culture (the symbolic conditions) to explain the reproduction of racial – and also gender- discrimination and inequality:

“All between two extremes—a Marxist political economy which remains true to its 150 year-old roots, and a ‘culturalist’ sociological frame which seemingly abandons the material in favor of the symbolic—there is a central terrain, a ‘middle ground’, which both acknowledges the importance of the economic formations which are in part socio-culturally apprehended, and recognizes the sui generis status of the socio-cultural order without abandoning an interest in the material order...” (2002: 3)

Subsequently, throughout this chapter we will present the arguments for the usefulness of this ‘middle ground’ as a reasonable and efficient way to study the phenomenon of racism.

**Academic trends and new waves of social thought**

According to the authors, the trend in the academic research during the 1970’s was that of class analysis, within which race was being treated merely as a “subset of class” (2002: 9). There is a detectable example also in the theory used for this project, in Benedict Anderson’s book, published in the beginning of the 1980’s where there is a small part devoted to racism (Anderson, 2006: 149) After studying Fenton’s and Bradley’s book we became conscious that the idea of racism was being attributed by Anderson to class ideology without any further discussion, it
was thus treated like an axiom.

Bradley and Fenton subsequently proceed to explain some of the historical reasons why this way of thinking was abandoned, for example, “the collapse of Soviet Union” which seemed to “invalidate the Marxist project” (2002:1), and also some the theoretical reasons: post-modernism and deconstructionism came at play, so the materialist perspective with the fixed categories and its connection with “evolutionary theories of social development and progress” (2002:10) lost its popularity. The result was that in the 1990’s there was a great ‘cultural turn’ which favoured “the study of identities, cultural representations, ethno-nationalism, imperial and post-colonial cultures, the politics of racism, citizenship and multiculturalism. This academic boom has been encouraged by public debates about national identity in Britain and other European States, debates which are allied with the politics of minorities, and of immigration and racism.” (2002: 10)

According to the authors, this shift in academia made many professors and researches to feel even embarrassed by the discussion about class (2002: 02). It becomes apparent here, that Hage belongs to this second ‘school’ of thought, which examines racism from the standpoint of this newly favoured ‘cultural’ tradition.

**Defining the ‘post-modern’**

In this book there is an attempt –most thoroughly elaborated in chapter three by Rattansi- to define the term ‘post-modern’. The conclusion which seems to be drawn is that it is quite impossible to define ‘post-modernism’ as separated from the concept of ‘modernism’ (Rattansi personally rejects that there is a “*strict stagist discontinuity*” between these two notions) and this is because the “*postmodern is undoubtedly a part of the modern*”. (Lyotard in Fenton and Bradley, 2002: 50)

Lyotard also argues that the ‘post’ of postmodernity means “*the process of analyzing, anamnising, of reflecting*” with regard to the modern. (Lyotard in
Fenton and Bradley, 2002: 50) Another reason why postmodernism should be regarded as a continuity of the Western modernism is “not merely the survival but the almost hegemonic role of some version of capitalism in the global social (dis)order” (2002:50) during the formation and the development of both these movements of social thought. Having said that, one can also argue “that some of the other variety of class inequality remains a crucial element of old nation-states and requires detailed attention in relation to processes of racialisation” (2002:50).

After highlighting the continuity of the modern and the post modern, we can settle for the following definition of the post modern:

“Post-modernism seems to reject the instrumental and positivist legacies of Enlightenment rationality embedded in Western modes of discourse…in particular to the manner in which conceptions of reason have become imbricated with binary oppositions between subject and object, male and female, culture and nature, such that the first term in each of these binaries assumes a superiority and separation from the second term. The above might also be described in part in Gidden’s terms as a radicalization of the reflexivity of modernity, that is, as a period marked by anxiety stemming from serious doubts about the Enlightenment faith in the capacities of Reason and the certitude of Progress.” (2002: 50-51)

**A critic of the post-modernist approach to racism**

Bradley and Fenton set out to criticize the constant preoccupation of the postmodernist theoreticians with culture. However, they consider their contribution as
highly beneficial since they cite that ‘post-thinking’ has put a “commendable stress on the variability and fluidity of social relations” and has highlighted the “multidimensional nature of social difference” (2002:10). By being very careful not to bring themselves on the same side as the modernist academics, they nevertheless point out “the post-modernist thinkers’ overemphasis on culture and choice and the neglect of economic dimension, of material constraints and disparities of power” and cite that “While wary of any modernist accounts which impute an unwarranted fixity to relations of difference... (we are) distancing ourselves from the idea of social identities as detached and free floating.” (2002:11) Furthermore, they criticise the complete lack of structure or pattern in the post-modern understanding of social reality as jeopardising social change. (2002:13)

In order to clarify the differences between the different sociological approaches, the authors start by discussing the concepts of economy and culture before they continue on racism. The discussion concerns how these concepts are presented by four different traditions of thought; the Marxist, the Weberian, the postmodernist and the anthropological (2002: 11-14) For Marxism, culture is a ‘product’ of the superstructure and the purpose of it is to justify the status quo of the ruling class. Thus, economy and culture are unbreakably connected, with the economic reality in the role of shaping culture, ideas and beliefs for the benefit of the ruling class.

The Weberian thought however, which according to the authors was constructed as a criticism to Marxism’s historical materialism has characterized this culture-economy relationship as ‘possible’ but not as fixed or definite. Weber put the stress on the ability of humans to have agency, meaning that they can choose through a variety of actions and influence the social reality without being helplessly and absolutely guided by their (sometimes false) class-consciousness. Moreover,
Weber’s work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), described the economic model of capitalism as developed in interaction with the cultural values of Protestantism.

For the post-modernists, the deconstruction of the previously viewed as inbuilt society structures, meant the complete separation of economy and culture, and the study of ethnicity was given great importance. Quoting from Bradley and Fenton:

“This new form of attention has been ‘critical’, both politically and intellectually, in so far as it stimulates the constant rethinking of both social and sociological categories. This would in part explain the appeal of postmodernist frames to students and writers who are critically engaged with sexuality, gender and ethnicity. At another moment postmodernity takes on a profoundly conservative character in the celebration of irrationality, the debunking of planned and sought-for social change, and the denial of the possibility of, or at the very least a shift away from, the analytical exposure of social realities, including the temporal persistence of material inequalities.” (2002:13)

Lastly, the anthropological perspective, according to these authors, is associated mainly with the post-modernist tradition, for it focuses largely on various peoples and their diverse ways of running their societies, putting emphasis on the notions of culture and the meaning of symbols.

In order to understand the connection between ethnicity and class, according to Bradley, one has to notice “the multiple positioning of the individual inside the processes of social differentiation” (Bradley in Fenton and Bradley, 2002: 15) In
addition to this, John Rex who is the author of the second chapter of the book, cites his study of working class blacks and working class whites in South Africa, to note that between these two groups there were many similarities but many differences as well; He as well doubts whether there can be “any final answer to understanding the relationship between class and race or ethnicity”, therefore he agrees that the relation between class, race and ethnicity is always defined by its context (2002:31)

**A critic of the modern (Marxist and Weberian) approach to racism**

In order to emphasise the need for a ‘middle ground’ in the analysis of racism and social analysis in general, the book of Fenton and Bradley does not stop in criticizing post-modernism; they offer an account of critic of the Marxist/Weberian approaches as well. As already explained, the Marxist approach in racism contains “*production-based theories of ‘class and capitalism’, which in effect described what was understood as ‘society’*” while the Weberian thinkers focus on “*market-based conceptualizations*” (2002: 42). There are also references of prominent Marxist and Weberian theorists such as Rex, who defines “*race relations as a category of class relations*” (1970), Miles who regarded “*ethnic minorities primarily as a class fraction within the capitalist structure of social relations*” (1982) and Sivanandan. Rattansi views all of these authors and the ones similar to them as having more in common than in difference, despite that during that period the heated debates made the connection look distant. (Rattansi in Fenton and Bradley, 2006: 42-44)

The critic here is based on the fact that the aforementioned approaches neglected entirely the fact that there are several divisions “*within the capital and between the apparatuses of the state*” (2006: 48). Therefore the assumption that the ‘capital’ or the ‘state’ as two homogenised entities, which act in perfect harmony with each other, is not a valid one. Neither should we assume that the only role of the state is
to work in accordance with the interests of the capital. This type of approach is called ‘instrumentalism’ (the state works as an instrument of capital) and has been criticized both outside but also from within the Marxist circle of academics, for example from Antonio Gramsci and Nikos Poulantzas. (2006: 48) These two authors have been maintaining that even within the capital and the state exist competing powers and conflicting interests.

The project has now presented a cultural approach on analysing racism by Ghassan Hage but also, an economic approach by Reich and Parenti and the ‘middle ground’ by Fenton and Bradley. The project will now embark to discuss of the presented theory.

7. Discussion:

This part of the project will evaluate the theory presented in the previous chapters. It will explain and discuss why we believe that Hage’s approach in *White Nation* is rather incomplete as it lacks an economic perspective and does not pay enough attention to the question of social class. Nevertheless, we believe that this is a crucial perspective that must be taken into consideration and the reasons for this will be further elaborated. Furthermore, the discussion will include our conclusions regarding the concepts of racism and nationalism, how they are interrelated and whether they are inherent or socially constructed notions. Finally, we will analyse the reproduction of the cultural hegemony that sustains and reproduces the discourses of racism and nationalism.

Firstly, Hage raises many valid points in *White Nation*. He deconstructs the discourses of tolerance, multiculturalism and acceptance used by the White Australians to highlight the properties hiding under these discourses. In this way,
he exposes the underlying racism, which exists both in the xenophobic political discourses and the tolerant political discourses, since both parties conceive themselves as the rightful owners of the national space. Thus, he proposes that the primary motives behind the racist attacks are actually not fuelled by the belief that the foreigners are inferior in terms of race, but it is an effort to maintain the dominance over the national space. (Hage, 1998: 49) For this reason Hage calls the racist attacks ‘national practices’. Therefore, if we consider racist attacks as national practices, it is obvious that they are not as marginal as we would like to think.

Another well-founded idea in Hage’s theory is that within the boundaries of nation state, symbolic capital equals national capital. When national capital is accumulated it produces the feelings of national belonging and governmental belonging. In addition, this distinction between passive belonging and active belonging is examined also by the political philosopher Giorgio Agamben in *Homo sacer; Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998) when he discusses the ‘state of exception’; a situation when one can be included in the law in the sense that he faces the consequences of the law but not in the sense of participating actively in politics (governmental belonging). Hage supports that this state of exception is applied to all new coming immigrants and already existing ethnic minorities in Australia because of their lack of national capital. In addition, although the formal requirement of national belonging is the national citizenship, the actual characteristics of it such as acquisition of the correct accent are more crucial in gaining acceptance by the dominant culture and therefore national belonging.

However, a basic weak point of Hage’s theory is that he disregards Bourdieu’s concept of class. Although he notices the economic divisions within the White ‘dominant’ group and he states that the white working class only has the illusion of
being part of it, he still puts equal blame onto them for treating the immigrants unjustly. At the same time, he treats the group of Third-world-looking immigrants as one homogenised group discriminated according to their physical characteristics. Nonetheless, this sort of classification is weakly argued, for it overlooks the economical, educational and cultural incoherence, which exists within such a broad group. In this way, it seems like Hage has borrowed selectively from Bourdieu’s theory, because he leaves out both the economic and the social capital.

Bourdieu, on the other hand, argues that social classes are made up by the amount of accumulated cultural capital. Consumption is the primary way to differentiate from lower classes by accumulating objectified cultural capital through ‘the distinctive’ way one consumes. Consequently, everything becomes a choice of ‘distinction’ between higher class and lower class, while at the same time the lower class idealises the dominant class and the dominant taste. Social and economic capital should not be disregarded as all capitals are closely connected to each other. “So it has been posited simultaneously that economic capital is at the root at of all other types of capital...” (1986:54)

Hage’s alteration of Bourdieu’s class is challenging, because within the dominant class there ought to exist divisions of power as such a large group cannot be homogeneous. Hage does not consider this problematic, as he does not exercise a deeper investigation of the white dominant class, thus we argue this creates challenges to his theory that one ought to consider. One can ask, how are these classes viable when they contain entire nations and all economic/social classes? And so, how are we able to work with these classifications and to draw conclusions on something this broad?

Although Hage has changed the concept of social class, a vital concept of Bourdieu, the structure in the accumulating process and distinction amongst the
classes remains. As voiced by a Lebanese Christian: “there are Lebanese and Lebanese”. By this she entitles herself to more cultural capital than a Muslim Lebanese, by sharing religion with the dominant class and consequently accumulate more White-ness and national belonging.

In addition, the fact that Hage’s theory has been shaped inside a general postmodern framework which means that it reflects several flaws that are usually encountered in the postmodern theories. For example, what Fenton and Bradley criticise, as an “overemphasis on culture and choice and the neglect of economic dimension” is very obvious in Hage’s writings, especially in the end of the book where his only proposal is that we need a “deeper commitment to multiculturalism”. (1998:26) In this way he turns racism into a matter of choice, completely neglecting the power structures which sustain this phenomenon, together with the fact that these power relations do not benefit the majority of the white population, but only a very small elite. By presenting racism as a ‘free floating entity’, he actually fails to make any suggestions for social change and social policy change, for he diminishes racism to the level of a simply moral choice.

By recognising these weaknesses of the post-modern cultural approach, we find it important to take the economic aspect into consideration as well. We have shortly introduced some of the main elements of the material aspect regarding the investigation of the phenomenon of racism. He seems to be taken the economic factor for granted and puts it aside as non-influential entity, whereas, it in fact has numerous touching points in society, e.g. manipulating the divisions between classes and gender. Both Parenti and Reich argues, that economy cannot be ignored when investigating racism, because even when it is systematically used in all areas in life, the economic elite is the one who ultimately benefits from the division
between groups. It is used to maintain the hierarchy of social groups and to disunite the lower groups in order to prevent them focusing on the capitalistic system which is creating this inequality among people. This way, we can conclude that racist beliefs are socially constructed, as it is the case of the national ideology according to Benedict Anderson and Ghassan Hage. Despite this, we reject the modernist stance that the state only plays an instrumental role in reproducing the racist discourses. As many Marxist sociologists, Antonio Gramsci amongst them, argue that there are divisions within the institutions of the state and of the capital, which have conflicting interests and are not in any case, homogenous.

Subsequently, we find the proposal of ‘the middle ground’, suggested by Fenton and Bradley, very relevant in the analysis of racism. The reason for this is that we acknowledge that both the cultural- and economic analysis can contribute in the understanding of the phenomenon, but at the same time they have several delimitations. Therefore, we believe, that we should not use these approaches in an exclusive manner, instead, we should take both of them under consideration in order to arrive at a more valid conclusion regarding the genesis, reproduction and forms of expression of racism.

In relation to the notion that racism is socially constructed, we will now examine how the power structures in a society play a fundamental role in reproduction of it. The dominant group, which constitutes the hegemony, imposes their values and norms as the established ones and the dominated groups support them while the groups influence each other. This notion of cultural hegemony is introduced by Gramsci and will be now shortly elaborated.

The Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) who is considered to be an influential Marxist thinker developed his idea of dominant ideologies and culture, thus evolving further from more conventional Marxist’s notions of economic
determinism: as the hegemony could be achieved by moving beyond the group’s economic interests (David Foregacs, *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, 2000:422-424). In his extensive writings he argues, that the leadership of a particular group is maintained by cultural and political hegemony over the other class. This is done by imposing the views of the dominant group on society and hence, making these the shared moral and cultural values. This is how their ideology becomes the established one and consent for this power position is gained. Laws are made to protect this domination, but also as said, cultural values through, e.g. education and popular culture, are reproduced and reinforced. Through this reproduction and reinforcement, the dominated one actually supports the power relation as they conceive this as a natural arrangement, and subsequently, the use of violence, to secure this position, is unnecessary. But importantly, the groups influence each other and have a dialectic relationship because in order to maintain the hegemony and assimilate the members of the other group, the dominant group must adapt some of the dominated group’s values. As Gramsci argues in *Prison Notebooks, volume III* “...in order to exercise this hegemony better, it [bourgeois] embraces a part of proletarian ideology.” (Gramsci, 2007:126) This way, hegemony over the dominated groups is sustained, but not without them having some active part in it as well.

Moreover, as the popular culture reproduces the dominant group’s ideology, it keeps the masses passive. According to Gramsci it is “...a narcotic that dulls the sense of pain, etc” and it arouses and substitutes “...the fantasies of the common man; it really is daydreaming...one could say that the fantasies of the people stem from a (social) ‘inferiority complex’ that is the source of fantasies about revenge, punishing those responsible for their adversities, etc.” (2007:106)

Gramsci argues that hegemony can be achieved if the subjugated social groups
demand established position of power for themselves, e.g. by uniting. “…It is possible to imagine the state-coercion element withering away gradually, as the increasingly conspicuous elements of regulated society (or ethical state or civil society) assert themselves…” (2007:75) Hegemony is sustained by using the aforementioned methods or by e.g. as Parenti argues, deploying racism. Parenti regards that via racism the minority groups or lower classes are kept disunited, which will prevent them from organising and gaining power position in society. (http://www.earthsociety.org/public_ftp/MP_Racism_&_The_Ideology_of_Slavery.mp3)

When it comes to reproducing the ideology of nationalism, the work of Michael Billig, Banal Nationalism (1995), exemplifies this well. He argues that nationalism is reproduced in the people of nation-states by constant ‘flagging’ of the national symbols, which is so banal that is unrecognized. These symbols are so embedded in our daily routines that they become a natural part of the habits and are therefore unconsciously reinforced in us. This way, we are unconsciously reminded who we are and who we are not.

In addition, racist beliefs are following the same pattern of reproduction. Michael Parenti argues in his speech that hate and other negative attitudes against other human beings are learned in a very early age. He claims that among other parties, the economic elite deploys racism in order to create disunity among lower social groups. From this, one can conclude that racist beliefs are not inherent but socially constructed. This leads us back to the question of who is the dominant group promoting these values and for what purposes?

Concluding from the notion of cultural hegemony by Gramsci, it becomes clear that Hage is leaving out the study of whose dominant values the promoted nationalism and racism actually are, and thus, who is ultimately benefiting from their existence.
He does not distinguish between the political leaders shaping the discourses and promoting these attitudes amongst the people and the common man who follows the dominant ideologies. And therefore, he does not question who the dominant group is within the group of white Australians, and how they interact with the dominated group, in order to sustain their hegemony. This study would have provided a deeper understanding of the primary motives behind these popular discourses he aimed to deconstruct. Through this we can conclude that when ignoring the differences within these two groups, the power structure is left unstudied. Furthermore, when this takes place one might lapse to regard the motives behind the established values as property of everyone, when in fact, they might be imposed from the ruling group. Studying the differences and acknowledging the power structure one can arrive at better understanding of social classes and the hierarchic positions they possess and start questioning the motives behind the dominant norms and moral codes. As capitalism is argued to use racism as a tool, one can start asking whether the nationalism is the tool as well. This goes further from the point that Hage is making, when he regards nationalism as a primary motive, which is deploying racism.

Through this investigation is has become clear, that racism is an ambiguous term and when uttered, one actually reproduces the concept of race. Hence feel, that Whiteness studies, which Hage employs, is categorising and generalising and therefore reproduces the structures it fights to diminish. It seems, as this mode of studying is not moving beyond the concept of races and the white race as the superior. It could be argued, that the Whiteness Studies are generalising the influences and the forms of expressions of the so-called ‘white culture’ as it overlooks the colonialism that has occurred from non-Western cultures and while the domination and forms of oppression has been taken place in homogenous states.
In Hage’s case this overgeneralisation of the two opposite classes in Australia (dominant whites and dominated immigrants) does not allow for a strong proposal/solution in the end of his analysis. In addition, just by putting the blame on the white individuals’ weak moral stance would achieve little more than self-loathing and calibrating of the enmity between the hypothetically existing races.

Furthermore, if we want to move beyond the concept of races, which we find necessary, we need to be aware of how we address these issues. While it is argued that race still seem to matter, as it is a part of the daily discourses, further labelling seems, also argued by social constructivism, to keep this notion of race alive by reproducing it. Additionally, as argued throughout the project, racism presupposes the existence of biological races. So in many cases, ‘racism’, being a vague term, is employed on incidents that are not related to ‘race’ but to ethnicity. Scapegoating has changed from accusing racially inferior outsiders to culturally unsuitable immigrants to cause problems and instability within one’s nation.

Consequently, we argue that racism has not vanished but that the rhetoric has altered and become a more subtle discourse, which has changed emphasis from a biological aspect to a cultural and often national character. This means, that the subjective feeling of ‘hatred’ still exists but has taken a different, a more legitimate, form. Ghassan Hage provides sound examples of how the racist discourses have been transformed, going from a biological perspective to a cultural perspective.
8. Conclusion

In our work, Ghassan Hage’s *White Nation* has been the starting point of the investigation of the phenomenon of racism. We have found that by deconstructing the discourses of tolerant multiculturalism as well as the exclusive racist ones, Hage reveals that both of them hold nationalist ideologies. Thus, he exposes the multiculturalists’ practises as being structurally similar to racist nationalist practises and criticises multiculturalism for being merely another strategy to maintain the majority’s cultural domination. Furthermore, by exploring the theories of nationalism by Benedict Anderson and the capitals by Pierre Bourdieu, we gained a deeper understanding of Hage’s arguments, namely the idea of the nation as socially constructed and the notion of accumulated capitals. While studying Bourdieu, we arrived at the conclusion that economic capital is the root of other capitals, and therefore, it is vital to include economic and social capital as well, because they are strongly interrelated. This, in our opinion, is problematic in Hage’s *White Nation*, as it seems that he has applied Bourdieu’s capitals selectively and altered the important phenomenon of class so that it fails to recognise any economic perspectives within the classes.

As his approach is a critical cultural study of racism, we have shortly introduced an economic view of analysing racism. By briefly examining a radically different view of this phenomenon, we have arrived at a better understanding of its multiplicity. Moreover, with the thorough study of Fenton and Bradley, we argue that as economic and cultural approach is closely interconnected and strongly influencing each other. Subsequently, one must regard their equal importance regarding racism and how it is encountered in everyday life.

In order to answer our research question of the reproduction of racism, we included
the theory of cultural hegemony by Antonio Gramsci in our discussion. This enabled us to see that there are dominant values and ideologies in societies that are promoted as the established ones, hence, they should be studied in order to trace the primary motives behind sustained ideologies. Furthermore, we concluded that racism and nationalism are socially constructed values that are promoted by the dominant group for several purposes. Additionally, it became obvious that since these notions have been developing historically while following the tendencies of the time, they have strong political and cultural functions. Thus, they are external ideologies imposed and used for serving the dominant groups’ interests.

Finally, through the process of writing this project we have arrived at the conclusion that racism is a complex phenomenon, which is formed and maintained both because of unequal economic patterns and cultural hierarchies that constantly interact and favour each other. This reproduction of racism is one important - among others- strategy, which assures the cultural hegemony of the dominant groups in society by dividing the rest of the people into conflicting categories. Our future perspective is that racism, as a word should be abandoned altogether, because it is not an accurate description of discrimination on an ethnic base. However, as Hage points out, changing a definition by making its name unsuitable does not eliminates racist attitudes, which continue exist under different discourses. Consequently, we believe that in order to abolish racism we need to abolish the hierarchic relations that prevail in each society.
10. Abstract

This paper examines the concept of racism; its multiplicity and different approaches analysed by different theorists. One of the aspects, the cultural analysis, which is taken by Ghassan Hage in *White Nation*, is the cornerstone of this project. Hage argues that racism is disguised nationalism and therefore this project studies the concept of nationalism as well. In order to gain a holistic understanding of Hage’s theory, we study theories proposed by Benedict Anderson and Pierre Bourdieu. Additionally, we embark to critically analyse Hage’s theory with the help of Fenton and Bradley’s, while also, adding the economic perspective which is shortly introduced. By initiating an opposing aspect to the phenomenon of racism the project conclude that Ghassan Hage is taking a limited approach when analysing racism.
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