

## <cn>Chapter 8

### <ct>The Racism of Globalization

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<fl>Modern institutions are universalistic in principle but limited in practice. Democracy, for example, means that everyone who is affected by the results of a decision should participate in making that decision (Habermas 1996). As important political decisions may affect all of humankind, democracy should by now be a global institution. On the other hand the practice of democracy presumes the existence of a public sphere, a Habermasian discourse, a decision-making procedure and so on. Those preconditions depend on resources such as a common language and thus are limited—most often to the nation-state. The dilemma between universalism and particularist social closure is typical for modern institutions and it becomes more obvious due to globalization processes. Giddens’s definition of globalization even emphasizes the problem of global effects: Globalization is “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens 1990, 64).

<txt>In the field of international migration the contradictions of modern institutions are especially visible. Migration used to be a one-way process, and migrants could be conceptually included into their state of origin or destination. Today a significant percentage of migrants go back and forth between their countries of origin and destination. Their social ties link them to two or more countries and in some cases a third (transnational) social space is developing (Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Pries 1999). Thus the classical assumption that every person clearly belongs to one territory that coincides with one administrative entity and one collective identity is challenged. The myth of a clear-cut national citizenship has become more difficult to uphold.

How can democracies determine the limits of participation in a world in which collective decisions may affect everyone? How can nation-states decide about citizenship, when many people live in transnational social spaces? These questions are related and describe a dilemma common to modern institutions: they follow universalistic norms and have acted as expansive agents of globalization processes. Yet borders are necessary for their functioning, and it is increasingly difficult to justify the selectivity of their inclusion practices.

I will argue that there are no convincing criteria for the closure of modern institutions. They have to close, but due to globalization processes they cannot distinguish clearly and legitimately between those who should and those who should not be included (part 1). This problem is solved by structural racism, which effectively creates barriers between people on the basis of illegitimate and arbitrary criteria. Veiled forms of structural racism have become a basic component of the social structure of modern societies (part 2). On the basis of the first part of the chapter we can distinguish analytically between side-effect exclusion, which is related in content to the border regulation of the national welfare state, and structural racism, which transforms contingent criteria into a basis for national closure (part 3).

In Germany structural racism has undergone enormous changes in content while continuing as a stable form of symbolic power. Structural racism in Germany has referred to varying criteria that are not limited to the black–white divide. Content-centered theories of race are criticized for confusing the contingent criteria of racist closure with the core of racial domination (part 4). The final part of the chapter exemplifies the stability of symbolic domination by analyzing a white German group that fights racism but cannot avoid reproducing its privileged position.

## <1>1. Border Regulation of the National Welfare State

<fl>The empirical changes associated with “globalization “ have not left traditional sociological concepts unscathed (Beck 2002). While the core of sociological thinking presumes the nation-state to be a self-evident, quasi-natural precondition of social formation (Urry 2000), world systems theory has started from a different perspective. “It was at this point that I abandoned the idea altogether of taking either the sovereign state or that vague concept, the national society, as the unit of analysis. I decided that neither one was a social system and that one could only speak of social change in social systems. The only social system in this scheme was the world-system” (Wallerstein 1974, 7).

<txt>The newer forms of systems theory (e.g., in the Luhmannian tradition), conceptually transcend the nation-state. They define social systems as networks of communications. Since communications by now span the globe, this automatically introduces a global perspective to sociology.

Luhmann distinguishes between segmented, stratified and functionally differentiated societies. In segmented and stratified societies persons are integrated into multifunctional entities such as families, households, monasteries, or castes and stratum respectively. Integration is understood as an adaptation of persons to the social norms and values relevant for their social position. In functionally differentiated societies on the other hand one person participates in many different subsystems of society. She is not integrated into society as a complete entity but *aspects of* her person are addressed by diverse *subsystems* of society (Nassehi 1997). For example, she may be included in the health system as a patient, in the economic system as an employee, in the financial system as a credit card holder and in the political system as a mayor. Since subsystems in modern societies operate independently from each other, the position of a

complete person in a society is highly specific and individualized. Few persons will share exactly the same pattern of inclusions and exclusions.

One of the few exceptions to this argument concerns the relationship of persons to national welfare states. In contrast to the majority of the other subsystems, the political system is territorially (i.e., nationally) segmented. The political system has to address *complete* persons as citizens of the nation-state in order to produce loyalty to the state and legitimacy of decisions (Bommes 1999, 16). This exception to the rule of partial inclusion has far-reaching effects, as the exclusion of a complete person from a nation-state influences inclusion options into other subsystems. Persons who may not enter a national territory are automatically excluded from organizations who operate only in that territory and who require physical presence. Economic organizations presuppose a specific biography and career when they evaluate job applicants (Bommes 2000). As careers depend on nationally organized education systems, candidates from other nation-states typically lack the educational certificates expected by employers in a specific nation-state.<sup>1</sup> According to Bommes, the national welfare state establishes a “threshold of inequality” (see Bommes 1999, 147) that affects numerous functionally differentiated subsystems and the majority of organizations.

Bommes shows that the inclusion of complete persons into national welfare states is an anomaly in a globalized world. While most social systems reach across national borders and address only the *aspects* of persons that are relevant to a specific subsystem, the political system still attempts a clear-cut decision about citizenship referring to *complete* persons. Thereby Bommes offers a partial explanation for the position of migrants in national labor markets. Their disadvantaged position results from a lack of formal citizenship and from the fact that they offer resources that may not be compatible with the expectations of the nationally specific

organizations to which they apply. As their career diverges from the national standards of the country of destination, they are treated by economic organizations like the large group of those with relatively low formal education and their cultural capital is not acknowledged. In comparison to local unqualified workers they can gain a favorable market position, however. As they have lower expectations and spend part of their wages in poorer states, the threshold of inequality creates employment niches for first-generation immigrants. In a world in which wealth is unevenly distributed between nation-states and in which rich national welfare states offer better opportunities and protection to their inhabitants than weak states, international migration improves individual inclusion options through geographic mobility.

Generally speaking, this argument is quite convincing. Taking a closer look, the fit between resources and the expectations of organizations turns into an interesting and contentious question. Staying with the example of economic organizations, which are profit oriented, we can easily accept that an organization will prefer applicants with the best individual performance. This should result in selecting the candidates with the best track record from as large a pool of applicants as possible thereby paying the lowest necessary wages. On the other hand economic organizations depend on collective goods such as education, social welfare and trust, which are cheapest when monopolized by a limited group of people. Bourdieu and numerous others have shown that organizations tend to prefer applicants with high social and symbolic capital. As the value of these types of capital is a matter of opinion, employment is limited to applicants who share the predominant values in the organization or the field (Bourdieu 1984). Employers may also find it reasonable to reduce the conflicts that might result from diversity.<sup>2</sup> Recruiting personnel through private networks is seen by many as a means to avoid conflicts and save

recruiting costs. Finally, most national labor markets are limited to those with citizenship or a work permit. This also reduces the number of potential applicants.

At this point we again run into the problem of universalizing institutions that cannot legitimize particularized closure. The goal of efficiency explains why the economic subsystem selects applicants according to individual performance. It can also explain why the number of applicants should be limited. However, it cannot decide according to which criteria the number of applicants should be reduced. Similarly the political subsystem and its most prominent institution—the nation-state—needs to limit its members but cannot legitimately decide whom to exclude in a globalized world.<sup>3</sup> Thus we encounter many contradictory and contentious compromises between universalist principles and particularist practice. Take the example of an Iranian doctor moving to Europe. In Great Britain this doctor will be incorporated into the public health system easily. In Germany legislation on foreigners will keep her from working as a doctor. In some regions right-wing extremists may limit her options in public space so much that she will not even want to live there as a nurse.

The compatibility between applicants and organizations, between people and nation-states respectively is not only organized by the needs of specific systems. It is also mediated by barriers to mobility. Some of these barriers can be rationalized easily. Most of them respond to the simple goal of reducing the number of potential applicants and members—which by itself can increase efficiency. If selection procedures mainly serve the goal of limiting numbers, it will be impossible to legitimize the criteria according to which selection takes place. As a result these selection processes are highly contentious, and often practices of social closure step in where formal exclusion fails. Racism can be seen as a part of these barriers to mobility. In the following discussion I will show how arbitrary criteria of social closure can be institutionalized as

structural racism. As a result they appear as self-evident and legitimate even though intense political and normative struggles were necessary in order to introduce them.

## <1>2. A Structuralist Model of Racism

<fl>Pierre Bourdieu dealt with the problem of ascribed classifications in his work on male domination. His description of classifications turning into stable social structures can be generalized to other relations of domination. It was first developed with reference to the traditional Kabyle society.

<ext>”To account for the fact that women are, throughout most known societies, consigned to inferior social positions, it is necessary to take into account the asymmetry of status ascribed to each gender in the economics of symbolic exchanges. Whereas men are the *subjects* of matrimonial strategies through which they work to maintain or to increase their symbolic capital, women are always treated as *objects* of these exchanges in which they circulate as symbols fit for striking alliances. . . . Male domination is thus founded upon the logic of the economics of symbolic exchanges, that is, upon — the fundamental asymmetry between men and women instituted in the social construction of kinship and marriage: that between subject and object, agent and instrument” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 173f.).

<txt>Male domination originates in the gendered classification, due to which men and women enter marriage markets with asymmetrical starting positions. Bourdieu then goes on to show that asymmetrical market positions gain importance by promoting divergent strategies of action. For example, “women can exercise some degree of power only by turning the strength of the strong against them or by accepting the need to efface themselves and, in any case, to deny a power that they can only exercise vicariously, as ‘éminences grises’” (Bourdieu 2001, 32). They will appear as cunning, whereby the classification of women as the opposite of men is stabilized.

“The androcentric view is thus continuously legitimated by the very practices that it determines. Because their dispositions are the product of embodiment of the *negative prejudice* against the female that is instituted in the order of things, women cannot but constantly confirm this prejudice” (Bourdieu 2001, 32).

As time goes by, both classifications and practices become habitualized and thus part of the accepted social order. Bourdieu speaks of symbolic violence or power (Bourdieu 1998, 209), if subjective structures, like the dichotomous and hierarchical classification of men and women, and objective structures, like the gendered division of labor, coincide without leaving room for doubt or criticism (Bourdieu 1977).<sup>4</sup> “Symbolic power is that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it” (Bourdieu 1991, 164).

According to Bourdieu, male domination is characterized by the fact that it regulates a specific market: the marriage market and the work of reproduction. Can the mechanism by which classifications develop into social structures also be applied to racialized situations? In this case we would have to generalize Bourdieu’s argument from marriage markets to all markets or subsystems of a society.

Let us assume that some actors are delegitimized with reference to arbitrary criteria in a multiplicity of markets. Their right to participate in the markets is contested and they are asked to prove why they should be accepted as equals. In this case a similar process like the one described for male domination would take place. In order for classifications to affect practices, it is sufficient that the right to be included as equals is doubted. For example, an employer will feel some skepticism toward applicants who might have “visa problems.” A landlady may anticipate hostility from “normal” tenants if she rents an apartment to “foreigners.” Sartre has described the

fear of assimilated Jews that someone at some time may start to research ancestry once more (Sartre 1965). Once the threat of delegitimation is generalized, it translates into divergent action strategies and finally into symbolic power.<sup>5</sup> Then delegitimation starts to become largely independent from individual situations. Racialized classifications develop into an objective structuration of society much in the way Bourdieu describes for male domination.

Following and extending Bourdieu's lead, I suggest that the stable forms of racist delegitimation be treated as a specific type of symbolic capital (see Weiss 2001a,b).<sup>6</sup> Racialized symbolic capital is an asymmetrically distributed resource with considerable influence on the life chances of its owners. Physical features such as light skin and an "angelic face" have turned into symbolic goods signifying equal standing. Racialized symbolic capital is similar to cultural capital, since it has to be acquired through lengthy processes of socialization and the collective endeavors of numerous generations. Racialized individuals cannot escape the status attributed to them, even though entire groups can move their position in racial hierarchies as was the case for Asian Americans in the second half of the twentieth century. Like social capital, racialized symbolic capital is a collective resource, which can, however, be emphasized and utilized by individuals as representatives of a group (Bourdieu 1991, 203–19). Assuming that racial classifications are at least partially institutionalized (e.g., in national citizenship and the differentiated legislation applying to migrants and refugees), it is possible to treat them as capital and introduce them systematically into a theory of social inequality.<sup>7</sup>

If a given society is structured by racialized symbolic capital, this will affect objective class formation. For racially dominated groups, racialized symbolic capital will be a central and explicit dimension of their class position. For members of the racially dominant class, the situation is less clear. Inside a dominant culture aspects of racism that have developed into

symbolic power are viewed as self-evident and natural, as “what goes without saying and what cannot be said for lack of an available discourse” (Bourdieu 1994, 165). Therefore members of the dominant group tend to find the possession of racialized symbolic capital so natural and at the same time so implicit that they cannot even put a name to “white privilege” (Frankenberg 1993). Therefore the empirical relevance of the concept of symbolic power is best understood when looking at other societies from a distance (see part 5).

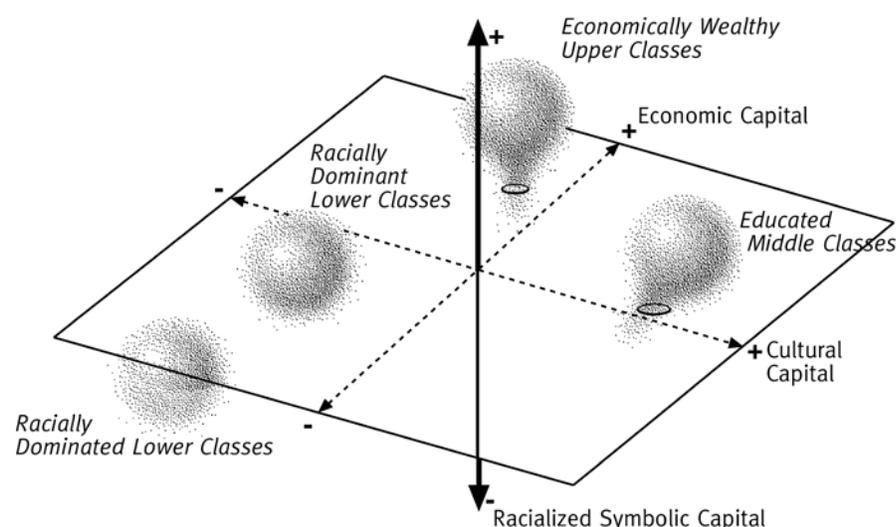


Figure 1 Possible Class Structure of a Society Structured by Racism (Weiss 2001a,b)

### <1>3. The Racism of Globalization

<fl>We can now distinguish between two different ways in which universalistic institutions like the nation-state limit access. On the one hand functionally differentiated subsystems and organizations expect specific types of cultural and social capital. It is harder for nonnationals to command this kind of capital. Therefore nonnationals are excluded as a by-product of the “normal” functioning of nationally specific subsystems and organizations (side-effect exclusion).

<txt>If this were the only form of closure, it would be difficult to uphold national institutions in a globalizing world. Side-effect exclusion is supplemented by a negative symbolic bias. The right of persons to participate as equals is put into doubt referring to a wide range of

contingent criteria. In the long run symbolic delegitimation results in divergent action strategies and in a racialized form of symbolic capital (structural racism).

Both forms of particularist closure differ in content and function. Side-effect exclusion is linked by content to the functioning of subsystems and organizations. A hospital will only accept medical school graduates as doctors. Structural racism, on the other hand, serves the sole goal of limiting the number of potential participants. Therefore it is based on contingent criteria, which are institutionalized through symbolic power. These criteria can be racist in the narrow sense of the word. They can also refer to national group membership, culture, religion and so on. My case study of Germany shall show that the exact content of racist closure can be extremely variable and contingent.

The functioning of structural racism is specific to all forms of symbolic domination. It is characterized not by content but by form, i.e. —by a dynamic interrelation of symbolic power and symbolic struggle. “The dominant class has only to *let the system they dominate take its own course* in order to exercise their domination, but until such a system exists, they have to work directly, daily, personally, to produce and reproduce conditions of domination which are even then never entirely trustworthy” (Bourdieu 1994, 184). Symbolic power is self-perpetuating and stable as long as objective and subjective structures coincide. Symbolic struggle results if the fit between subjective and objective structures undergoes an objective change. In that case actors who want to dissolve domination try to make symbolic power visible, to give a name to oppression.

During the first wave of nation-state formation—which often went hand in hand with colonialism—center states succeeded in establishing defined and generally accepted criteria that could distinguish between those who were citizens on an equal standing and those who were not.

As a result of globalization processes these criteria have started to shift. Migrants increasingly cross the racialized barriers of center states and often both migrants and established citizens refuse to “melt” into a new nation. This is not just a change in identity formation, but also an effect of transnational markets and technologies which make repeated (trans)migration more likely and feasible than in the nineteenth century. At the same time many tacit agreements that were institutionalized during the violent phase of nation building are in a process of change. It is not self-evident anymore that an alien does not belong or that a person of African decent must have a blue-collar job. Neither can all of us share the belief that citizens can be held hostage by their genocidal governments or that basic rights do not apply to noncitizens.

I have suggested that modern institutions cannot close their borders with reference to legitimate and convincing criteria and that structural racism steps in where legitimate closure fails. The problem of particularist closure and the answer of structural racism are specific to modernity. As globalization threatens the existing balance between objective closure and subjective assumptions, we can observe a resurgence of symbolic struggles about racialized classifications. This “racism of globalization” is not a relic of the past, but a flexible and efficient answer to the border problems of modern institutions in a globalizing world.

#### <1>4. The German Case

<fl>As far as globalization is concerned the situation in Germany is not very different from that of other welfare states embarked on a neoliberal path of trade liberalization and deregulation. The particular German type of racism is interesting, however, in that it has undergone enormous shifts in content without changing the way it functions. This is relevant to the theory of race relations favored by the English-speaking world, as this theory has emphasized content over structure.

<txt>Scholars of race relations usually think of racism as racial prejudice or racialized discourse (Van Dijk 1987; Miles 1989). They acknowledge that the content of the adjective “racial” varies greatly across time and location. Nevertheless they insist on a definition focusing on content, thus stimulating a lively debate about the advantages and disadvantages of narrow versus open definitions of racism. According to Miles (1989) an analytically convincing concept of racialization processes should focus on constructions of race that are closely linked to physical difference. Others have argued that racist discourse adapts to antiracist criticism (Balibar 1991). Thus it would seem that racism disappears, when in fact it is replaced by a “new” racist discourse that constructs groups as essentially and irredeemably different and argues for social distance between them (Balibar 1991; Barker 1981; Kalpaka and Raethzel 1990).

In Germany this argument has taken an interesting turn. Traditionally the term “racism” has been applied to violence against groups targeted as racially inferior by the national socialist genocides— Jews, Sinti and Roma, and to some lesser extent Africans.<sup>8</sup> Few of them survived and even fewer stayed in Germany. Despite some immigration of Eastern European Jews and Roma in the past decades, these groups constitute small minorities in German society today.

After 1945 West Germany experienced two large waves of immigration. In the founding years of the republic refugees of German decent arrived from former German territory and Eastern Europe. In some states they constituted between a fourth and a third of the population, thus causing enormous integration problems. Yet the German postwar industry needed workers and everyone agreed that these migrants were part of “our people.” As a result tensions between established and outsiders (Elias 1994) were overcome in the long run.

When East Germany closed its border 1961, the immigration of Eastern European ethnic Germans was largely replaced by a recruitment of so-called “*Gastarbeiter*” (guest workers) in

the Mediterranean. They were supposed to return after a while and a high proportion of them did so. After 1973 Germany stopped recruitment. Nevertheless the immigration of these groups continued as a result of existing migration systems, the reunification of families, an increasing number of refugees, and for the EU countries the mobility allowed by European unification.

After the wall came down, ethnic Germans from the newly independent states came to Germany in increasing numbers. Officially they are considered citizens. In practice their ethnic identity differs from that of the autochthonous Germans. This means that they are treated as citizens by the state but experience social problems similar to those of “guest workers” and refugees.

As a result of the National Socialist atrocities the term “race” is no longer used in Germany referring to human beings. Everyday and scientific concepts of “racism” tend to be limited to violence against visible minorities. Visible minorities constitute only a small number of “foreigners,” however, and quantitatively speaking hostility and discrimination against the much larger Muslim and especially Turkish minorities is a more important problem. In this situation mainstream scientific discourse argues that antforeigner violence should be regarded as a xenophobic form of interethnic conflict (Althoff 1998; Dollase et al. 1999; Stolz 2000; Wahl et al. 2001; for a critique, see Koopmans 2001). As the Turkish are not characterized referring to biological criteria, actions against them would not be viewed as racism. This position coincides with Miles’s argument for an analytically precise definition of racism, which draws a strict line between ethnic and racial conflict.

Viewed in a historical perspective, it seems unlikely that the racist ideology which has pervaded German society before 1945 should have vanished between 1945 and the 1960s, while a new phenomenon, “xenophobia,” suddenly appears in the 1960s and has remained important

ever since. In Germany we can distinguish different phases of immigration which were accompanied by changes in discourse. But it is not plausible to assume that racism as such vanished and was replaced by a different problem. Instead the structural racism described above is referring to a variety of criteria, such as citizenship, looks, ethnicity, religion and language. It targets Caucasian ethnic minorities and even German citizens of German descent. I will now give an impression of the varying borders separating the people who live in Germany.

Until the year 2000 German politicians stressed that “Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland” [Germany is not a country of immigration.] and catered to right-wing populism. The *ius sanguinis* treated ethnic Germans as citizens even when they had not lived in Germany for several generations. Children of noncitizens stayed noncitizens as long as they did not actively seek citizenship. This means that they can remain noncitizens even if their parents and grandparents were born in Germany. The law on citizenship was reformed on January 1, 2000, and supplemented with provisions for children born in Germany. Yet the reform impacts only slowly on established structures of inequality. Of the German population, 8.9 percent still are noncitizens, of which 21.4 percent were born in Germany. Fifty-five percent of the “foreign” population has lived in Germany longer than ten years. This population lacks political citizenship, and many live without a secure residence and/or work permit (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen 2002, 300).

The official ascribed criterion in Germany is “*Ausländer*” (foreign citizen). There are no statistics of ethnic and/or racial identity or of physical features such as black or Caucasian. However (children of) migrants who do not “look German” continue to experience social discrimination, even when they have become citizens and when they are completely integrated into “German” social networks and institutions (Mecheril and Teo 1994). Violent attacks have

targeted people who “look different.” In the year 2000, 64 percent of 998 violent crimes committed in a right-wing extremist context targeted people who were perceived as aliens (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen 2002, 264).

In other cases religion appears to be the relevant criterion. In June 2001 a Mannheim court ruled that the state of Baden-Württemberg did not have to employ Fereshta Ludin as a teacher because she wore a headscarf for religious reasons. Teachers are public officials and thus obliged to appear as neutral employees of the state. The court ruled that this obligation is more important than Ludin’s right to religious freedom.<sup>9</sup> Considering that the separation of church and state is not common in Germany, this ruling has been very contentious.<sup>10</sup>

In the German school system language seems to be the main reason for the inequality of migrant children (Gomolla and Radtke 2002).<sup>11</sup> In 1999 every tenth (9.7 percent) alien pupil left school with the right to attend a university as compared to every fourth German child (25.5 percent). Twenty percent of the alien children leave school without any diploma (as compared to 8 percent of the Germans) (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen 2002).

These few selected examples show that physical criteria for discrimination in Germany can hardly be distinguished from ethnic, religious, legal, language and other differences.<sup>12</sup> While all of the examples parallel racialized social phenomena, only the criterion of “looks” can be interpreted as “racist” in the traditional sense of the word. In sum they add up to a structure of inequality, a system of domination (Wacquant 1997) guaranteeing that a complex of stable and flexible, of material and socially contingent ascribed criteria are held to be self-evident reasons for discrimination and inequality.

Case studies on the effects of ethnic identity, xenophobia, citizenship, racist discourse, group-focused enmity and so on offer relevant insights into specific discourses of delegitimation.

In order to understand the importance of and the interconnections between them, we need to show how culturally flexible and arbitrary criteria for differential treatment can develop into a stable system of domination.

Sadly the scientific debate about the definition of racism mirrors the arbitrariness of selection criteria in processes of social closure. If the *selection* of personnel is justified referring to individual achievement and formal citizenship, it is viewed as legitimate. If persons are *discriminated* on the basis of their looks, accent, friends, or habits, we may talk about racism or ethnic conflict. But how can sociologists distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate types of hierarchy? It may be possible to show that a clear-cut biologist statement, such as “blacks are innately stupid,” is definitely considered racist by a majority of people. And we can also assume that a majority of citizens in the OECD countries feels legitimized in closing or selectively opening “their” nation-state borders to migrants. The examples differ in content and evaluation, but sociologically speaking they both exemplify collective closure referring to arbitrary criteria. The debate about narrow or wide definitions of racism tries to solve a normative question by developing clear-cut content-oriented definitions. This is impossible and sociologists should rather shed light on the complex processes by which arbitrary classifications develop into social facts.

#### <1>5. Symbolic Power and Symbolic Struggles in Germany

<fl>The fact that I am writing about these issues shows that they have already become issues of contention. Structural racism is not limited to symbolic struggles, however. Mostly relations of symbolic power are the problem, which veil domination by making it appear as self-evident. Therefore the empirical relevance of the concept of symbolic power is best understood when looking at other societies from a distance. A German audience will find the one-drop rule in U.S.

society amazing. Under the one-drop rule every person who had any African ancestry at all was considered “black.” What was once an institution allowing slave owners to profit economically from raping their slaves and then selling their children, over time grew into a generally accepted classification (Davis 1992; Wacquant 1994). The black community started to feel solidarity and in fact demand solidarity from every person with any African heritage at all. In a situation of symbolic power the strategies of both the dominant and the dominated are conceived in a common context, despite the fact that the dominant groups control this system, while the dominated groups adapt to it in an effort to empower themselves.

<txt>An American audience may likewise find the German school system’s practice of educating children irrespective of their native language amazing. Children who have not learned German from their families either acquire German in voluntary and costly kindergarten (and not from professional language teachers) or they are left to their own resources in school. As the path for higher education diverts from general education in grade 4 (i.e., at age 10), an extremely high proportion of migrant children ends up in the lower echelons of a hierarchically segmented school system (Gomolla and Radtke 2002). Recently this has been publicly discussed under the header “intercultural problems of migrant children.” Still the “German only” practice of German educational institutions is considered to be self-evident.<sup>13</sup> The language skills of six-year-olds are viewed as their private affair and their parents are criticized by the public for talking to their children in their native tongue.

Often the content of symbolic struggles hints at symbolic power and the objective conflicts of interest on which the symbolic struggles are based. I will now describe a specific antiracist struggle in Germany, arguing that this struggle—and its blind spots—is typical for the kind of racism that deals with border regulation. In 1998 I have observed five white German

antiracist groups, as part of a research project on the unintended reproduction of racialized inequality.<sup>14</sup> I have worked with antiracists because they actively oppose racism and do not just conform superficially to antiracist values. If we can observe phenomena among them that are apt to reproduce racial hierarchies, we must assume that the observation is not a result of individual racist intentions, but a symptom of a racially structured society from which not even antiracists can escape.<sup>15</sup>

One of the six groups I observed is a radically leftist volunteer group organizing an antidiscrimination hotline and documentation center, a journal and political protests. Among the thirty group members is one nonwhite migrant—an obvious underrepresentation of migrants when compared to the population average in the city the group operates in. Therefore the group wondered whether they were discriminating against migrants despite of their antiracist intentions. As part of a weekend meeting the group tries to reach an agreement about the definition and causes of “the problem” and to develop solutions.

<ext2>Regine: If I am working on the topic “refugees in Germany” I cannot learn 150 languages in order to speak with all of them in their language. . . . This is a specific thematic focus, which does not imply me loving to learn languages.

Alex: But I think that one should start to differentiate between the people who are forced under one conceptual roof all the time. . . . The majority of migrants in the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] speaks rather good German. They work and live. . .

Birgit [interrupts]: (. . . and write . . .) dissertations.

Alex: Excuse me?

Birgit: And write dissertations.

Alex: Hm?[[AU: why are there parentheses around this speaker's name? I could not identify him for certain]]

Birgit: they are even writing dissertations.

Alex: Yes.

Birgit: They are even writing dissertations.

[Laughter]<sup>16</sup>

<txt>The group is debating reasons why migrants are underrepresented in the group. Half of the group believes that this is due to the migrants' lack of language skills. This argument is exemplified by Regine. She explains that it is impossible for her to communicate with all of the migrants in their language: "If I am working on the topic 'refugees in Germany' I cannot learn 150 languages in order to speak with all of them in their language." During the discussion all kinds of structural impediments to desegregation were mentioned. Most of these obstacles were presented as deficits of migrants: They are not sufficiently integrated into German society. And the antiracist group cannot be expected to overcome all those barriers to integration.

The other half of the group finds this discourse racist because it generalizes incorrectly and attributes a deficit to migrants and not to those who are excluding them. Alex's statement contains two parts: First he argues against any kind of generalization. Secondly he shows that part of the migrants do know German. Thus in the second part of his argument he uses a generalization himself. So far the interaction exemplifies a typical symbolic struggle: Is exclusion the migrants' fault or should the majority change their hostile and false concepts about the minority?

In this situation something strange happens. Birgit interrupts Alex and adds "and write dissertations." The group members ask three times, what she has said, and she repeats three times

adding the adverb “even”: “They even write dissertations.” Finally the group understands her and laughs. Birgit succeeds in showing the absurdity of a discourse fantasizing about the “true” qualities of migrants. Her statement is organized like the other general statements about migrants. It also is true, since some migrants do write dissertations. But as not all migrants are writing dissertations she creates a contradictory statement which finally makes the group laugh. Birgit’s intervention can be read as an ironic critique of the patronizing discourse Alex and Regine share.

The interaction also shows a lot about the class position of the antiracist groups. Since the observed groups are members of the middle class, whose main capital is cultural, it is no problem for them to feel solidarity for migrants with inferior cultural capital.<sup>17</sup> They do have a problem envisioning educated migrants however. Even though Birgit’s statement was acoustically clear, it took four times until the rest of the group even understood it. In fact, the assumption that migrants are uneducated is so strong that two other groups interrupt their conversation completely after a group member introduces the image of a migrant who is more educated than the majority of the group.

In Germany the educated middle classes need not fear direct competition of migrants as they are protected by the threshold of inequality and by institutional barriers. For example, laws regulating professions usually include clauses which discriminate against aliens even more than the “normal” regulations for residence and work permits.<sup>18</sup> In this setting the educated middle classes can easily support multiculturalism (and look down upon lower-class right-wing extremists who do not understand the beauty of a diverse world). As a result of globalization people who know several languages and cultures and who identify with transnational entities are more marketable in the middle classes than national chauvinists. If however migrants turn out to

be culturally rich in larger numbers, they could challenge the privileged position of the German middle classes. In this context it makes sense, that the antiracist groups whom I have observed tend to view migrants as an unequal oppressed group which can be patronized. Or they ignore the migrant origin of some members of the educated middle classes. Once migrants are presented as migrants *and* culturally rich the groups do not understand what is said and then work hard at making this fact invisible. Structural racism is not only reproduced through discourse but also through habitualized distinction practices which make it difficult for migrants to be included as migrants *and* equals.

The lines of argument in the observed group can be related to Michel Wieviorka's distinction between two logics of racism: Inegalitarian racism developed during colonialism and it "believes that there is only one universal, that of the dominant race, to which other races can only be subordinated in relations of domination" (Wieviorka 1995, 43). Differentialist racism on the other hand "postulates that there are as many universals as there are cultures and, behind each culture, races. It is not possible to rank or compare universals and each of these represents so many potential threats to the others. Racism, in this case, no longer means relations of domination, but rather the setting apart, the exclusion and, in the extreme case, the destruction of races which are thought to pose a threat" (Wieviorka 1995, 43). According to Wieviorka the inegalitarian and the differentialist logic of racism go hand in hand empirically.

By relating racism to the border regulation of modern institutions we can explain how both logics of racism connect. The differentialist logic of racism serves to construct "races" in the first place and to keep "different races" at a physical distance. Part of the observed antiracists e.g. believe that most migrants speak a different language and have other integration deficits that keep them from participating in the group. Their position can also be seen as a discursive

response to side-effect exclusion. Once racialized “others” enter the markets of a nation-state, the inegalitarian logic of racism gains importance. Those who “do not really belong here” can be present, but only at the price of inferior status and resulting exploitation. In this case they are disadvantaged by structural racism. The two logics of racism are like the two sides of a coin. By doubting the right of persons to participate as equals, they are either kept at a distance or included as inferiors. Structural racism is different from other forms of domination in that it delegitimizes actors inside a social space by referring to their possible exclusion from this space.

If the position of migrants changes (e.g., as a result of globalization) or if it becomes difficult to patronize them (e.g., because they are writing dissertations), we will observe symbolic struggle. The lines of distinction shift and a group that was formerly patronized may now be viewed as “white.”

#### <1>Conclusion

<fl>When nation-states create a “threshold of inequality,” when economic organizations select their employees according to economic, cultural, social and symbolic criteria, when people feel hostile towards “foreigners,” we are observing complex systems of domination, which are partly rational, partly traditional and partly hostile. They cannot be characterized by a common content. But they do address a widespread problem: the particular closure of universal modern institutions. I am arguing that structural racism comes in, where official and legitimate reasons fail to justify social closure. Structural racism is a system of tacit domination, which can stabilize barriers to mobility in a globalizing world.

<txt>The new racism in Germany can be treated as a testing case for this assumption. It is rarely based on biologist criteria and in fact uses varying concepts, such as citizenship, language, religion, group membership and so on. Nevertheless it offers a social mechanism which can

distinguish on a long-term basis between those who interact as equals and those who are either kept at a distance or forced to accept lower status.

I am not proposing that every kind of nationalism is by definition racist. One could imagine shifting limits to the nation-state and criteria for closure which are related in content to the goals of the nation-state. Instead I am suggesting a continuum of closure ranging from benevolent nationalism to outright racist closure. The difference is not in content, but in the form and rigidity of closure and the contingency of criteria. Structural racism works through the tacit and long-term assumptions of symbolic power and it can refer to a wide range of varying criteria. This kind of racism becomes more important when borders are crossed by increasing numbers of migrants and when groups change their status, for example, from colored to Asian to white. By creating stable borders out of contingent criteria structural racism addresses one of the major problems of modern institutions in a globalizing world: the particularist closure of universalizing institutions.

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Graphic 1[[AU: where is figure? I included it in the text]]

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<1>Notes

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1. Gellner (1993) argues that nation states emerged *because* they could guarantee a generalized education and a market for that education within their territory.

2. Research on workplace diversity shows that pluralistic employment practices may improve outcomes (Bhawuk et al. 2002) under certain conditions.

3. Citizenship can guarantee stable and legitimate distinctions to some extent (Marshall 1950; Mackert 1999). Nevertheless contradictions between different forms of citizenship abound. Some people are political citizens, but socially excluded or delegitimized. This is very often the case with visible minorities. Soysal (1994) has shown that the Turkish minority in Germany is socially included, but lacks political rights. By itself citizenship cannot guarantee clear and legitimate distinctions in a time of flux either. It must be supplemented by concepts like structural racism, which can show that and how arbitrary criteria can develop into stable inequalities.

4. Bourdieu uses the concept of “doxa” mainly for traditional societies (Bourdieu 1994). In class societies he talks of a dominant culture, which is not self-evident, but forces all other cultures to define themselves as subcultures in relation to their distance to the dominant culture (see Bourdieu 1991, 167).

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5. Tilly (1999) describes the diffusion of „durable inequalities” in a similar manner. His model is compatible with the one suggested here, but he puts less emphasis on the dynamic relationship between symbolic struggles and symbolic power which will be discussed below.

6. By adding social and cultural capital to economist theories of social inequality Bourdieu developed a culturalist approach to social inequality. His concept of capital is very general: “Capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its ‘incorporated,’ embodied form” (Bourdieu 1986, 241). The resources which actors own are a result of prior accumulation strategies and they limit the potential for future action. And Bourdieu argued that apparently disinterested “non-economic” exchanges of symbolic goods (Bourdieu 1998) can mask and reproduce inequality, thereby introducing the concept of symbolic capital.

In spite of this “cultural turn” Bourdieu fails to integrate male domination into his theory of social inequality. He shows how a symbolic classification can develop into a stable difference between people. It becomes part of those institutionalized beliefs which are taken for granted by (almost) everyone and it changes the life chances of actors. His approach to inequality lacks compelling arguments against the “capitalization” of symbolic delegitimation. Nevertheless Bourdieu does not attribute capital status to this relation of domination. Instead he remains in the Weberian tradition which treats classifications such as age, gender and ethnicity as allocative inequalities within existing class relations.

7. While the United States characterized by a dualistic black–white racial structure, the social system in Germany offers a continuum of very specific legal and social statuses, which can be compared to the elaborated “mixed-race” systems in Latin America.

8. As national socialist Germany wanted to be a colonial nation, policy toward potential colonial subjects” was contradictory (Oguntoye 1997).

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9. Another case was decided similarly in 2002. Recently the constitutional court has ruled that states have to weigh the importance of religious freedom versus the importance of religious peace in schools. States are allowed to prohibit religious symbols of *all* denominations in order to promote the latter goal. This has resulted in conservative states proposing new prohibition laws, exempting Christian symbols from the prohibition as they are part of “our” cultural heritage. Whether these laws are constitutional is an issue of contention.

10. Social services and many schools follow the principle of subsidiarity—they are often organized by religious organizations, but financed by the state. In this system the state subsidizes social self-organization. However, once a social institution is organized by a church, the church has the right to employ only believers. And since a large proportion of social institutions are organized religiously, this results in a high level of discrimination against nonbelievers. For example, many kindergartens employ only Catholics (including nuns wearing headscarves) even though they are the only institution in a village and mainly paid for by the state.

11. The OECD PISA Study 2000 asked whether both, one or no parent was born in Germany. So far causal links can not be proven, but contextual evidence and other studies point in the direction of language skills as the main reason for disadvantage.

12. A large project researching hostile attitudes avoids this problem altogether by introducing a new concept “*Menschenfeindlichkeit*” (group-focused enmity) “meaning an anti-humanist political attitude which manifests itself especially as a rejection of minorities, such as e.g. foreigners, immigrants, homosexuals, homeless people, handicapped people etc.” (Heitmeyer 2002, 3).

13. Additional education in the native tongue is offered to some groups of students in the hope that their parents will return with them to their native country. This education is not

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enabling them to succeed in the German system, though.

14. Many, but not all, antiracist or multiculturalist groups in Germany consist of a majority of white nonmigrant members. Racism is seen as closely connected to fascism by some Germans and thus is an issue of political contention among white German nationals.

15. A comparison with two other groups did show that the antiracist groups are very skillful in avoiding open racism and even some subtly racist discourse.

16. This quote and the following ones were translated by me from the German original:  
Regine: Wenn ich zum Thema Flüchtlinge in Deutschland arbeite dann kann ich keine 150 Sprachen [lacht] lernen, um mit allen in ihrer Sprache zu sprechen, sondern . . . das ist ein anderes Thema das nichts damit zu tun hat, dass ich gern (ne) Sprache(n) lerne.

Alex: Aber ich finde, man muss dann schon mal anfangen, die Menschen, die hier immer begrifflich über einen Kamm geschoren werden, das ein bisschen aufzusplitten. . . . Die Mehrheit der Migranten äh Migrantinnen in der BRD, die sprechen ziemlich gut deutsch, die arbeiten leben usw. nichtsdestotrotz [Unterbrechung]

Birgit: (. . . und schreiben . . .) Doktorarbeiten.

Alex: Bitte?

Birgit: Schreiben Doktorarbeiten.

Alex: Hm?

Birgit: Die schreiben sogar Doktorarbeiten.

Alex: Ja.

Birgit: Die schreiben sogar Doktorarbeiten.

[Lachen]

17. Bourdieu has argued that the conflict between the culturally “rich” fractions of the

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dominant classes and the economically rich is structurally homologous to that between the lower and the upper classes. Thus he explains why a cultural avant-garde tends to sympathize with the oppressed (Bourdieu 1984).

18. See sections 2 and 4 of the law on the psychotherapeutic profession (Psychotherapeutengesetz—PsychThG ), which was implemented on January 1, 1999.