# Preface

This book is for people concerned with the problems of racial injustice in society. In particular, it deals with state systems of control and regulation. Readers, that is, students and teachers of criminology, sociology, law, policy makers, and criminal justice professionals, are persuaded that minority ethnic groups suffer substantial inequalities. Over the past two decades there has been a proliferation of research on policing and race relations, a significant proportion of which has been concerned with community policing. The preponderance of written materials on this issue has been impressive. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the concept of community policing is now ubiquitous in the humanities and social sciences, being invoked not just by the political scientist and the sociologist, but also by the philosopher and the literary critic. No book can hope to do justice to the breadth of material and certainly I would not claim any such pretension myself. My aim in this book is considerably more limited. I attempt to return to some of these original sources, to inquire analytically into the fundamental premise and include my own reflections, realizing that no single theory or intellectual positioning is capable of comprehending the phenomenal complexity of even a moment of experience, assuming the possibility of locating and isolating that elusive moment. Admittedly, more research needs to be specifically directed at race issues. I argue that all criminological research should encompass dimensions of racial differentiation and gender differentiation. Thus, engaging or actually doing both is difficult and painful. This book acknowledges the pain and the problems, and aims to assist research on race issues by opening up methodological debates and by presenting a range of theoretical options.

In the process of my research I have encountered many difficulties. Difficulties have, in part, centered on the fragmented and contentious nature of available literature. My library search led me to pursue different disciplines: sociology, cultural studies, criminology, history, politics, social policy, and geography to name a few. In many of these interrelated disciplines, the presence of racism and the concomitant problems, which warrant explanation are well-known, so that theoretical disputes can be

fruitful and progressive. Interestingly, when it comes to racism and criminology, I found more attention was given to defining the problem rather than to productive theorizing. It is no secret that in criminology the dominant and "privileged" theoretical perspective is the administrative perspective.

After analyzing the contributions of theorists who write about whether or not there is a problem of black crime or black criminalization, or policy researchers who argue about the existence of discrimination in the criminal justice system, there is a real sense in which both are locked into the Black/White dichotomy. Further, theoretical analyses are criticized for being "speculative," unworried by empirical data, whereas policy research is questioned on the grounds that it endlessly seeks data ultimately fruitless in the absence of theoretical postulates. A criminological understanding of racism seems not to have progressed beyond the polarized debate of the 1980s and the Black/White dichotomy. However, more recently there have been significant advances in the official acknowledgement of racism in the criminal justice system.

My guiding perspective has, of course, been a sociological one, and I have approached the subject matter acknowledging such traditional concerns as the meaning of the term "community," the epistemic questions of its relation to science, and the problems raised by the notion of "community policing." Nevertheless, in what I hope will be regarded as fertile eclecticism, I have not hesitated to draw on material from other disciplines where necessary. My belief is that this has helped to illustrate some of the more abstract points and has thereby periodically given the discussion an applied dimension.

It is particularly timely to do a racial analysis of community policing today. A number of local, national, and international events have supported "law and order" trends and their connections to racism, sexism, and classism within the "right-wing backlash." A cursory reading of works on racism during the post-Civil Rights Movement era reveals a general consensus that race is not salient. But when race does matter, it is situated within a discourse of criminality. The media, one of the most powerful sites through which societal images are shaped, play a pivotal role in the perpetuation of racism. Mainstream media consistently depict liberalized images of a society that try to move beyond race-related problems toward multicul-

turalism and the "new" talk of diversity. In light of these developments, race-based identities and policies discourses seem regressive, at a time when race permeate almost every facet of Canadian life.

In late capitalism, an era marked by capitalist expansion and globalization, Marxist perspectives have been discredited internationally in light of the fall of the transitional socialist governments in Eastern Europe. Ethnicity/race only exists as long as it does not interfere or determine consumption habits. In the post-NAFTA era, capital has become more and more flexible in crossing national boundaries while, at the same time, nationalism in the form of "ethnic pride" and "ethnic cleansing" seems to be sweeping many societies. In such discourse, race is restricted to a cosmetic function at a point in history when many cities in Canada, such as Toronto are more diverse racially than ever. It may seem, at times, that the motive of Black people's emancipatory struggles has been to make race and ethnicity unimportant. Arguably, this has arrived in the late 1990s, as one takes a cursory look at images presented by Hollywood and the mass media. Yet, some argue that Blacks are dissatisfied with such representations and suspicious of the underlying motives. A critical approach to seeing and reading these images may reveal that not only do policies and laws serve a historically oppressive interest, but these "new" racial views and attitudes thrive on particular misconceptions about empowerment. Somehow, the fate of Black people's social struggles, including social justice in Western society, became inextricably tied to the end of racism.

Anti-racism as a strategy to resist racism is counter-productive because the discourse keeps Whites dominant and at the center of the debate, in essence reinforcing White supremacy. In most of these debates, whether it is within a particular site, for example the criminal justice system or policy issues, exclusion automatically means oppression, while inclusion means empowerment. Affirmative Action policies or programs easily attest to this exclusionary project. Modern day race policy rushes ahead by applying a simplistic logic that exclusion is bad and inclusion is good. The equality achieved with this logic is at best asocial, because racial economic equality certainly does not exist. With economic disparities in place, integration is simply a prelude to assimilation.

Some Black thinkers continue to hold the Civil Rights Movement as an ideal, which, although it may have outlived its utility, has not been

discarded by Whites. It is a point of reference for conservative thinkers to demonstrate how far race relations have progressed since the 1960s. As Omi and Winant (1987) assert, the old recipes for racial equality, which involved the creation of a "color-blind" society, have been transformed into formulas for the maintenance of racial inequality. This is all too clear when one looks at the "law and order" debates of the past decade. This was a time that brought forth the Rodney King trial and its aftermath in Los Angeles. Also at this time, Canada experienced the shooting of unarmed Black men by the police, the death of Georgina Leimonis in the Just Desserts Cadi robbery, and the shooting of Police Officer Todd Baylis in Toronto. All of this occurred against the backdrop of the call for "law and order." In Canada, the Federal Government strongly pushed a "law and order" agenda. On June 15, 1995, the "Danger to the Public" provision of the *Immigration Act* received Royal Assent. This Act removes the right of refugee claimants to seek protection in Canada and the rights of permanent residents of Canada to appeal their deportation order to the Immigration Appeal Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board. Further, Bill C-17 *Criminal Law Improvement Act, 1996*, gives the police expanded powers of arrest, the power to set terms of judicial interim release, and further crime exemption for police and police agents.

This discourse now serves to legitimize the popular and prevailing racial attitudes of the day. Essentially, neo-liberal thinkers have allowed an outdated conservative agenda to succeed. That is, the issue of race has been diffused and the public is weary of racism. However, the public keeps a keen eye out for "reverse racism," or any other exclusionary practices exercised by ethnic groups. Thus, the construction and ensuing dissolution of race serves particular interests. Today's integrative race policies or color-blind theory and attitudes (clearly an element in Canadian multiculturalism and community policing) are in actuality assimilative policies designed to eliminate or diffuse difference. Such attitudes are structured to serve the interests of late capitalism by allowing capitalism the stability it needs during a transitional or contradictory phase.

Social perceptions about the law and the economy influence how resources are distributed in certain sectors of society. In this sense, as societies move through the twenty-first century and embrace the global economy, race is once again been pushed aside and the economic, intellec-

tual, and social investments of the people in these racial groups are diversified.

The logic of late capitalism produces a racial discourse, which allows ethnicity to flourish as long as it is dispersed and not organized. Here, Black people are treated as packages and sold self-determination through the equal opportunity to consume. Concurrently, Black communities are encouraged to accept social peace at the cost of social justice. It is within this logic that this book argues that community policing serves to maintain the status quo, rather than empowering Black communities. Further, this book serves as a documentation of the forms of exclusion through a discourse of community policing.

Chapter one presents an overview of some of the principal approaches that have been taken to the study of racism and criminology. This chapter takes the view that although traditional approaches highlight the problems of racism in society, it is not sufficient in conceptualizing racism today. This chapter advances critical race theory and critical criminology, insofar as it does not limit the scope of inquiry to state definitions of crime and prefers to include issues of social harm and social justice. The chapter also takes a critical look at the *Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System.* In so doing, it seeks to expose and oppose domination rather than be complicit in its recreation.

Chapter two elaborates upon the methodological issues raised in chapter one. Specifically, this chapter looks at young, law-abiding Black University and College male students. Utilizing focus groups, this chapter captures a specific point of view on crime, race, and community policing that is so often overlooked.

Chapter three examines the media images of Blackness. This favorable image serves to conceal rather than reveal the forms that race/racism takes in the discourse on community policing at particular moments of the law and order "crises." This chapter then presents the works of Antonio Gramsci, Livy Visano, and others that caution us about hegemony, law, consent, and ideologies that produce a particular frame, that so-called reasoning becomes the ideological reason in the service of the state.

Chapter four explains the utility of the concept of citizenship in understanding both the ideological and material conditions under which

Black people live their lives in Canada. It is argued that exclusion manifests itself through the denial of legal citizenship through immigration policies.

Chapter five looks at the role of the police in community policing from a Black viewpoint. I argue that community policing is another form of societal discipline.

Lastly, chapter six highlights and problematizes some of the primary concerns and forms in the discourse on racism and community policing.