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Racial Categories as Resources and Constraints in Everyday Interactions: Implications for Racialism and Non-Racialism in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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Abstract

The anti-apartheid struggle was characterized by tensions between the opposing ideologies of non-racialism (exemplified by the Freedom Charter) and racialism (exemplified by Black Consciousness). These tensions have remained prevalent in public policies and discourse, and in the writings of social scientists, in the post-apartheid period. In this paper, I examine some ways in which issues of whether, when, and how race matters become visible in everyday interactions in South Africa, and what insights this may offer with respect to these ongoing tensions. Specifically, I employ an ethnomethodological, conversation analytic approach to examine some ways in which racial categories are treated as resources for action or constraints on action. I conclude by arguing that these findings point to the contingent and situational operation of a *practical* non-racialism (as well as *practical* racialism), and thus to the achievement of these ideologies in the moment-by-moment unfolding of interactions.

Key words: non-racialism; racial categories; interaction; South Africa; ethnomethodology; conversation analysis

Introduction

Non-racialism has been a prominent concept in South African politics and public discourse for at least several decades. This is reflected in Frederikse's reference to non-racialism as the 'unbreakable thread' of resistance to apartheid (Frederikse 1990), a characterization that reflects the centrality of this concept for much of the anti-apartheid struggle. During the apartheid era, non-racialism offered a means to bring together a number of strands of apartheid resisters, subvert the rigid boundaries constructed by apartheid and begin to move beyond categorical divisions and towards a unified society (Maré 2001). By the early 1950s, following its emergence as a leading apartheid resistance organization, the African National Congress (ANC) had played a prominent role in popularizing the concept of non-racialism as an anti-apartheid value (MacDonald 2006). However, despite the prominence of non-racialism as an anti-apartheid buzzword for the ANC and other organizations, the term often lacked content (Maré 2001) and held varied and sometimes ambiguous and contradictory meanings (MacDonald 2006). This resulted in a lack of clarity with respect to the implications of non-racialism for the status of racial categories in everyday life in a democratic South Africa, and confusion and inconsistency with respect to the practical meaning of non-racialism for ordinary citizens.

In contrast to the non-racialism of the ANC, other anti-apartheid movements and organizations, including the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (which was most strongly associated with Steve Biko), adopted what could be described as racialist approaches to the struggle. For example, while the demands of the Black Consciousness Movement were similar to those of

the ANC's non-racialism, calling for 'an open society, one man *(sic)*, one vote, no reference to colour' (Biko 1996:123), Biko criticized non-racialism for foreclosing the use of racial consciousness and solidarities in resisting racism. Furthermore, Biko argued that racial integration would be artificial unless whites and blacks first overcame the respective superiority and inferiority complexes that had resulted from segregation and oppression (Biko 1996).

These tensions between non-racialism and racialism, along with the abovementioned contestation and ambiguity with respect to the definition of non-racialism, have remained a prominent feature of the post-apartheid era. Despite the ANC's long-standing commitment to non-racialism, there remain persistent tensions in government discourse between a focus on black nationalism and more moderate claims that people of all races have a part to play in the new South Africa (Louw 2004). Similar tensions have emerged between the status of non-racialism as a central value in the new constitution and the use of race conscious affirmative action and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies to redress the injustices of apartheid. As Posel (2001) notes, legislation aimed at reversing the effects of apartheid thus continues to rely on, and thereby reproduce the relevance of, apartheid racial categories in its implementation and the measurement of its success. On the other hand, however, Sharp (1998) argues that uncritically adopting non-racialism provides no guarantees of a better outcome, given the way in which it has been selectively appropriated to obscure continuing structural racism and hence perpetuate the legacy of apartheid (cf. Winant 2001). By this reasoning, the self-same categories that served as the basis for oppression under apartheid must now become the basis for the

deliberate establishment of an equitable society to replace the deliberately racially stratified society of the past (Posel 2001).

In addition to documenting these tensions between non-racialism and racialism, social scientists have demonstrated a reflexive orientation to them in their reflections on the contemporary study of race in South Africa. For example, Maré (2001:80) asks,

> how do we address a rejection of the actual 'existence' of races as well as the overwhelming existence of the social construct in having shaped – and still shaping – the life chances of citizens; how do we avoid our own intellectual curiosity and critical training being blunted through the acceptance, for whatever reason, of these categories of race?

While the status and meanings of racialism and non-racialism thus clearly present important and complex dilemmas for the likes of policymakers and social scientists, I examine some ways in which they are also lively concerns for ordinary people as they engage in everyday interactions, even when matters of race are not ostensibly central to what they are talking about. In doing so, I show how participants' orientations to, and management of, the question of how and when race is relevant in the course of their interactions may offer insights into the practical realization of non-racialism and racialism, and the tensions between them, among ordinary people in South Africa (cf. Billig et al. 1988).

I approach these issues by drawing on a data corpus consisting of approximately 115 hours of interactional radio shows broadcasted on three different South African radio stations. This corpus includes several hours of pilot data that

were recorded in May 2006 and May to June 2007, in order to assess the feasibility of using radio broadcasts as a data source, with the remainder of the data recorded over a three-month period from March to June 2008. The data collection was designed to include 1) broadcasts with a high degree of interactivity (e.g., interviews with guests and calls from listeners), 2) both government-operated and independent radio stations, 3) radio stations that broadcast to a wide audience, either through conventional radio or streaming online, and 4) shows broadcasted at various times throughout the day. On this basis, and based on the geographical and other self-identifications provided by callers in the data, it is likely that the recordings that make up the data corpus were heard or participated in by people from a broad cross-section of South African society. However, the data corpus is by no means intended or claimed to constitute a random or nationally representative sample, either of South African speakers or of interactions in post-apartheid South Africa (see Whitehead in press, for further discussion of the data and methodological approach used in this study).

The data were analyzed using conversation analytic techniques (see, for e.g., Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Sacks 1995; Schegloff 2007a), informed by ethnomethodological perspectives (see, for e.g., Garfinkel 1967; Sacks 1995), and aided by detailed transcripts.[2] The specific focus of the analysis was on developing detailed descriptions of some ways in which participants' racial category membership came to be treated as either a resource or a constraint with respect to the action(s) being produced and responded to. In accordance with this focus, the analysis draws in particular on previous findings with respect to a range of features of social categories,

including their associations with bodies of common-sense knowledge; 'typical' activities or conduct of category members (or 'category-bound activities'); rights, obligations, and authority, particularly with respect to the production of particular actions; and members' methods for formulating and responding to particular actions (e.g., Whalen and Zimmerman 1990; Sacks 1995; Kitzinger 2005; Schegloff 2005; Raymond and Heritage 2006; Schegloff 2007b; Stokoe 2009).

Racial Categories as Resources for Action

A first systematic way in which speakers' or recipients' racial category membership came to be treated as relevant in the data was through its treatment at particular moments as a resource for the production of actions. This is illustrated by Excerpt 1, in which a caller uses a racial self-identification as a means for heightening a positive assessment of, and display of appreciation for, one of his recipients, Archbishop Desmond Tutu (who is on the line as a guest on the show), in the course of pursuing a response from Tutu.

Excerpt 1:

[184 – SAfm 4-28-08]

1 C: Um uh uh uhuh Bishop, really, uhuh huh! .hh
2 H: M[m.
3 C: [So good to talk to you:. Really sir.
4 (0.6)
5 G: °God bles[s you.°
6 C: [It's an honor, it's an honor sir, it's an
7 honor.

8 (2.8)

9 C: Anyway. .h I [just wanted to say sir, .hh the fact that

10 H: [Ja.

11 C: you (.) (t-) (0.3) ten:d your humor .h with (.) your

12 religion, (0.2) has actually made you a unique person.

13 .hh Really. pt=.h This means so much to so many of us.

14 H: Mm::. [Mm.

15 C: [E::h really. Really it has. .h And uh you'll

16 never know how much (.) you've (.) meant to us. .hh Um:

17 (.) I(h)'m t(h)alk(h)ing ab(h)out white South Africa.

18 ((smile voice)) .hh [And uh really sir, (0.2) um (.)

19 uh:: sir we honor you

20 H: [Mm.

21 C: and uh I respect you. .h Really sir. .h Thank you very

22 much.

23 G: G[od bless you and thank you.

24 C: [Thank you.

25 C: (The-)

26 (0.4)

27 H: Oh sorry we l(h)o(h)st Richard there.

After displaying his pleasure at being able to speak to Tutu (lines 1-7), and praising him (lines 9 and 11-12), the caller twice notes how much Tutu has meant to 'us' (lines 13 and 16). He then specifies what he meant by 'us' – 'white South Africa' (lines 16-17) – thereby revealing that he is a white South African. This self-identification seems to specify a basis upon which the caller, in praising Tutu's work, represents more than simply another one of the millions of people worldwide who

have been virtually unanimous in their positive regard for what Tutu has achieved. It does this by displaying that the caller is praising Tutu *as* a white South African, thereby drawing on common-sense knowledge about the categories of people (i.e., black South Africans) who would ordinarily, and historically, be understood as having been the primary beneficiaries of Tutu's work. In light of this, the caller's racial category membership may be seen as adding additional weight or authority to his praise (cf. Whalen and Zimmerman 1990), by virtue of delivering the praise from the perspective of one who has not been a member of the category that have historically been assumed to be the primary beneficiaries of Tutu's work. In addition, the caller may be treating effusive praise of this sort for a black person by a white person as somehow transgressing normative racial alignments, and thereby as being remarkable by virtue of breaching expectations in this regard.

It may well be the case that, from the outset, the caller was designing his praise to be heard as coming from him as a white South African, and thereby as being noteworthy, and that he made his racial category membership explicit only when his recipients showed no recognition of what he was doing as being remarkable in any way. Evidence for this is shown in the way in which the caller on several occasions throughout the call pursued a response from Tutu, with his mention of race being produced as one of this series of pursuits of uptake, following the failure of several previous attempts. The first of these pursuits occurs at line 3 where, following a possibly complete assessment ('So good to talk to you') after which Tutu does not immediately respond, the caller adds an increment[3] ('Really sir'). This increment creates another transition relevance place[4] at which a response from Tutu is relevant,

but he does not respond during a 0.6-second silence (line 4). Following this silence, Tutu does address the caller, albeit with a somewhat minimal show of appreciation for the caller's assessment ('God bless you,' line 5). Several further pursuits by the caller occur (see lines 6-7, 12, 13, and 15-16) before he produces his racialized specification of who he means by 'us.' The caller's mention of race thus follows a sustained and consistently unsuccessful series of pursuits of a response from Tutu, which strongly suggests that the caller employed his racial category membership as a resource in the service of his continued pursuit of a response. As it turns out, this particular pursuit is no more successful than the previous ones, and the caller has to produce several more (see lines 18-19 and 21) before eventually receiving uptake from Tutu (line 23) and being put out of his misery shortly afterward as his call was lost (see lines 25-27).

Thus, by identifying himself racially in this way, the caller may have been making explicit something he treated as potentially recognizable earlier on, thereby retrospectively making clear why his praise for Tutu was potentially noteworthy (cf. Raymond 2010). In this sense, there may have been a presumption on the part of the caller that his recipients would be able to recognize him as a white South African, and by virtue of that recognize the kind of action he was producing, and only when they failed to produce any uptake that would serve as a display of such recognition did he explicate the basis for why his actions should be treated as remarkable. In light of this, Tutu's lack of uptake may have been a way of tacitly resisting the racial common-sense upon which treatment of the caller's actions as noteworthy appears to rest.

In contrast to Excerpt 1, in which the recipient did not overtly display any recognition of the use to which the speaker was apparently putting his racial category membership, Excerpt 2 shows an instance in which a recipient actively uses a speaker's racial category membership as a resource for aligning with the speaker's actions. Prior to this excerpt, the host of the show has criticized the South African government, claiming that they have failed to provide sufficient support for small and medium-sized businesses, and a caller has produced a similar criticism, with the host and caller agreeing that the government is 'dysfunctional' with respect to supporting such businesses. Subsequent to this alignment, the caller secures the host's go-ahead to express 'one more comment' (see lines 1-3), before criticizing the decision to hire a highly-paid 'imported coach' for the national football (soccer) team, rather than making use of 'local talent' (see lines 4-11). In aligning with this position, the host tacitly treats the caller's racial category membership as a basis for authority in expressing such a position, when it would otherwise be written off as being racially motivated.

Excerpt 2:

[176 – SAfm 4-28-08]

1 C: And- and (sure) one more comment if you don't mind
2 [(me telling you) so, .h is that e- uh y- you have thee
3 H: [That's fine.
4 C: sort of: football arena where .hh you have a: imported
5 judge for a: .h imported (c-) coach for a to- too
6 ridiculous amount .h of money to mention. .hh How about
7 taking it on the chin, (.h) and having a local person,

8 .h running from top to bottom, .h and let (.) this
9 country try and .h (live with) what it can do? .h
10 Instead of trying to have this ridiculous farce going
11 on, .h and use the local talent .h [(maybe) to
12 H: [ABsolutely!
13 C: actually (.) let this country grow. .h [And not (in/the)
14 H: [Boudewijn,
15 C: reverse.
16 H: I couldn't agree with you more. I'm so glad you- I mean
17 I'm glad we- we got you to call. .hh Because every time
18 you say something like this it sounds like you're just
19 pushing for black this black that. .hh But it's the
20 small .hh and the [medium business.
21 C: [(I'm not-) I'm not p- .h I'm not
22 pushing for black. Because that's a mistake in
23 itse[lf.
24 H: [Exactly.
25 C: You mus- you must push .h you must push for what's
26 there, what you have in your [hand.
27 H: [(What's) right. Yes.

The host begins his response by expressing strong agreement with the caller (lines 12 and 16), before expressing his pleasure at having the caller phone in to express these views (lines 16-17). He then produces an account for this pleasure, claiming that 'every time you say something like this it sounds like you're just pushing for black this black that' (lines 17-19), thus suggesting that in *this* case the view being expressed by the caller is *not* hearable as racially motivated in the way

that it would be in other cases. In this way, the host treats the caller as having special authority to make claims of this sort, whereas other people who might make them would likely be treated as simply having a racial bias (cf. Antaki and Horowitz 2000). The host thus treats the caller's claims, which were ostensibly concerned with national interests, as being hearable as euphemistic ways of 'pushing' for racialized interests if produced by a (type of) speaker other than the caller.

While the host does not explicitly specify the basis for his treatment of the caller as having this type of special authority, he does make the caller's racial category membership available as the 'obvious' solution to the puzzle of why this would be the case (cf. Whitehead 2009). That is, by claiming that the position the caller has expressed is hearable as 'pushing for black,' while implying that it is not hearable as such when coming from this particular caller, the host invites listeners to consider what characteristic of the caller might provide for his exemption from an assumption of racial bias as a basis for expressing this position. This puzzle can be solved by assuming that the caller is white – and thus that the host is treating him as such, even though he has not overtly identified himself as such at any point during the call.

In this way, the host appears to be oriented to the caller's racial category membership as consequential for understanding what he is doing, treating him (by virtue of being a white person doing what he is doing) as adopting a principled stand on the matter at hand, rather than taking a self-serving and thereby possibly racially biased position. In doing so, the host uses the caller's race to buttress the claims that

he (the host) has previously made, and that the caller has aligned with during the course of the call.[5]

Further evidence for this analysis is provided in the caller and host's subsequent responses. In lines 21-22, the caller treats the host as having suggested that he is in fact 'pushing for black,' and denies that he is doing so, claiming that this would be 'a mistake in itself.' The host then treats what the caller has just said as a statement of the position that he himself previously had independently held by saying 'Exactly' in line 24 (see Li's [2007] analysis of the use of the word 'exactly' in this type of sequential environment). The host thus confirms that he was not accusing the caller of 'pushing for black,' effectively reasserting his appreciation for the caller doing something that could not (given who the caller is) be treated as 'pushing for black,' even though it would be treated as such if other people did it.

As in Excerpt 1, the (in this case more tacit) use of a speaker's race as a resource for action both rests on and reproduces common-sense knowledge associated with racial categories (cf., for e.g., Sacks 1995; Kitzinger 2005; Schegloff 2007b; Stokoe 2009). Here, knowledge about what (racial) categories of people would benefit from increased emphasis on making use of 'local talent,' and thereby what categories of people would potentially be seen as self-interested in demanding such an emphasis, underpins the host's treatment of the speaker as having enhanced authority to take the position he has taken. This may be particularly so in the context of a discussion of football, which both historically and in post-apartheid South Africa has been seen as a 'black' sport (Pelak 2005). This may thus be another case in which common-sense knowledge of past and present, and the continuities between them, are

reproduced through the use of race, and the connection of racial categories to particular material interests, in a situated interactional moment. In addition, it demonstrates how ostensibly national interests come to be (re)produced as racialized, through the treatment of claims about national interests being treated as possible euphemisms for racialized interests. This, in turn, points to the continuing mundane consequentiality of historical racial divisions and race-specific interests for contemporary actions-in-interaction.

Racial Categories as Constraints on Action

The converse of cases in which racial categories are deployed as resources for action is cases in which they are treated as constraints on action. An instance of a speaker's orientation in this regard is shown in Excerpt 3. In this case, a caller who is complaining about government responses to concerns about violent crime, and about the violence of South African society, concedes that 'the whites are to blame' (lines 16-17) for the things about which he is complaining. By doing this, he displays an orientation to his diminished authority as a white person to produce such complaints, while at the same time defensively preempting the use of his racial category membership as a basis for undermining his complaint.

Excerpt 3:

[255 – SAfm 5-19-08]

1 C: Um:: I- I- I do:n't want to sound like I'm beating a
2 drum here but=h (0.6) the government (.) denial=hh geez
3 I tell you man, (0.2) it s:ickens me to my stomach.

4 C: .h[h Because last week we had the minister saying, .hhh
5 H: [Mm.
6 (0.3) uh:: you know, (.) n- 'South Africans are not like
7 this:.' I mean we wo- live in one of the most violent
8 (.) countries in the world.=
9 H: =Mm[:.
10 C: [Okay? .h Now I'm not saying all South Africans are
11 violent,
12 H: No most of u[s are Alec.
13 C: [(but) But- [but the fact is is that
14 H: [Fact.
15 C: we have a (.) terribly violent society and- and yes:,
16 (.) you know, >th- th-< the whites are to blame for
17 that. (.) Uh: under the apartheid [system. But the fact
18 H: [Mm mm mm=hhh
19 C: of the matter is it continues. .hh And people do have a
20 choice to stop.
21 [.hh
22 H: [Mm:.

Although the caller does not directly identify himself as white in this instance, by producing this concession he orients to the possibility that a recipient could treat him as being a member of the same racial category as those that could be blamed for producing the conditions about which he is complaining, thereby invalidating his complaint. It is further noteworthy in this regard that the caller precedes his concession with the word 'yes' (line 15), thereby designing the concession as responsive to a hypothetical counter to the complaint he has just produced. The caller

then re-asserts his complaint, thereby using the concession as a means of preemptively shaping the range of responses available to recipients who could potentially seek to undermine his complaint (cf. Antaki and Wetherell 1999). That is, by acknowledging his vulnerability to the kind of racialized counter that might be used to undermine his complaint, he ensures that such a counter could not subsequently be produced without being a repetition of a charge he has already admitted to. In this way, he renews the relevance of a response to the substance of his complaint, while constraining the relevance of a response that would use his racial category membership as a basis for undermining his complaint.[6]

Consistent with the data examined in the prior section, the caller's production of this concession shows his orientation to the common-sense knowledge associated with his racial category membership in a number of ways. Firstly, the caller treats shared racial category membership as a basis for shared blame, such that simply being a member of the same racial category as those responsible for something makes one vulnerable to being targeted for blame for it, and involves having limited rights to complain about it. This, in turn, rests on the common-sense association between the category 'white' and the violence of the apartheid system, which the caller explicitly mentions in his concession (line 17). Moreover, the assignment of responsibility for apartheid's atrocities is treated as continuous with potential blame for post-apartheid social conditions that can be linked to apartheid – thus providing a basis for the caller's effort to break this past-present link with the claim that 'the fact of the matter is it continues. .hh And people <u>do</u> have a choice to stop' (lines 17 and 19-20). It is noteworthy in this regard that the caller formulates those to blame as 'the whites,'

thereby excluding himself from the category he is formulating – in contrast to a formulation such as 'we whites.' In this way, although he displays an orientation to potentially being blamed for the very thing he is complaining about as a result of his racial category membership, he simultaneously positions himself outside the culpable category, thereby further distancing himself from any responsibility for the blameworthy actions of its members. In this way, the speaker's conduct is shaped and constrained by, while simultaneously reproducing, common-sense knowledge about his position within South Africa's racialized social order, both past and present.

The host's response to the caller's concession is consistent with the above analysis, as he displays his understanding of the caller's actions in line 18. Although this response consists only of minimal tokens ('mm'), the host's production of these tokens shows his recognition of (and possibly alignment with) the point the caller is making. In addition, the timing of the host's response is significant, as it occurs just after the point at which the caller has made explicit the basis for his concession that 'the whites are to blame,' immediately after he has linked the culpability of white people with the apartheid past. The host thus displays his understanding of, and collaborates with, the racial common-sense the caller is oriented to.

Despite the caller's preemptive management of what he treats as limited rights associated with his racial category membership, the concession he has produced may provide a basis for recipients to discount his complaint precisely because of his acknowledgment of his limited rights to produce it. Conversely, however, had he not done anything to preemptively manage the consequentiality of his racial category membership for his actions, recipients may still have heard and responded to his

complaint as coming from someone with limited rights to produce it – indeed, this vulnerability is the basis for the work he does through his concession. In this sense, participants' racial category membership may simultaneously be a constraint for some and a resource for others, depending on what they are doing at any particular moment. Excerpt 4 provides a further illustration of this, demonstrating the potential consequences for a speaker of not preemptively managing the ways in which his rights to produce a particular action may be constrained. This case involves a guest, a wealthy businessman who is using his own money to wage a legal battle to prevent the government from disbanding the Scorpions, an elite crime-fighting unit tasked with investigating corruption.[7] During a lengthy interview prior to the excerpt below, the guest has displayed no apparent orientation to the implications of his racial category membership for his opposition to the disbanding of the Scorpions. However, in responding to the case in favor of the Scorpions that the guest has set forth during the interview, a listener (communicating via a text message, which the host reads on air) uses the guest's racial category membership as a resource for undermining his arguments.[8]

Excerpt 4:

[18 – Kaya FM 5-5-08]

1 H: Okay and this one, 'John your fairly unknown guest is
2 just a white attention seeker. .h He can use the money
3 that he amassed because of apartheid to better the lives
4 of many people, .h instead of this cheap publicity
5 stunt. .h He can use his riches to make good the victims
6 of apartheid he has benefitted from. .h The Scorpions

7 must go.’ Okay. (.) One listener .h who’s- you(‘re)
8 doing completely the wrong thing, .h uh: Hugh Glenister
9 (a) response?
10 G: .hhh=pt=.hh (0.2) U:m=hh okay. hhh (.) The wealth I’ve
11 created in actual fact has (.) actually occurred after
12 (0.6) u:m: (.) nineteen ninety four. .hhh U:m: (.) and
13 (.) I was one of those who fought (.) for the very (.)
14 change that we have in South Africa. .hh Um: (.) the one
15 concern I have is that I fought very hard against the
16 previous bunch of bullies in the eighties, .hh a::n:d
17 the current behavior (0.2) o:f certain people within the
18 government i- (.) reminds me so much of the eighties,
19 and that scares me. .hh And that’s why I took the action
20 that I took.
21 H: Okay, Dumi is calling from Protea. Hi Dumi?

In the text message (as read by the host), the listener accuses the guest of being ‘just a white attention seeker’ (line 2). This compound formulation serves to conflate the racial category ‘white’ with the attribute ‘attention seeker,’ packaging them together as a complete and recognizable unit. In doing so, the listener treats ‘attention seeker’ as an attribute not just of this particular guest, but also as bound to the racial category ‘white’ more generally (cf. Sacks 1995; Schegloff 2007b). In addition, however, the description of the guest as ‘fairly unknown’ adds additional weight to the claim that he is a ‘white attention seeker’ by claiming that he is not well-known enough to get attention without doing the sorts of things he has been doing in attempting to prevent the disbandment of the Scorpions. The listener thus

treats the guest's actions as having no merit, by virtue of being motivated by an attempt to get attention, rather than (for example) by a principled belief in the cause for which he is fighting (cf. Antaki and Horowitz 2000). In this way, the guest's racial category membership is treated as making him differentially vulnerable to charges of selfish motivations in his production of ostensibly civic-minded actions, even if he has not previously oriented to it as such. At the same time, however, the guest's racial category membership serves as a resource for the listener to undermine the arguments that he has made, thus illustrating the way in which one participant's constraint can be another's resource.

Several additional features of the listener's accusations, and the guest's response to them, are noteworthy. Following the claim that the guest is 'just a white attention seeker,' the listener draws explicit racialized links between the apartheid past and the present, claiming that the guest's wealth was 'amassed because of apartheid' (line 3) and that he has 'benefitted from' 'victims of apartheid' (lines 5-6). In doing so, the listener invokes a common-sense narrative of apartheid-era creation and protection of white wealth and exploitation of black citizens, using the guest's financial status and racial category membership to position him as a continued beneficiary of apartheid at the expense of its victims. He thus treats the guest as having limited rights to oppose the actions of the current government by virtue of his relationship to the prior apartheid system.

Following the host's invitation to the guest to respond to these accusations (lines 7-9), the guest resists them by working to dislocate himself from the position in which the listener has located him. He begins by claiming that his wealth was created

following the end of apartheid (lines 10-12), thus resisting the listener's claim that he was, and continues to be, a beneficiary of apartheid. By using the phrase 'in actual fact' in the course of making these claims about the origins of his wealth, the guest designs his utterance as a counter to the listener's claims, and draws on his primary epistemic access to matters of his personal wealth (cf. Raymond and Heritage 2006), thereby treating the listener's accusation as being speculative and mistaken. He then claims to have 'fought (.) for the very (.) change that we <u>have</u> in South Africa' (lines 13-14), thereby claiming to have been an active opponent of apartheid, and thus further resisting the claim that he benefitted from apartheid by exploiting its victims. Finally, he draws a connection between the apartheid regime and the current government (lines 17-18). By referring to the '*previous* bunch of bullies' (line 16; emphasis added), he implies that the *current* government is similarly describable as a 'bunch of bullies.' However, he is then much more cautious in his explicit formulation of the current government, referring to 'certain people within the government' (line 17-18) rather than applying the term 'bullies' to the entire government. He thus equates the undeniable villainy of the apartheid government with the actions of the present government, and claims the measures he is taking against the current government to be of the same sort as his struggles against the apartheid regime. In this way, he reformulates his actions in non-racial terms, proposing that what he is doing is concerned with opposing bullies, rather than being about race, thereby further resisting the listener's use of racial common-sense in constructing the accusations against him.

This interactional work on the part of the guest illustrates the potential consequences of not taking preemptive action to manage the potential constraints on action associated with racial category membership. Dealing with race up front, as the speaker in Excerpt 3 did, makes it readily available as a resource for recipients to interpret and respond to an action. However, not dealing with it preemptively provides no guarantee that a recipient will not use it as a resource for holding speakers accountable for their actions (cf. West and Fenstermaker 1995), as the listener in Excerpt 4 did – and in such cases, the original speaker is faced with performing the kind of retrospective work that the guest in Excerpt 4 performed in response to the recipient's use of his race. However, in this case the guest (unlike the caller in Excerpt 3) never admits to the relevance of race for what he is doing, instead treating it as completely irrelevant. In this sense, taking preemptive action (as in Excerpt 3) has the advantage of dealing with possible trouble before it arises and the disadvantage of admitting to the possible relevance of race when it might otherwise never have been treated as relevant, while not taking preemptive action (as in Excerpt 4) has the converse advantage and disadvantage.

Conclusions

The data I have presented above demonstrate some ways in which, as a result of the common-sense associated with them, racial categories can serve as both interactional resources and as constraints, both for speakers and recipients. Racial category membership can contribute to speakers' production of particular courses of action, lend additional weight to actions, and assist recipients in recognizing the actions

speakers are producing. Conversely, racial category membership can make it more difficult for certain categories of people to produce a particular action, at a particular moment, for particular recipients, without facing potential interactional difficulties.

These findings suggest a two-sided mechanism through which racial common-sense can be reproduced in ordinary interactions. The first side of this mechanism involves race being reproduced as a result of its usefulness in getting things done, which provides speakers with a systematic, structural motivation to continue using it to help them achieve the interactional outcomes that they are designing their actions to achieve. The second side involves race being reproduced as a result of speakers orienting to it as limiting or constraining their actions, and shaping the way they produce their actions accordingly – and because failing to do so in cases where recipients may treat race as a constraint on speakers' actions, even if the speakers themselves do not, can result in interactional difficulties. These two bases for the reproduction of race together constitute a single mechanism in the sense that racial category membership may simultaneously be a resource for one participant and a constraint for another – and may be a resource for one participant precisely by virtue of being a constraint for another. As a result, speakers can be held accountable for any race-relevant conduct they produce (cf. West and Fenstermaker 1995), which provides a strong warrant for speakers to monitor their actions moment-by-moment for possible race-relevance, and to choose whether and how to shape their actions accordingly. If they do not do so, they have no guarantee that others will not, with interactional trouble as a potential outcome. Similarly, recipients can monitor speakers' actions for their race-relevance, and decide whether to use any possible

race-relevance as a basis for holding speakers accountable (West and Fenstermaker 1995; Whitehead 2009). Clearly there are no easy solutions to this dilemma (cf. Billig et al. 1988), and participants must grapple with these decisions moment-by-moment, and on a case-by-case basis, with no guarantees of avoiding trouble no matter what choices they make.

It is important to note, however, that in much (or perhaps all) of the data on which this analysis is based, it is evident that the participants are not setting out specifically to reproduce race. Instead, they are simply engaging in the business of everyday life, doing the sorts of ordinary things that people do (assessing, complaining, agreeing and disagreeing, and so on), and treating racial category membership as relevant for how they do things, and even for what they are doing. In this sense, race comes to be reproduced not as a result of participants' active efforts to reproduce it, but instead as a 'by-product' of whatever actions they happen to be engaged in (cf. Kitzinger 2005). Thus, while it is certainly possible for race to be taken up as a topic for discussion in its own right, in many cases it emerges as a result of being treated as relevant for whatever other topic is being discussed, pointing to the way in which it is intertwined in many complex ways with the everyday concerns of ordinary people in South Africa.

These findings have implications for the abovementioned discussion of tensions between non-racialism and racialism, and for questions of what these opposing ideologies look like in post-apartheid South Africa. The recurrent treatment of people's racial category memberships as relevant for what actions they will be understood as producing, their rights and authority (or lack thereof) to produce

particular actions at particular times, and so on, can be thought of as a kind of *practical racialism* – a set of ways in which people come to treat race as relevant on the basis of the practical demands of unfolding interactions. Conversely, in cases in which participants do not treat race as relevant for what is happening in an interaction, or resist the treatment of them as such, they can be thought of as adopting a position of *practical non-racialism*. In this sense, *practical* racialism and non-racialism can be thought of as not being mutually exclusive options – it is possible for individuals to flexibly adopt either position on any given occasion, based on their assessment of the particulars of the situation, rather than choosing to apply only one or the other across all possible situations (cf. Billig et al. 1988). Thus, rather than being stable, cross-situational ideologies, racialism and non-racialism can be seen as contingent and situational achievements that emerge from the moment-by-moment unfolding of interactions, in accordance with the demands and choices facing participants at particular moments (cf. Billig et al. 1988).

Of course, as the above analysis demonstrates, there can be disagreements or disputes with respect to which position is most appropriate for a particular situation and, on such occasions, tensions between (practical) racialism and non-racialism are realized at the level of individual episodes of interaction. Such moments may provide evidence for the consequentiality of the post-apartheid social transformation of South Africa, and for the ways in which speakers may reproduce or resist non-racialism or racialism in their everyday lives. However, the regularity with which speakers in the data oriented to the relevance of racial common-sense, and the systematic ways in which recipients participated in the co-production of such common-sense, points to

the recurrent collaborative reproduction of race as a taken-for-granted feature of post-apartheid life.

Notes

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[2] A list of the transcription symbols utilized is provided by Jefferson (2004).

[3] For a discussion of turn increments see, for example, Ford, Fox and Thompson (2002).

[4] A transition relevance place (TRP) is a recognizable place at which transition to a next speaker may possibly occur (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974).

[5] Paradoxically, this involves using race (in the form of the caller's race-based authority) to defeat the use of race (in the form of potential accusations of racial bias in expressing a position).

[6] It is noteworthy that the caller in this case establishes from the outset a defensive orientation with respect to what is to follow, setting the scene for the defensive racialized concession that he subsequently produces. He does this by 1) prefacing his complaint with the claim, 'I do:n't want to sound like I'm beating a drum here' (lines 4-5), thereby treating what he is about to do as the sort of thing that could be responded to with accusations that he *is* 'beating a drum,' and 2) claiming that he is 'not saying all South Africans are violent' (line 13-14), thereby displaying his concern about the

potential for being accused of making unsustainably broad generalizations about South Africans, and moving to preempt such accusations.

[7] The Scorpions unit had been accused of partisan political motivations in its decisions on which investigations and prosecutions to pursue, and the government had proposed disbanding it and incorporating its personnel and duties into the regular police force.

[8] The listener's ascription of the racial category 'white' to the guest involves a presumption on the part of the listener since, as mentioned above, the guest has not shown any apparent orientation to his racial category membership, and has not overly identified himself racially in any way. In responding to the listener, the guest tacitly confirms the accuracy of the listener's presumption by resisting the listener's accusations (as described below) without challenging the listener's claims about his racial category membership.

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