

**CLAIMING SPACE:
RACIALIZATION AND SPATIALITY IN CANADIAN CITIES**
Edited Anthology -- Call for Submissions

Cheryl Teelucksingh, Ph.D. (Editor)

I. Introduction

Approaching Toronto's greatest shopping centre, the Eaton Centre, from the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Dundas Street, one is immediately bombarded with the mix of street vendors, massive digital plasma advertising, traffic congestion, street performers, and crowds of shoppers, business people, and passers-by. The corner is an ideal urban spot due to its easily accessible subway, close vicinity to downtown schools and nearby inner city residential housing. However, despite being a nexus of commercial and business activity in Toronto's downtown core, the area around Yonge and Dundas is commonly "viewed by some as unsafe, decrepit and in serious need of a makeover" (*Toronto Star*, Cohen, 1999). The Toronto Metropolitan Police, which has a community station established visibly close to the Yonge and Dundas entrance to the Eaton Centre, monitor and deter loitering, pickpocketing, and other petty crime. Over the years, Black youth have made this corner their place to meet and hang-out. By virtue of their race, clothing, and presence, Black youth are assumed by police and others to be "up to no good" (James, 1998), including potential crime and gang activity.

Recently, in 2003, the southeast corner of Yonge and Dundas has been re-developed into "Dundas Square", heralded as Canada's version of New York's Times Square. Dundas Square is officially planned to be an organized gathering and entertainment space. The new economic potential associated with Dundas Square has increased local pressure from businesses, potential billboard advertisers, and City of Toronto officials to clean up the area of all undesirable people and activity.

The Yonge and Dundas corner of the Eaton Centre is just one example of a racialized space in Toronto that draws on ideologies about both public and private space. Racial meanings are embedded in our current and historic spatial understandings of Canadian cities. Space is concurrently the contrast between the physicality of the built space, the imagined space, and the politics of lived space. Canadian metropolitan cities have evolved as racial and ethnic groups have carved out physical territory and, correspondingly, a political economic presence due to the location of their homes, businesses, and their use of public space. The construction of racialized spaces in cities, under any name, including Chinatown, Little Italy, and Greektown, are tied to systems of power that define how groups relate to each other. Conceptual or imagined understandings of space in cities are another way in which space is produced and reproduced by systems of power. For example, the cultural representations and discursive practices of the media and urban planning processes contribute to racialized ideologies that either normalize or question the hegemonic social and spatial order. Imagined spaces become a component of our shared common sense understandings of communities and

the naturalized location of desirable and undesirable land uses and people. The reality of the lived experience of space may be different from either the imagined or the physicality of space. The everyday politics of social relations, whereby stakeholders compete for control over space, contribute to the lived experience of urban contexts, including the resistance struggles to create new spaces for racialized people. In short, space is an agent in defining racial social relations and structures. Canadian cities are important spatial contexts to analyze how racialized power is produced, represented, and circulated.

Each of the contributions to this edited anthology will critically examine how the state's and various individuals' and institutions' narratives and practices serve to (re)produce space as a means to make sense of and manage race and race relations. This analysis of the racialization of space in Canadian cities seeks to uncover both the macro structures and micro experiences which contribute to the racialization process (see below for the tentative table of contents).

II. Theoretical Framework

Human geographers, including Henri Lefebvre (1991, 1996), Edward Soja (1989, 1996), David Harvey (1996), and Doreen Massey (1984), engagement in the critical analyses of space have encouraged theorists and researchers in numerous other disciplines to understand the spatial dynamics of the city as having a reciprocal relationship with social relations. Racialization is a way to describe the process of racial and ethnic diversity that is an important component of many metropolises in Canada. Examination of the spatial workings of racialization in Canadian cities allows for the uncovering of hidden racial meanings that are not reflected in the mere count of the number of immigrants, the number of visible minorities, or the number of cultural groups in a particular fixed location in the city. The notion of racialized spaces seeks to move beyond demographic statistics to consider how racialization materially manifests itself in a dynamic manner by considering the politics of how racialization occupies space.

III. Tentative Table of Contents:

With an eye to racialized space in Canadian cities, contributions to the anthology will explore the following themes:

- State policies and the politics of space
- Communities and social histories
- Gentrification and displacement
- Public space and social control
- Cultural representation and discursive space
- Identity formation and space
- Resistance and social movements

IV. Significance of the Work

Several American and British works (Duncan and Ley, 1993; Jackson and Penrose, 1993; Liam, 2000, Keith and Pile, 1997; Berry and Henderson, 2002) have contributed to the literature dealing with race, space, and urban environments; however, there are fewer works reflective of the Canadian context. As an indicator of the rising importance of this literature, the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association explored the theme of ethnicity, space, and place at its recent October 2003 conference. The theoretical approach to racialized space proposed for this anthology distinguishes this work from existing Canadian work in the area of racial residential segregation which focuses predominantly on the fixed physicality of place and race. Other seminal Canadian work that has explored the relationship between race and space have focused on the dynamics affecting an isolated part of a city or one particular racial group (Anderson, 1991; Kobayashi, 1993) or particular components of state practices (Razack, 2002). Distinct from these works, this anthology seeks to explore the complexity of race and space across a diverse range of city spaces and the role that various stakeholders play in producing racialized spaces.

V. Tentative Schedule:

Please send a two (2) page proposal (or completed paper, if available) as an attached file Word document to Cheryl Teelucksingh (teeluck@ryerson.ca) by **August 29, 2003**. Accepted papers of 6,000-7,500 words will be due by January 5, 2004.

VI. About the Editor

Cheryl Teelucksingh (Ph.D., York University) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Ryerson University in Toronto. She teaches courses in the areas of Race and Ethnicity, Sociology of Diversity, and Urban Sociology. Her scholarly activities relate to the areas of Environmental Justice; Spatial Analysis; Applied Geographical Information Systems; and Ethno-Racial and Immigrant Settlement Patterns in Toronto. She has been published in various academic journals, including an article published in 2002 entitled, "Spatiality and Environmental Justice in Parkdale (Toronto)" in *Ethnologies*, 24(1). Cheryl is also involved with many Toronto organizations committed to social justice, environmental sustainability, and community economic development.