

RACE RELATIONS RESEARCH IN THE 1990s

Mapping out an Agenda

by

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Occasional Paper in Ethnic Relations No.5

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February 1990

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This report is based on the proceedings of a national conference 'The Future of Race Relations Research' held in November 1988 at the University of Warwick, organised jointly by the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations (CRER) and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The conference was funded by the Commission for Racial Equality, with the additional help of a small grant from the Home Office.

The conference was organised by John Wrench and Charlotte Wellington of CRER and Muhammad Anwar and Cathie Lloyd of the CRE. The report was written by John Wrench with the assistance of Evelyn Reid, who took notes throughout the proceedings and provided a transcript of the conference. Additional material was provided by Cathie Lloyd of the CRE and staff from the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, in particular Harbhajan Brar, Harry Goulbourne, Mark Johnson, Daniele Joly, Sasha Josephides, Michael Keith and Mel Thompson.

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## INTRODUCTION

In November 1988 a national conference took place at Warwick University to discuss the agenda for race relations research in Britain in the 1990s. The conference was organised jointly by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations (CRER), with some financial assistance from the Home Office Research and Planning Unit (HORPU). There were roughly 80 invited participants, drawn from academics researching in the field, research officers from the CRE, government departments and local authorities, and individuals from funding organisations, charitable foundations and ethnic minority organisations. A list of participants is provided in Appendix 1.

The conference aimed to provide researchers, funding agencies and community organisations with a discussion forum which would cross boundaries and be informed by community participation. The object was to share information on existing plans for research in the field, to identify gaps and shortcomings in existing research, to discuss problems of funding and access to information, and to suggest research and funding priorities for the future. One aim was to assist charitable and funding organisations in their decisions on which applications to fund, and influence academic researchers on the kind of race relations research which is seen to be important by both funders and community organisations. Exchange of information was considered to be an important aspect of the conference and the CRE distributed a questionnaire to form the basis of a new register of current research on race and ethnic relations. As the numbers present were limited by the resources available and many actively involved in race relations research were not present, it was resolved to produce a report based on the proceedings which could have a much wider circulation. The two-day conference comprised three parts:

- (1) Plenary presentations from the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Home Office Research and Planning Unit on their current and future research plans, with questions and discussions to follow.
- (2) Discussion groups under the headings of Employment, Education, Racial Violence/Harassment, Refugees/Migration, Housing, Social Services/Health, Communities/Ethnic Associations, and the Criminal Justice System.
- (3) A panel discussion comprising participants from ethnic minority groups and voluntary agencies, followed by a plenary discussion and a concluding presentation.

## THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Professor Alistair Hennessy of the University of Warwick Centre for Caribbean Studies opened the conference by welcoming the participants to the university, and suggested that one powerful theme for the conference should be the implications of the development of the 1992 single European market, which may exacerbate a form of Eurocentric racism.

Dr Muhammad Anwar explained the aims of the conference: (1) to look back at work which has been completed; (2) to exchange current ideas, and (3) to identify gaps in our work, such as the impact of new legislation on ethnic minorities, developments in the inner cities, and the implications of 1992. He suggested that discussion should cover the problems faced by researchers in obtaining finance, and access to data, and the connections between academic/theoretical and policy oriented research work. The conference should consider ways of improving the dissemination of research information and means of influencing policy. Attention was drawn to the register of race relations research being compiled after the conference by the CRE.

Professor Robin Cohen spoke about the general commitment to race relations research found at Warwick University in a number of departments and centres. More specifically he described the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations' research programme for 1989-1993, which has now been agreed with the ESRC. The 1989-93 programme will be based around three subject groupings: education and communities, inner cities and employment, and migration and comparative issues. The first group of researchers will be concerned with the evolution of a multi-cultural society, looking at the structure and responses of communities, the effects of legislation on them, and conflicts within the education system. This will be based on theories of the public versus the private domain: law politics and economics are perceived as public, requiring conformity amongst citizens, whereas the family, morality, religion and art are more private, allowing a greater likelihood of ethnic distinctions. The education system, however, is a 'contested domain' where the distinction is less clear. Specific projects will include the effects of the 1988 Education Reform Act on the black communities, the politics of community education and anti-racism in a local authority, and political organisation, participation and leadership amongst the population of West Indian descent in Britain.

The second group will maintain continuity with earlier work on employment, inner city regeneration, the changing labour process, and ethnic minority access to welfare and housing. Specific projects will include a comparison of employment and economic regeneration in the inner city between London and Birmingham, a study of health and safety issues for black workers, and a study of the effects of welfare restructuring on black communities and the potentialities and limitations of the voluntary sector in welfare provision for black people. There will also be a continuation of earlier work on the experiences of black school leavers seeking work and vocational training by making a comparison with research done on the experiences of second generation migrant workers in European Community member states. Attached to this group of researchers is an externally funded project to study Afro-Caribbean business in the UK and identify opportunities and constraints influencing trade with the Caribbean.

The third subject grouping will include a comparative analysis of the African-Caribbean diaspora in the UK and Canada, using a longitudinal analysis of the life experiences and achievements of African-Caribbean migrants viz-a-viz the majority and other migrant groups. There will also be a study of refugees in Europe looking at two aspects: a critical examination of European initiatives to harmonise policy on asylum, and a study of the refugees themselves as they organise and express their views through their own associations.

Professor Bhikhu Parekh spoke on the work of the CRE Research Section and the future directions of race relations research. The relationship between the CRE's research work and its duties under Section 45/43 of the Race Relations Act were outlined. Research is undertaken to discover the extent of racial disadvantage and discrimination. Formal investigations are supported by research (for example, the Massey Ferguson case, Tower Hamlets housing policies, and so on). Alternatively, research may put new items on the agenda (work on overseas doctors, ethnic minority teachers, surveys of young people and the media). He outlined current research on industrial tribunals, on the Code of Practice, and on psychiatric remands. Future work on the criminal justice system and a new data base project was announced.

The CRE research functions are contained in the 1976 Race Relations Act: it may undertake or assist research necessary or expedient for the purposes of the elimination of discrimination, the promotion of equal opportunity and good relations between people of different ethnic groups, and the reviewing of the workings of the Act. The aim of their research on discrimination is to change policy and practices, and the CRE therefore considers that follow up to the recommendations contained in its research reports is very important. The CRE

sometimes commissions outside bodies to undertake research (for example, the Policy Studies Institute). It also has very limited means to grant funds to a small number of research projects which have been generated outside the CRE. These would need to be directly relevant to their overall strategy, and the CRE would work in partnership with the organisation. It is the sort of research which is of great value but which would have difficulty in securing the funds elsewhere. For example, it might be on smaller ethnic minority communities - eg Mauritians in London, the employment problems of the Chinese community, ethnic minority elders, and so on.

The distinction between policy oriented and fundamental research was then discussed. Professor Parekh stressed that the sort of research needed included (1) practical knowledge which would be of assistance to decision makers in giving more information about the structure and context of discrimination; (2) research which gives rise to political policy alternatives, and (3) explorations of how prejudices are formed.

In the ensuing discussion the need for an anti-racist counter culture was stressed. Recent socio-economic and political changes have transformed the terrain on which we work, including the expectations of ethnic minorities, and the way ethnic minorities are perceived in society. Ethnic minority groups are maturing in political struggle; different ethnic groups may also be moving in different directions. We should ask if our research assumes that ethnic minorities are passive objects or that they are active in their own strategies. Finally, there was a suggestion that we might consider whether we need a new National Institute of Race Relations Research to co-ordinate and initiate new research, and investigate the setting up of a European CRE to cover complaints from all EC member states.

Roy Walmsley outlined the work of the Home Office Research and Planning Unit. This is necessarily policy orientated rather than theoretical, inasmuch the Unit's function is to serve the research needs of a government department. However, Mr Walmsley stressed that the Unit's reputation depended on the impartiality with which it fulfilled that role. Its programme of research was published annually and focussed primarily on the criminal justice system, although it included a section on 'race relations'. Items in this section, though, did not represent the Unit's total output on 'race': it was an integral dimension of many of the other projects in the programme. In this connection, Mr Walmsley stressed the need to avoid marginalisation or reducing black people and their experiences to a single dimension. It was essential, he argued, a) to conduct 'race' research squarely in the context of wider research, and b) to ensure that wider research in relevant areas included a 'race' dimension. Moreover, there were dangers in collecting crude figures which apparently showed ethnic differences; and their interpretation could be sensitive, particularly in the field of criminal justice. HORPU's responsibilities for offering research-based advice within the Home Office took them into this area also.

HORPU had been one of the main funders of the PSI study 'Black and White Britain' and it had itself produced the pioneering study on 'Race, Crime and Arrests' in 1979. More recently, it had completed a second survey of racially motivated incidents and built an ethnic over-sample into the British Crime Survey, while external projects had included an evaluation of local black business advisory agencies and a study of s.11 usage by Social Services departments. Currently, it was sponsoring research on the effectiveness of anti-discrimination legislation and black recruitment into the police force; and an internal project was looking systematically at the treatment of ethnic minorities in the criminal justice system at key decision-making points from being charged with an offence to being sentenced. This type of research contributed both to increasing knowledge about racial discrimination and disadvantage and to ways in which policy might more effectively tackle these problems.

Research priorities for the future, Mr Walmsley suggested, were four-fold:

- to keep a regular check on patterns of discrimination and disadvantage;
- to address new and urgent concerns;
- to provide the necessary understandings for interpreting statistical data;
- to evaluate the impact of policy.

## THE FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

The primary aim of the conference was to identify gaps which currently exist in research work, and suggest what should be the agenda for the 1990s. There would seem to be three broad headings under which the points of discussion for the future can be grouped:

### A: Past Experience

Part of the content of any future agenda can be determined by looking back over past experience, judging what has been left out, and seeing what issues previous research activity has thrown up which may otherwise have been overlooked. In other words, part of any future agenda must be determined by past experience - what researchers have learned from past mistakes, incorrect assumptions, inadequate theoretical underpinnings, misconceptions of the subject matter, and political naivety. This is a process of building on what has gone before, and rejecting that which experience has shown to be less fruitful.

This process constitutes the expected and normal development of an academic discipline. But this is not all that must be considered in determining the future agenda. Equally important must be our predictions as to what is going to be new about the 1990s, and our judgements as to how a number of anticipated developments in the 1990s are going to impinge on research activity. Of course, futurology is difficult. But there are some events or developments that we are able to anticipate, which will have specific implication for the research agenda of the the 1990s. These can be divided into two further, and not entirely separable, headings.

### B: The Predicted Continuation of Trends

This refers to those broader developments or trends which we have already witnessed in this decade, and which we anticipate may become more pronounced in the next. There are a number of examples of such trends: one is the decline in the birth rate and the effects of a significant reduction in the number of young people in the population. This will have implications in a number of areas relevant to researchers, perhaps most in the arenas of education and work. Correspondingly, there is the ageing population and its particular implications for social services and housing. Then there is the continuing development and embracing of new technologies at work and the implications for the labour process, along with the expansion of new forms of working - part-time, contract workers, and homeworkers, for example. There is the globally changing distribution of production, changes in the international division of labour, and new forces to encourage new patterns of migrant workers and displace new influxes of refugees. In the national political sphere there is the growth of what has become known as the New Right, the possible further consolidation of an entrenched conservatism in government, and the possibility of new oppositional groups and alliances.

### C: New legislation

The other heading covers those specific pieces of legislation which have either recently been enacted or are known to be on the way, and which are seen to have particular implications for black people. Examples here are the Housing Act, the Education Reform Act, Employment Acts, the Local Government Act, the Social Security Act, the white papers on the reform of health services and care in the community, the Immigration Act and most important of all, the Single European Act and 1992.

## SUBJECT GROUPS

The conference broke up into subject groups to discuss the future agenda under different subject headings. The subject group headings were as follows: Employment, Education, Racial Violence/Harassment, Refugees/Migration, Housing,

Social Services/Health, Community/Ethnic Associations, and the Criminal Justice System. This choice of eight groups was constrained by the logistics of the conference, and it is appreciated that there are others that might have been included. However, further topics were also raised in the collective sessions. The views on the agenda for future research in each subject area can be roughly divided into the above 'A, B and C' division as to whether they stem from previous research activity or anticipate future developments or legislation, although with some of these subject groups the division seemed less appropriate than with others. It is clear, particularly with hindsight, that the identified areas of importance are by no means comprehensive, and simply reflect the immediate ideas which sprang from spontaneous and often vigorous discussion. Therefore, the following material should be seen as a starting point for further debates on the future of race relations research which might continue in other fora (for example, within the pages of the journal *New Community*).

## Education

The suggested priority areas for future research work were:

A: The continuation of ongoing work seen as important, for example, work on racial harassment in schools, pastoral care, the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), the entry of ethnic minority students in to higher education, a study of 'disruptive' pupils, and a project on 'educational nationalism'. Research should continue to monitor the GCSE. In the future, educational research should continue to confront the idea that British culture was unproblematic. It should continue the work on black 'under-achievement' and its links with racism - and then attempt to challenge that racism. Work on anti-racist strategies must continue. There is a need to link research in education with other disciplines, such as that on the economy. It is important to take account of the educational implications of the restructuring of groups in societies, and the ways in which groups are segregated. Future research should be informed by the realisation that you cannot look at education in isolation - it is part of a wider debate.

B: The rise of the New Right and its well organised attack on education is itself a legitimate subject for research. Research evidence can assist the challenge to the New Right's attempt to grab the populist white view, with ideas of 'superiority'. Work should be done on the appropriate education for white children, at a time when 'educational nationalism' is being pedalled. The terrain has shifted from the notion of a plural culture towards one of common culture, dismissing the validity of minority cultures. There was a need for a debate on national identity and education, because of the dangerous idea that education exists to provide common citizenship, identity and culture (that of the white middle class). Research must address itself to the ideology of a national identity which underpins the new national curriculum, where the major aim is to socialise, rather than to humanise, and which appeals to populist nationalist beliefs.

C: The key area of concern for those researching in education was the implications of the new Education Reform Act (ERA). Firstly, it marginalised, even excluded, the issue of race. Research must look at the way the ERA undermines equal opportunity initiatives, and also identify if there are any ways in which the Act may facilitate them. Are there any ways in which the restrictive powers of the Act in this area may be sidestepped or subverted by progressive forces? Research must look at what will happen after the 'opting out' process, and the issue of 'sink' schools in inner city areas. There should be studies of segregated schools in the context of ethnic communities, focussing on the possibility that new groups may use the act to set up ethnic schools. Researchers must look at the issue of national testing at age 7, 11, 14 and 16, and this must be started immediately. Time was limited - the national tests are being prepared. The ERA is only one part of a broader process of centralisation, and attack on local government. Researchers should be aware of any contradictions in the government's activities - for example, there is a need to look at how the Act may be used in a positive way by some of the communities, as with the issue of parental choice.

The government's plans for the phasing out over time of grants for students and the introduction of loans were announced in the white paper of November 1988. This could have implications for the participation of black young people in higher education. Because of discrimination in graduate recruitment, their older average age and their greater family commitments, ethnic minority students may well be deterred from entering higher education through worries over loan repayment.

Finally, the new emphasis on Europe after 1992 suggests a need for comparative work with other European countries on their educational provision for the children of ethnic minority groups and migrant workers.

## Communities and Ethnic Associations

Rather than itemising specific areas for research, discussion within this workshop covered broader principles for sociologists and anthropologists to maintain when engaged in the study of ethnic communities and associations.

It was felt that there is a problem of studying people as victims; the time has come to look at their own choices, purposes, and organisations. One argument was that anthropologists have neglected the task of providing ethnographies of UK minorities. Some anthropologists felt this was because of a purist tradition in anthropology, which doesn't see research in the UK to be real anthropology. Also, sociologists and others have devalued the work of anthropologists.

There is a need to develop further understanding of multi-cultural societies, including looking at the power imbalances between the different groups. We need a more complex account of the life and cultures of people who live in these communities, based on three criteria - language, religion and culture. We need to look at kinship and religion as social bonds, and with a historical perspective. Researchers must monitor those things that change over history - for example, kinship has begun to change, because after a generation or two in the new country many kinship obligations dissolve. Organisations, too, change and fragment over time.

There was a view that researchers should tread warily here. Is there a danger of research activity increasing group fragmentation? There was some critical discussion about the value of ethnographic study. There is a danger that doing ethnographies might be seen as just 'butterfly collecting'. Some argued that ethnographers produced an understanding of people's needs; others argued that it is not the job of an ethnographer to make assumptions about peoples needs, and that discovering peoples demands and needs can be done simply by asking them. The primary purpose should be that of contributing towards the understanding of multi-cultural societies and empowering different groups within it. Culture has to be seen as dynamic and politicising. In this, the emphasis of the political scientist is important when studying associations, as their links with the political structure are crucially important.

## Employment

The suggested priority areas for future research work were as follows:

A: Firstly there was seen to be a continuing need for comparative work: for example, looking at the experiences of those UK employers trying to adopt USA style equal opportunity (EO) measures. A recent study of US employers using race and ethnic monitoring systems to develop affirmative action concludes that it is the large employers who are doing this. The actions of these large firms (rather than small and medium sized companies) are making great strides in the establishment of a black middle class in the USA. The CRE has found that in the UK by and large employers are not engaged in such action. (In contrast with the USA, the UK Code of Practice is voluntary.) Some employers who appear to be developing EO are not. Employers need to be encouraging black people to apply. In studies of employment, consideration of promotion and career development is important, not just access to employment in organisations.

The question was raised as to how much value should be placed on the expansion of a black middle class. A preoccupation with this development may obscure the real problems. Research should be directed at measures for developing the resources of the black community rather than relying on the benevolence of the power holders. In future years there are likely to be key divisions in employment along gender as well as race lines, and researchers should always be aware of the gender dimension in race research - something that has not always been recognised in the past.

B: One factor which may force employers to examine critically their recruitment policies is the impending sharp reduction in the numbers of young people coming on to the labour market. The numbers aged 16-19 in the population will have fallen by over one million between 1983 and 1993. The labour force will be older, contain more married women, and more people from the ethnic minorities. Particularly noticeable will be the increased proportion of school leavers from ethnic minority backgrounds. The overall shortage of young people due to demographic changes may mean that employers will need to change their recruitment practices, with a reduction in the discriminatory exclusion of black young people.

It has been argued that we may in the future see the development of a black middle class and at the same time a progressive emiseration of the urban poor. How significant is dramatic demographic downturn in this scenario? Will there be a future need for the previously emiserated to be trained and incorporated into the new technological workforce? This should be an important focus of research - which will happen? Is it conceivable that an acute labour shortage can co-exist alongside the progressive emiseration of some sections of the population?

We will need to look at the changes in the labour process and the implications for black workers: part-time working, contract workers, homeworking, reduced union power, work intensification and degradation, the ending of protective legislation on women and young workers, the extension of shift working, and possible reduction in standards of safety and health. All this should be documented.

In earlier academic debates on the dual labour market and its functions, the positions of women and black workers were seen as of crucial interest. With the current academic debate on flexibility and core and periphery we must ask what if anything has changed. Should the change in emphasis be away from those 'black British', often second generation workers, towards the migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, unprotected labour which fill the classic 'peripheral' jobs and which raise whole new difficult questions about unionisation? There has always been a need for a dispensable labour force by many employers, and the argument is that the expanding service sector has thrown up yet more of these jobs on the 'periphery'. The general tightening up of immigration rules has led to more illegal workers - refugees without Convention status, asylum seekers, and migrant workers without work permits. Those migrant workers who are employed on work permits for specific jobs are the subject of restrictions which make their bargaining position particularly weak in relation to other workers, making them attractive to some employers, along with the illegal refugees, asylum seekers and illegal migrants.

British trade unions have started to take an interest in this sector, some have sponsored a recent report into undocumented workers and started to try and help such workers. In the light of shifts in power and structure of trade unions we must follow what changes have had implications for the recruitment, membership and participation of black workers; how black workers have managed to produce changes in union practices and attitudes, and the differential ability of unions to protect working conditions of black workers in different industrial sectors.

C: New employment legislation will continue to be a stimulus to sweatshop working, already reinforced throughout the 1980s with the removal or weakening of statutory rights available to workers. This is in the context of the recent processes of labour market de-regulation, on wages, hours of work, health and safety, (in particular, withdrawing protection of women and young workers) and the outlawing of contract compliance by local authorities on good employment practices (including health and safety and equal opportunity practices). Changes in the law have now meant that many more part-time and temporary workers

are excluded from statutory employment protection. In sweatshop type industries, a very high proportion of these will be black. In a November 1988 white paper, the government announced that "the time has come to reconsider the Wages Councils' future", further reducing what little protection previously offered to such workers.

The same white paper announced the government's plans to hand over a greater share of industrial training to the private sector, introducing roughly 100 Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) to oversee the provision of local training, including the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) and Employment Training (ET). Two thirds of the membership of TECs are intended to be top managers from local private sector employers. The question for researchers to monitor is whether this further shift of training to the private sector affects equality of access to quality training for young black people. To what extent will the new Compacts be successful in building links between ethnic minority young people in schools and employers who have not traditionally recruited them?

The European focus will become extremely important. What will be the employment implications of 1992? The single market will affect all industrial sectors to some degree and, in the short term at least, will cause a rise in unemployment. Will there be specific implications for black people and employment? In terms of employment protection Britain is far behind other EC countries, such as France and Germany. The Thatcher government has set about dismantling much of the employment protection legislation that existed. Is there a danger that the single market, by encouraging the uninhibited movement of capital and labour across borders, will increase pressure on Britain to provide a cheap labour environment, with a 'flexible', non-unionised workforce unfettered by protective legislation? As black people are over-represented in jobs with the worst pay and conditions will they have most to gain from the 'Social Charter', or will this in practice have a minimal effect in the upward harmonisation of minimum wage and working conditions?

In the apparent absence of any consideration of racial discrimination in EC documents about the single market and the 'social charter', researchers will need to play a role in putting the issue on the European agenda. Are there factors which will reduce the potential for black workers to benefit from the enhanced labour mobility across member states (such as, for example, the deterrent affect of heavy internal policing)? We need research on how black people are responding to changes in housing and the labour market over Europe. After the completion of the European Community's internal market there will be millions of 'non-citizens' of EC states who although legally resident, will be devoid of many of the employment and mobility rights held by EC nationals. Thus there will be an intensification of the pressures which confine these workers to the least prestigious and lower paid jobs. Most vulnerable of all will be the 'unauthorised' workers who form around one in ten of non-EC migrant workers, and who are the least able to resist exploitation.

## Refugees/Migration

The plight of refugees in Britain and in Europe was seen to be an urgent priority for research.

A: Suggested items for the research agenda were: basic demographic information - where people come from, where they are located; secondary migration - their movement from one part of Britain to another; statistics on employment, unemployment, housing, health, and mental health; the trauma of leaving home, living in limbo, and how this affects integration. Educational requirements should be examined - what services have been developed and provided for refugees? Broader material is needed on the attitudes and aspirations of refugees - how long do they hope to remain in Britain? When do refugees stop being refugees? Do they identify with the host society? Do they want to assimilate? Particularly urgent is research on the attitudes and aspirations of the second generation of refugees.

Theoretical discussion needs to be developed comparing refugees and immigrants at different levels. For example, it was argued that refugees and immigrants are similar in the way they constitute a buffer in the labour market. Many recent refugee streams into Europe are the present day expressions of post-colonial migration. There are ways in which refugees differ from other immigrants in that they were forcibly uprooted from their country of origin, they enjoy a distinct legal status, and they may need specific services, such as in the domain of mental health in relation to the traumas they may have experienced, sometimes related to periods of incarceration in transit camps. One suggestion was to look at national immigration rules which favour people with wealth, and how many such people have benefited from them. Another is to compare the treatment of 'unauthorised' overstayers from countries such as the USA who are treated differently by immigration authorities than those from the third world.

There was considerable strength of feeling amongst the conference that researchers had a particular role to work to expose the naked racism which has been inherent in British immigration policy since the 1960s, and which has in recent times been condemned by the European Court. The policy has worked to keep black married couples apart, and black families divided from each other. As more material becomes available in public records relating to the time when immigration laws were first being considered, researchers can expose the official thinking at work here.

B: There may need to be differentiation according to how different groups of refugees are received by the host communities. The development of anti-refugee attitudes in the media and in the press more specifically, should be monitored. Government policies and some settlement policies also exacerbate prejudices against refugees - for instance, when the issue of their ability to integrate is raised. One specific category of refugee was signalled as being almost completely unstudied, but present to the researcher great difficulties of access - these are the asylum seekers and de facto refugees who have been refused Convention refugee status, live clandestinely and are denied the facilities that benefit migrants or refugees.

C: The important question of the December 1992 deadline - the elimination of EC internal borders - was considered and how this would affect refugees and immigrants. Worries were expressed not only about the strengthening of external borders but also the strengthening of internal controls, the introduction of identity cards and police identity checks, with the harassment of foreign-looking people. A common EC policy on refugees is being set up by European governments in secrecy in the context of dealing with drugs and terrorism. This is clearly pointing towards greater restrictions on refugee recognition, and enhanced immigration controls, with a generally worsening situation of refugees and asylum seekers.

There also needs to be comparison between the complex legal statuses, migration processes, and responses of the state in different European countries. The effects of the Social Security Act on refugees and asylum seekers should also be studied. Research on 1992 and the effects of the Social Security Act should be prioritised as it is needed within the build up to 1992 as part of the lobbying process.

#### Housing

The process of dismantling local authority housing provision will lead to strategies by others to provide housing, and changes in the way people go about securing housing. Research must address these issues: for example, the strategies that people use to gain housing in a diversified housing market; the role of ethnic minority housing associations. There needs to be a shift in the emphasis away from black people as victims and towards black people as actors, showing strategies of success that can be copied. With the increasing subjection of housing to the market place, research must focus more on the private sector than it has before - building societies, the specific activities of estate agents, etc - and on allocation methods in a newly diversified market. There is a need to see how people experience the changes in housing policies. This will necessitate longitudinal studies and charting people's housing careers.

The suggested priority areas for future research work were:

A: Racial harassment and housing; the controversies involved in evicting racists; the evaluation of positive action schemes. Research might embrace the issues around black people working in housing in both private sector and local authorities with a view to identifying the kinds of support network they need, and how they are able to contribute in a white dominated structure. Research should focus more specifically on the links between housing, the labour market, education and the family.

B: Research must monitor the growth of homelessness and the evaluation of social and economic forces in this; the impact of an ageing population - which includes the black population - on housing availability.

C: The Housing Bill is one piece of legislation where the implications of changes will need to be monitored: for example, the inclusion or exclusion of equal opportunity policies when local authorities hand over responsibility to private landlords, together with strategies to ensure that equal opportunity policies are included. Research is needed to identify the activities of housing co-ops, housing associations, and tenants associations. There is a concern that they will promote racial discrimination when dealing with allocation. Policy makers will need to know if their practices are racially discriminatory, how they interact with funders, and the role they play in the housing market. This work will be particularly important as under this government they are likely to be a major source of housing.

#### Health and Welfare

A: Priority areas for research should reflect the continuing need to demonstrate the 'facts of the situation', in the tradition of pioneers like Owen Chadwick. Such studies have not lost their value. They are particularly valuable for community groups 'fighting a corner', although they do need to be made as accessible as possible.

There is a need for the greater understanding of community aspirations, the perceptions of need, and self-identified objectives and resources. Professional cultures require studying, in order to comprehend and improve service delivery. It should be remembered that professions are not unitary but contain sub-fields of practice. Do professional cultures (the gatekeeping role, a general

conservatism) inhibit the entry and contribution of black professionals? Consider, for example, the 'professional' nature of social work and the way white social workers suddenly 'discover' ethnic issues. Research needs to be continued into how local social services relate to black communities - the knowledge of black communities and how appropriate services are. Research has shown there were still confusions and misunderstandings, and some failure of will, in Social Service provision for a multi-racial or multi-cultural clientele.

A neglected area is the role of the arts - eg art therapy. The arts have a major role to play as the roots of culture, affecting personal and community development, and change. If ignored there is a danger of losing a fundamental part of the picture - the issue of the 'arts' as an individual personal resource and a type of community resource for black people might be quite distinctive from white sources of support and identity.

There is a need to clarify terms and destroy myths - for example, the idealisation of family and community. In the welfare arena there have been views of the black family as being simultaneously 'extended and supportive' and 'pathological'. This research is important to do at a time of emphasis on 'self-help'.

Social service groups need to continue to concern themselves with the double discrimination faced by black women. Other specific suggestions for concern were: mental handicap and race; race and disability, the effects of splitting up of black families; a multi-cultural approach to child sex abuse, and the black elderly and social service provision. Researchers can assist in writing handbooks of good practice. Should the Welfare State be defended uncritically, and do criticisms of it add further fuel for its demolition?

B: One continuing development is the growth of grass roots groups in reaction to specific dissatisfaction with welfare service provision, and to the progressive withdrawal of state aid from some fields. One researcher at the conference was observing emergent groups of community organisations, how they are interpreting the welfare services and the defects they perceive in mainstream services. This shows how various groups are fusing a way of life with a way of supporting themselves, with self-help relationships growing up between cultural and welfare agencies. This perspective and approach could be built on. A similar study being done was of Asian women constructing a study of the world as seen by those women in relation to health and daily life, including the nature and quality of services. Are there instances in which the withdrawal of state aid may be preferable for some groups? It should not be assumed that the provision of welfare services are an unqualified good thing for all groups of black consumers. Consumers should be allowed their own preferences. Could the strength of the ideology of the consumer be used to oppose present trends? Research will also need to look at people's own personal resources, what they have and how they can use it. This may also include cultural resources. Cultural strengths can generate new groups - but under what conditions can they best be effective?

C: Research is necessary in the context of the erosion and undermining of the Welfare State: what is happening with regard to government abandonment of whole areas of social service provision - eg decanting people from mental hospitals? What is happening to black patients 'in the community'? Do black ex-patients go into prisons as a result? In this context many voluntary agencies and the private sector are unclear of their role, and resent the new expectations of them. This too should be researched.

It was observed that there has been a hijacking of terms - the ideological creation of some notion of 'community' to provide the care which is no longer available in the public sector, without the additional provision of resources.

This is in the context of the ideology that 'there is no such thing as society' - only individuals and families, and this notion of 'the community'.

#### Criminal Justice System

Much of the discussion within this workshop concentrated on broad and basic questions which normally precede research design rather than on specific issues of future research. The discussion could agree only on the old axiom that if we wanted to get anywhere it would be better not to start from here. Much of the blame for the relatively immature state of knowledge in this field was put down to the particular sensitivities, excessive secrecy and resulting inaccessibility of the criminal justice system.

There was disagreement over the use of statistics and monitoring. Some argued that it was impossible to mount any campaign against racism in the criminal justice system without full and systematic monitoring of each stage of the criminal justice process. Without the quantitative vindication of empirical evidence it is not easy to demonstrate the racism of court procedures. Others argued that full monitoring was a naïve goal. It was not simply that monitoring, even if it existed, would do little to change practices. Racial coding of statistics could not be divorced from past and present processes of criminalisation, whereby such statistics have been used in a biased and racist manner to perpetuate stereotypical images of blacks and criminality.

There has been a tendency in the debate to portray black people as passive victims whilst whites do all the 'acting'. There needs to be an alternative view of interactions between black and white shaping the processes of the system. The experiences of black lawyers, magistrates, and black people working in the criminal justice system should be drawn on. A black perspective on criminal justice will be one of the key factors in any attempt to transform it.

A: There is a need for continuing research to look at the accumulation of effects which contribute to patterns of discrimination, racism and unfair treatment within the criminal justice system, and the failure of agencies within these processes. There needs to be more research which shows how the state criminalises black children, looking at the progression to the courts by studying various agencies - institutions, gatekeepers, teachers, the police, and the courts themselves. Future research should focus on race and sentencing, and decision making in the courts.

B: Demographic trends, with black young people forming a greater proportion of young people as a whole, and the continuation of racial disadvantage, discrimination and oppression in the wider society, mean that the proportion of black people in prisons may become even higher than it is already. Researchers may be able to highlight the dangers through comparative work on other countries, for example, the USA, where the high proportionate use of imprisonment for black minorities mean that the deleterious social impact of imprisonment is extensively felt, directly and indirectly, across the black communities in the USA.

#### Racial Violence/Harassment

The discussion noted that although racial harassment has been going on for a long time, only recently has there been more detailed evidence about its spread and level of occurrence. Research evidence from the last few years has shown that racial harassment is not simply confined to inner city or 'deprived' areas. It can also happen in the leafy suburbs and the rural shires.

Much of the discussion covered broad principles of research in this area, and noted the inherent methodological difficulties. For one thing, there is a tendency to concentrate on figures, with all the concomitant dangers of

uncritically viewing statistics as the ultimate indicator of the problem. It is very difficult to collect accurate statistics, with real problems regarding what can and cannot be deduced from such figures. For example, there will be a higher rate of reporting in areas with a higher density of black population, whilst the problem in other areas may be just as acute for individuals, but unrecorded. Furthermore, reporting will be more likely if an individual knows there is a greater possibility of a sympathetic response from the local authority or police.

At the moment reaction is often piecemeal, and in the nature of 'fire-fighting'. For a more coherent strategy we need a fuller understanding of those factors which render an area particularly prone to a high rate of incidents of harassment. For example, research might look at areas which are characterised by an apparently high level of incidents (perhaps in comparison with areas which look comparable but do not seem to be 'harassment prone') and then identify what it might be in the character of the nature, circumstances and traditions of the communities which might help to account for the differences.

In housing, we should consider both the way in which racism gets reproduced through the institutional structure - the policies and practices of the housing department - and how it is reinforced by the activities of the individuals who live on the housing estates, or wider locality.

Racial harassment is too often seen to be just a problem concerning communities and geographically defined areas of housing, when there is also the problem of racial harassment within institutions: the workplace, schools and prisons, for example. This does address some of the issues about the way institutions reinforce and help to develop the harassment which takes place outside in the community. It also shifts the focus from black people to predominantly white institutions. This is a productive and important area for future research.

It is not just a question of documenting evidence, but locating it in the wider context of the production and reproduction of racism. It is not enough simply to record racial harassment incidents against individuals. Researchers should also look at the extent to which these are legitimised either by the local community or by society at large. We need to be understanding the forces - economic, ideological and political - which are producing the motivations and legitimations of this sort of behaviour, not only locally but at the national level.

The UK government itself is not interested in tackling this issue. This has implications for local initiatives, because over the next decade, government legislation means that local government will change dramatically. Much discussion has been directed at what local authorities can do, but in fact local authorities are themselves under threat. There will be no initiatives from central government, who increasingly control the funds for the research initiatives of others. Perhaps because of this, there is an important role for comparative research to see what lessons can be learned from the same problem in other countries, and what alternatives exist in terms of public policy and legislation.

One general point was emphasised throughout the discussion: that black communities are increasingly concerned to avoid simply being 'monitored', being used as a laboratory for research which then puts nothing back into the community. When people are daily suffering the indignities of racial harassment and abuse, when they are scared to let their children go out and play, and when so many aspects of their lives are constrained by the possibility of racial violence, any research on the issue of racial harassment cannot remain 'academic'. Issues such as this are not only of concern to academics and policy makers but are increasingly becoming issues on which minority communities are themselves asserting the need for their own involvement.

Researchers should take care not to bring an attitude of paternalism with them - an attitude of "we'll come along and tell you what is happening and how we can help you" - rather than involving the people themselves. Networking between black communities on these issues is important, to provide their own input into these areas. When people who don't have an academic background are involved in researching and combatting racial harassment in their own localities there will be a role for links with the sort of academic forum represented by this conference. There are recent examples of research by academics carried out on this topic which have in fact raised questions which were then taken up by the community. This should be possible for a great deal more of the work carried out by academic institutions.

Throughout the conference, discussion ranged at a broader level, not always related to specific workshop themes. This material can be summarised in two parts: firstly, the points raised at the panel discussion relating to the specific concerns of panel members, and secondly, the observations volunteered on the nature and function of research activity in general.

#### THE PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel comprised Clive Nettleton (Information and Research Officer of British Refugee Council), Sue Griffiths (Senior Research Officer, Nottingham Social Services), Anthony Wilson (Barrow and Geraldine S.Cadbury Trust), Iain Crow (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders), and Dr Z.U. Khan (Pakistani Welfare Association). (Speakers from the West Indian Standing Conference and Indian and Bangladeshi Associations had been invited but were unable to attend at the last minute.)

One point was forcibly made: from the point of view of those involved in activist organisations, as opposed to academics, research on the effects of changes in legislation and the implications of 1992 is needed immediately, not in several years time. In short, work on 1992 needs to come out well before 1992 if lobbying is to be assisted.

A number of issues relating to research funding were addressed. In the present economic climate, voluntary sector funders were forced to make decisions between funding research or funding groups directly. These decisions were sometimes made in a vacuum, as the case for research was not adequately argued by researchers. One voluntary sector funder reported that out of 53 multi-racial initiatives financed in 1987 only 3 were influenced by research criteria in any way, and those involved monitoring. The majority of grants were concerned with service delivery, and tended to be 'demand led'.

Funding criteria were influenced by current shifts in ideas - for example, the change from multi-culturalism to anti-racism and equal opportunity policies. Funders also liked 'innovative' schemes and projects where the aim was to empower people. Another issue which influenced decisions to fund or not was to what extent and how the research would feed into and inform public policy, particularly under an unsympathetic government.

Representatives of ethnic community organisations welcomed the initiative of the conference in bringing researchers and ethnic minority organisations together, and stressed the importance of a dialogue between researchers and the community. It was felt, however, that there was still much to be done to make research findings more accessible. For research to have an impact, summaries of the main 'action points' should be made available for 'consumers'.

Reservations were expressed during the panel discussion on the issue of white researchers doing or directing research grounded in a black experience, and the

danger of imposing the white research community's own values on race relations research. Both of the last two points lead to further discussion in the plenary session, much of it covered below under the heading "The Nature and Function of Research".

Professor Juliet Cheetham gave the concluding presentation. She underlined the success of the conference and the emergence of a certain unity of priorities from the discussion, in an audience which was a good mix in terms of ethnicity, gender and organisation. She drew together some of the recurring themes of discussion which had appeared throughout the conference, such as the cautious distinction to be drawn between the policy related and theoretical work, and the problem of researchers maintaining control over their own work, given the priorities of funding bodies. She re-emphasised the importance of research as information in the present political climate, highlighting good practice and criticising the bad. The conference had provided an opportunity for issues on the role and nature of research to be aired in a productive and constructive way.

#### THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF RESEARCH

Many of the points raised in the concluding presentation and the panel discussion are developed further in this section, which brings together discussion at a general level on the nature of research activity which occurred at various stages throughout the conference. Not all of these points are relevant solely to the area of race relations research. Some reflect the perhaps inevitable lack of communication between academics and practitioners, and although many of these issues are not particularly new, it is useful to review them again. Other issues, however, are specifically pertinent to the circumstances of race relations research.

A number of points were made by participants in response to the question of the nature and function of research activity in this field. Obviously, it was argued, the task of research is to produce knowledge. However, the important issue is that researchers must be mindful of the sort of knowledge that is being produced. In the present political climate many felt that research should be focussed more heavily on policy oriented work, such as equal opportunity policies, or challenging racism. More co-operation between fieldworkers and academics was felt to be necessary, with more interaction and exchange of ideas between academics, practitioners and community groups, particularly as the latter two groups were more likely to be aware of the immediate and real experiences of people 'on the ground'. Some felt that academics had failed to deliver appropriate research to ordinary people. It should be both relevant and of practical benefit to 'the community'. More than this, it is quite possible in some circumstances for research to be an 'empowering tool' for those being researched. The view of many black community groups was that they did not need to have it demonstrated by researchers that things were bad for them - they knew this already. However, what was useful at times was to have access to material which enabled them to demonstrate facts of disadvantage or injustice for particular campaigning activities. Researchers themselves should make more attempt to gain feedback as to what impact particular pieces of research have had, whether on community groups and activists or on public policy. Some felt that in response to the question 'what influence has research in this field had on anything over the past 25 years?' the answer might be 'not much'. Something of a consensus emerged on the importance for research to have a higher profile and greater impact. Research on, for example, the workings of a local authority department should have a direct effect on how that department functions. There should be feed-back sessions, with the findings fed back into training, even if in doing this the progress of the continuing research process itself is delayed. Research based material should be made more widely available - and in a form that ordinary people understand. Dissemination is key. Additional

responsibilities fall on in-house researchers who are in a privileged position to ask awkward questions and feed directly to policy and practice, and who are often in a position to feed information directly to community activists. At the same time they are often exposed to internal pressures and in this activity may themselves need to be supported.

It was noted that black people were still under-represented in research activity, and that the research agenda was still largely set by white researchers. However, it was also noted that there had been changes in this over the last ten years, and that with more black graduates emerging from the higher education system and the setting up in recent years of Masters level courses in race and ethnic studies with a research emphasis which were attractive to many black students, the picture was likely to continue to change for the better. Nevertheless, it remained a fact that black people were under-represented in higher education generally. Therefore, educational research on the operation of racism should not only focus on primary and secondary school levels. As more of the young black population reach student age it is also important to shift critical attention to the processes of higher education, a sector of the educational system which is still remarkably backward and untouched by equal opportunities concerns. The under-representation of black researchers means that particular types of research activity cannot be satisfactorily attempted. There are some areas of research where a true insight is only likely to be achieved by black researchers - more probably in the case of qualitative rather than quantitative research methods where the subject group is part of the black population itself.

It was felt that a balance between quantitative and qualitative research methods is important. In terms of the persuasiveness of research, it might be argued that quantitative research data are more effective with politicians and government. However, good qualitative material can add the flesh of the human dimension to the bones of a statistical account, and can in that sense have a political power of its own, particularly when it is in a form that makes it likely to be picked up by the media. Some participants emphasised the importance of action research: one example given was of a project which identified a series of obstacles to the success of black businesses enabling greater long term success. Some researchers argued that rather than simply providing research evidence, researchers should be actively involved in promotional work - for example, with employers. It would be possible to pick out models of good employment practice - themselves based on research evidence - to demonstrate to other employers that it could be done and that others are doing it. However, other participants disagreed with these models of the activist researcher. They saw the role of researchers as primarily one of "documenting the processes". By understanding and describing the processes, and showing what needs to change and to what effect, there are direct policy related implications for research activity. But as researchers, they would not see their role as involving either development work in the black community or promotional work with employers.

There were a number of points raised that were rather more focussed and topical. These were raised at the beginning of the proceedings as central concerns for researchers to consider: for example, should research be focussed on ethnic minority communities themselves; does research take into account strategies of minority groups in their fight against racism; is there a distinction between policy research and fundamental research, and does this distinction make sense; does research inform the creation of an alternative non-racist culture?

It was argued that research must change with the changes in political terrain and the debate about racism, and identify strategies which take into account the new racism. Research should address changes among ethnic minorities themselves, as they have matured and developed their own strategies. They have also polarised into different factions - research can help to show when differences

between groups are valid, and when they are a smokescreen for unrecognised common problems. There have also been class developments, with some sections of the black community feeling that problems of racism are no longer a problem for the black middle class. Again, research can help to demonstrate the circumstances when such a view would be misguided. Strategies such as anti-racist policies must change. A new vocabulary must be sought, one which is not stating an 'anti' position but articulating a more positive stance. Links with Europe must be forged. It was argued by some that the emphasis should shift to increase comparative work with other European countries, rather than with the USA and South Africa. New race relations research must address the tension between theory and practice. It must be interdisciplinary, and include economics, history, and education as well as the traditional ones of psychology, sociology, social policy, and politics.

## CONCLUSION: THE CONFERENCE IN CONTEXT

This report is based on an edited transcription of the conference proceedings, with some additional observations. It does not claim to provide the definitive agenda, but should be seen more as a pointer to key issues. There is only so much that discussion can cover in one weekend - there were some important topics which were not fully considered, and others not mentioned at all. It should also be stressed that it was never anticipated that this report should constitute a consensus view on the agenda of future priorities in this field. It must be recognised that there exists a plurality of motives in research - different people maintain fundamentally different personal and political goals in their research activity, and this was reflected at the conference. It is a useful exercise in itself to recognise and bring to the surface these differences, and draw some conceptual clarity between them, and in doing so help to avoid some of the muddle in discussion which stems from a lack of appreciation of the different interests which lie behind research activity. Some researchers are concerned primarily with the continued growth and development of an academic discipline in the important area of race and ethnic relations, emphasising the furtherance of knowledge as an end in itself. Other academic researchers, whilst concerned with the development of the academic discipline, feel that that the knowledge they produce is only of value if it can be used by those who wish to produce social change. For those researchers employed in central and local government departments, research is a means to an end in informing policy in their relevant fields. And for those who are actively engaged in organising for political change the value of the research itself is subordinate to the political purpose, and is only to be judged by the way that it contributes to social and political ends.

There is nothing lamentable in these differences - they are to be expected, even applauded. The existence of this plurality of motives and approach by researchers does not mean that dialogue is not possible between them or that there is no common ground for debate. Indeed, individuals representing these different emphases had much to say to each other, and there was much useful exchange across the boundaries. Nor did it mean that there were no fruitful 'conclusions' that could be reached from this collective discussion. Despite the often fundamental differences in the way research activity was perceived, it was noticeable that by the end of the proceedings there were a number of priorities on which virtually everyone agreed, and there did seem to emerge a number of 'universals' which all felt to be important.

As it turned out there was little evidence of the view that academics should be purely 'academic', or alternatively that research quality and professionalism were things that could be sacrificed to political ends. Most seemed to work from the assumption that research should be carried out to the highest professional standards whilst at the same time being rooted in commitment to practical social ends. This was despite the fact that academics themselves formed the largest single group at the proceedings, and there has long been an academic school of thought claiming 'ethical neutrality' and the importance of 'objective' apolitical research in social science. (see Appendix 2: "Should race relations research be neutral"?)

In one sense the need for moral involvement in the consequences of academic race relations research is more heightened today than ever before. The quality of race relations is as central to the future of British society as it ever was. There is a recurring tendency for people to believe that the "bad old days" are now only of historical interest, whereas continuing research evidence can show that for large sections of the population the bad old days are still here. Racial violence and harassment continue for black people on a daily basis; racial discrimination persists at all levels, with recent research pointing to its operation in previously undocumented areas, (such as recruitment to medical training). Black people still find their domestic lives and careers blighted by

the operation of racism, with unjustified rejection in applications for jobs, higher education and professional training, and exclusion from housing, and promotion at work. Families continue to be forcibly kept apart by racist immigration laws, interpreted by officials whose judgements have yet again been shown to be wrong and malicious, most recently through the application of genetic fingerprinting techniques to demonstrate how partners and children have been wrongly and unjustly excluded. The political exploitation of race issues continues, with sections of the press orchestrating a backlash against anti-racist work, feeding popular opinion with disinformation and giving succour to the New Right.

Thus the importance of research-based information is greater than ever before. Information is political, and information is becoming increasingly controlled for political ends. Information which has been routinely and officially collected is withheld from publication; sometimes the findings of officially commissioned research projects are delayed, manipulated or suppressed. The government's new Official Secrets Bill will further curtail the availability of 'official' information that the government defines as unavailable, and excludes a 'public interest' defence which could have covered the release of information revealing the existence of fraud, negligence or unlawful activity, or a serious threat to public health or safety. Local authorities have been forbidden to publish or financially support the publication of any material deemed to support a cause identified with a political party. Official statistics are increasingly massaged and manipulated by government departments so as to give misleading impressions. Media freedom is not only being eroded through the Official Secrets Bill. New ways of using injunctions by the Government against the press, and the setting up of 'watchdog' bodies over broadcasting headed by politically inspired appointments, are leading to greater press and broadcasting timidity. At a time when many other countries are proceeding towards a greater openness and freer dissemination of information Britain is moving towards greater repression, restriction of information and censorship.

In this context the custodians of sound professional research-based information are increasingly those engaged in independent academic research, a fact which no doubt partly explains why the government has turned its attention to the academic arena, with direct pressure on universities and polytechnics through the controlling of funding and the simultaneous emphasis on the need for institutions to raise research money, which will then increasingly need to come from government and private industrial sources. A recurring theme of the conference was that of the need to resist the dilution of research effort that results from the existence of these pressures, and the need to continue to provide good quality, reliable, trustworthy, professionally gathered data, to inform both theory and practice. This is necessary both to fill the gaps in work which are not being covered by official bodies, and to counter the disinformation which is increasingly found emanating from politicians and certain newspapers to feed into popular consciousness. Thus, although like in Weber's Germany (see Appendix 2), higher education is being threatened by political interference, there was no evidence at the conference of the view that the mantle of the neutral and detached scientist should be adopted as a strategy to facilitate academic survival.

The social and political context of research.

Social scientists do not always apply a social science perspective to their own work. Research is not done in isolation. It is performed by members of an occupational group with its own ideology of professionalism, in the historical context of processes which in the past worked against the entry of women and more recently have excluded blacks, served by a secondary and higher education system which has already filtered out many within these groups. Thus some of the criticisms of research activity made by non-researchers, though often justified, are not always so easy to act upon, having their roots in earlier processes. There are reasons why black researchers are under-represented in the

research community, even in the field of research in race and ethnic relations; why research has not always been translated into policy, and why some topics have been conveniently neglected by researchers. Having said this, although the remedies may not always be immediately accessible to the research community, there is no excuse for not recognising the failings of research activity, becoming aware of its implications in terms of the gaps in research effort, and beginning to consider what must be done to improve the relevance, quality and effectiveness of research output. It is important that researchers themselves are aware of these issues, and become receptive to debate and change so that things do not remain the same for the next generation of professional researchers.

It was argued at the conference that there were structural and other constraints on a research agenda, among them the pressure for universities to publish material, and the domination of government funding bodies which want a certain kind of knowledge - safe, hasty, and often used to legitimate particular ideologies and lead the debate in the direction they require. Consequently, if alternative knowledge is to be produced then alternative research funds must be sought. The problem is that increasingly it is the government which controls resources. The impact of monetarist policies on academia and the squeeze on research funding sets limits on research activity. In putting forward alternative research strategies to those desired by government it is difficult to get funding from conventional sources; there is thus a continuing need for the input of other bodies such as trusts and charities in supporting research. Yet this leads to impossible demands on the voluntary sector, who justifiably resent the assumption that they can step in to do the job that ought to be done by central government agencies, particularly when government welfare cutbacks means an increase in the demands for welfare assistance on many of these groups.

It was argued at the conference that one of the messages being received from government is a desire to restrict intellectual freedom and direct academic activity. The instance was quoted at the conference of a researcher finding obstructions placed in the way of a research project that ostensibly had received official blessing; another was refused permission to publish research findings that had taken several years to produce, and which had cost the tax payer a large amount of money. In the case of government-sponsored research the fears held by academic researchers are often more than those of direct censorship. Subtle pressures exist in the negotiation over what is 'acceptable'. Academics must publish to survive, particularly in the case of full-time researchers, who, unlike lecturers in universities and polytechnics, do not have permanent positions and whose success in getting the next short term contract depends on the publications which arise out of the existing and previous ones. The fear that the findings of externally financed research will be simply 'not published' could put a great deal of pressure on academics for a little self-censorship to minimise the inclusion of material that may lead to its suppression.

It was felt that the government is systematically re-defining the agenda, leaving us with the question of what is happening to the alternative agenda which had guided much research activity. For example, in the field of education, what is the state of the Swann report and its implications, including the development of anti-racism? Will this die? Even the term anti-racism now seems to have lost favour within the Department of Education and Science, a fact which has implications for those who need resources and access to research the area. However, it was also argued that researchers should not simply see their role as one of influencing government, particularly as in the current circumstances government is hardly likely to listen. If we continue with the example of education we can see that current government education policies fly in the face of the findings of most recent educational research. Yet there are other groups who can be influenced, or for whom research may be of benefit, such as teachers.

In other words, there is a danger of allowing the government to set the research agenda. People on the ground need good anti-racist research work to assist them carry out their work effectively. The fact that anti-racist work is politically out of favour could be taken as a confirmation of its relevance and potential for producing effective change. We should not over-estimate the control that government agencies have - there is still much work to be done by the socially and politically informed researcher.

APPENDIX 1:

WARWICK CONFERENCE ON RACE RELATIONS RESEARCH  
5-6 November 1988

SATURDAY

10.30-11.00am REGISTRATION AND COFFEE

11.00-11.15 Welcome by Professor Alistair Hennessy  
Chair: Dr Muhammad Anwar -  
Opening remarks

11.15-12.00 Professor Robin Cohen (CRER) - Current CRER research;  
the CRER research programme for 1989-1993

12.00-1.00pm Subject Groups 1-4: The future research agenda

1.00-2.15 LUNCH

Chair: Malcolm Cross

2.15-3.00 Professor Bhikhu Parekh (CRE) - Current CRE research and  
future directions

3.00-4.00 Subject Groups 5-8: The future research agenda

4.00-4.30 TEA

Chair: Professor Sally Tomlinson

4.30-5.15 Roy Walmsley (Home Office Research and Planning Unit) -  
Current HORPU research and future directions

5.15-6.30 Report back from Subject Groups  
Chair: Professor John Rex

6.30-7.30 DINNER

8.00 RECEPTION  
Westwood Senior Common Room

SUNDAY

8.00-8.30am Breakfast

Chair: Dr Robert Miles

9.15-11.15 Panel Presentation: Minority Associations and Voluntary  
Agencies

11.15-11.45 Coffee

11.45-1.00pm Plenary. Chair: Professor Sheila Allen  
Professor Juliet Cheetham - Conclusions and the way  
forward

General discussion and close

1.00 LUNCH

## List of Conference Participants

ahmed, Shama - Department of Applied Social Studies, Bristol Polytechnic

ALI, Ameer - Research Section, Commission for Racial Equality

ALLEN, Sheila - Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of Bradford

ANWAR, Muhammad - Research Section, Commission for Racial Equality (now Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations)

BANTON, Michael - Department of Sociology, University of Bristol

BAROT, Rohit - Department of Sociology, University of Bristol

BEIDER, Harris - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

BHACHU, Parminder - Thomas Coram Research Unit, London University

BRAR, Harbhajan - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

BROOKS, Dennis - Department of Employment

BROWN, Colin - Policy Studies Institute

BURKE, Robina - Freelance Art Therapist

CASHMORE, Ellis - University of Aston

CHEESMAN, David - Department of the Environment

CHEETHAM, Juliet - Social Work Research Centre, University of Stirling

CHIPEYA, Addie - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

COHEN, Robin - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

CROW, Iain - National Association for the Case and Resettlement of Offenders

DEAKIN, Nicholas - Department of Social Policy & Social Work, University of Birmingham

EGGLESTON, John - Department of Education, University of Warwick

ENTZINGER, Han - University of Utrecht

FENTON, Steve - Department of Sociology, University of Bristol

FITZGERALD, Marian - Home Office Research and Planning Unit

GORDON, Paul - Runnymede Trust

GOULBOURNE, Harry - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

GRIFFITHS, Sue - Nottinghamshire Social Services Department

HARRELL-BOND, Barbara - Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford University

HAWKINS, Freda - University of Toronto

HENNESSY, Alistair - Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick

HUBBUCK, Jim - Research Section, Commission for Racial Equality

HUDSON, Barbara - Middlesex Probation Service

JEFFERSON, Tony - Criminology Department, University of Sheffield

JOHNSON, Mark - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

JOLY, Danièle - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

JOSEPHIDES, Sasha - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

KANDOLA, R.S. - Pearn Kandola Downs, Occupational Psychologists

KEITH, Michael - Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

KHAN, Z.U. - Pakistan Welfare Association

LE LOHE, Michael - School of Social Science, University of Bradford

LEE, Penny - Home Office Research and Planning Unit

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## Appendix 2: Should race relations research be 'neutral'?

As there is sometimes an assumption that academic professionalism and personal commitment sit uneasily together, it might be worth while taking some time to review the historical context of this particular academic debate, given its relevance to the activities of race relations researchers. Max Weber, in his essay "The Meaning of Ethical Neutrality in Sociology and Economics" defined value judgements as "practical evaluations of the satisfactory or unsatisfactory character of phenomena subject to our influence". He argued that there existed a logical distinction between statements of logically deduced or empirically observed fact, and statements of practical evaluation. Weber felt that social science may study evaluations provided it did not evaluate them. For Weber, all that the specialist - in our case, the researcher - does for what he called the "man of action" is to reveal, once the goal has been chosen, the best way of attaining it, and the possible consequences. Therefore, according to Weber's logic, a person of strong and active political commitment - an anarchist or a marxist perhaps - could be a professional academic as long as he or she kept separate their personal views from their scientific observations.

Alvin Gouldner (1962) considered Weber's position 'logically unassailable' and argued that the value free doctrine contributed to the growth of sociology in the past by helping it to break free from traditional morality. However, Gouldner did not believe that the contemporary social scientist should be 'value free' and avoid judgements on the satisfactory or unsatisfactory nature of social arrangements. He was critical of those he saw to have blindly followed Weber without doing him justice. Gouldner argued that you have to see Weber's views in their historical, academic and political context - namely, the threat of political interference in German universities at that time. But, he argued, value freedom had become the 'trivial token of professional respectability'. It had become the working group ideology of the sociologist - it is useful to those who believe it, and enables the sociologist to sell his or her talent to the highest bidder. It is a rationalisation for avoiding involvement in controversial issues. In the present context it would enable an academic researcher in the field of race relations to provide the funder of research with statistics or other professionally gathered information without feeling a need to pass judgement on the ultimate political use of the material.

In a further contribution to this debate, Gunnar Myrdal, himself something of a 'founding father' in the academic study of race relations, wrote that the only way we can strive for objectivity in theoretical analysis is to make one's value biases quite explicit at the beginning of one's work. He felt that the specification of value premises would overcome the social scientist's inhibitions against drawing practical and political conclusions and would consequently render social research a much more powerful instrument for guiding rational policy formation (Myrdal, 1970). The relevance for race relations research is plain. If one subscribes to Myrdal's position, the implication is that an academic researcher who also holds anti-racist values and a desire to further inter-racial justice should simply make these values explicit in the interests of objective social science.

The problem is that for many researchers in this field, this may not be enough. A reviewer of Myrdal's book (Alan Dawe, Sociological Review, July 1970) wrote that Myrdal does seem to be attached to the 'neutralist' view of social science. Despite his view of the positive role of values in analysis Myrdal seems to regard them as imposing a limitation on social science. Myrdal states "the ethos of social science is the search for objective truth". For him, objective truth is the end, relevance to value the means. But, as Dawe says, the real problem is that of holding both as ends.

If the conference discussion is seen to be representative of broader views then it would seem that many academic researchers in race relations would feel that

as well as having the 'end' of a professional academic researcher, they also desire the principles of anti-racism and social justice to remain as ends too. In other words, both academic values and principles of social commitment should be simultaneously maintained as ends.

In this it seems that we return to Gouldner: "Social science can never be fully accepted in a society ... without paying its way. This means it must manifest both its relevance and concern for the contemporary human predicament". Gouldner asks: does value neutrality mean that sociologists should never contradict certain false beliefs of laymen unless they are asked? On the contrary, he argues, if technical competence provides no warrant for making value judgements, then what does? The professional part of an academic researcher's work is not devalued or threatened because of his or her political views. There is no logical implication that, having allocated a proper role for the social and political values in research activity, it should lower the standards of the academic. Moral involvement does not detract from professional standards of research activity.

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