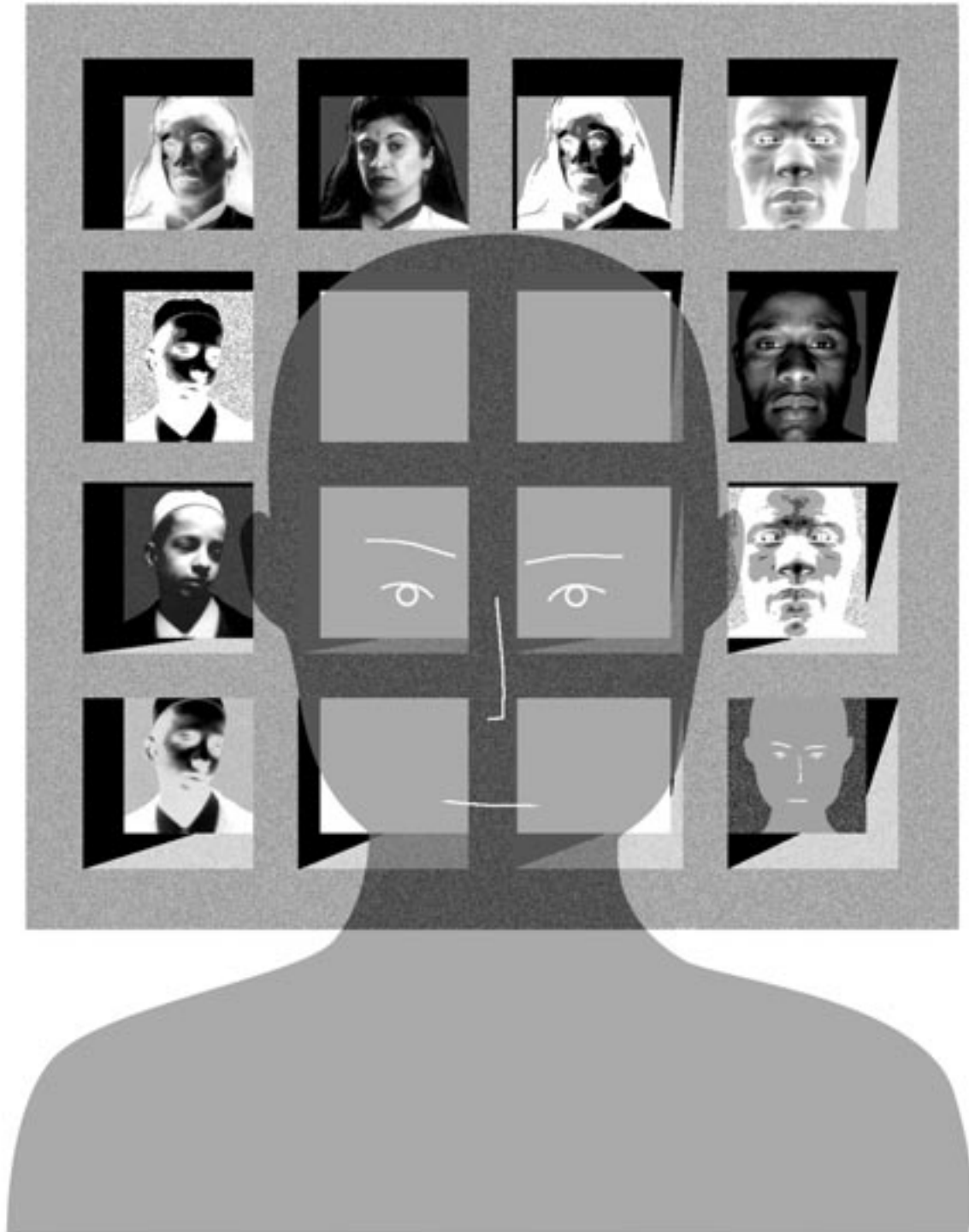


STEREOTYPING AND RACISM

FINDINGS FROM TWO ATTITUDE SURVEYS



STEREOTYPING AND RACISM

Findings from two
attitude surveys



© Commission for Racial Equality
Elliot House
10/12 Allington Street
London SW1E 5EH

Published 1998

ISBN 1 85442 214 6

Price: £3.50

CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Summary of findings	5
Methodology	6
1. Identities and stereotypes	9
Culture and identity	9
Stereotypes and prejudices	11
2. Racism: attitudes and experience	16
South Asians	16
African Caribbeans	18
White people	20
3. Dealing with racism	23
Institutional responses	23
Appendix	28

INTRODUCTION

In early 1998, the Commission for Racial Equality asked Market Research Solutions Ltd (MRSL) to undertake two studies of the views of white, South Asian and African Caribbean people in Britain on stereotyping and prejudice, the representation of ethnic minorities on television and in advertising, and racism and how to deal with it. A qualitative study based on six small group discussions with 18-25 year-olds and 25-45 year-olds from each ethnic group was conducted in March and April 1998, followed by a large-scale programme of 1,500 street interviews in May and June 1998.

This report focuses on the views expressed by the participants in the six discussion groups, drawing on data from the street survey where relevant.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. In the street survey, the majority of the 1,500 people interviewed – about two-thirds of all groups – said that race relations had improved in the last 20 years. About 60% said they thought the situation would get better in the future.
2. In the discussion groups, most of the participants thought that racism, albeit in subtler forms than previously, was still a problem in British society.
 - South Asians thought that race relations had improved over the last 20 years or so, although they still experienced racism both on grounds of colour and culture.
 - African Caribbean participants felt that racism was endemic in British society and an inescapable fact of life. They saw racism as a black and white issue based on colour and negative stereotypes of black people.
 - White participants, too, felt that they suffered from discrimination, and without any hope of redress. Although they had many black and Asian friends, they still held strong negative stereotypes of them as groups. They especially resented Asian, and especially Muslim, people, whom they saw as importing a foreign culture into their country.
3. South Asian and African Caribbean members of the discussion groups also had friends, colleagues or neighbours from different ethnic backgrounds, and believed that individual relationships were the best way of breaking down barriers between groups. However, most of them, especially the African Caribbeans, felt they were judged on the basis of widely held negative stereotypes of them as a group and rarely as individuals;

South Asian members of the groups were generally more optimistic that stereotyped thinking could be overcome.

4. Both South Asians and African Caribbeans in the discussion groups felt that television programmes and advertisements typecast them in limited and stereotyped roles, although they acknowledged that there had been some change for the better. South Asians, especially, thought that, while things had improved for black people, there were still far too few Asians in TV advertisements. Both South Asians and African Caribbeans in the groups said they wanted to see themselves in a wider variety of 'normal' roles instead of being used to sell 'ethnic' products. In the street survey, nearly three quarters of the African Caribbean interviewees said that people from ethnic minorities are stereotyped too often in advertisements.
5. South Asian members of the groups were more likely to mention being victims of racial abuse and assaults in the street and on estates, and of racist bullying in schools. African Caribbean participants were more likely to say they experienced racism and discrimination from the police and from employers. They also thought that schools did not help black children to achieve their true potential. In the street survey, 42% of all interviewees thought that discrimination and victimisation were most likely to occur in the workplace.
6. The majority of group participants had little faith that institutions or official bodies would help them if they experienced racism. Most felt that they would have to deal with the problem themselves, and for a significant minority this involved physically threatening racist aggressors when official channels had failed to help. In the street survey, more than half the sample felt that government, society and the individual have equal roles to play in standing up for what is right, but one in five from all groups believed that people were better off standing up for themselves rather than depending on official bodies.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative study

The qualitative research was coordinated, and much of it carried out, by Philly Desai, who worked as a consultant to MRSL. Qualitative methods were chosen because they are the most helpful way of exploring a range of attitudes, feelings and motivations, as well as the extent to which people's views are open to change through discussion and debate with others. Qualitative research aims to provide an understanding of why people think and behave as they do, and not to establish how many people think or feel in a particular way. This is a relatively small scale study and its findings should not be taken to be representative of views in the population as a whole.

The groups included six to eight people, lasted about one and a half hours each and were run by researchers using a discussion guide (see Appendix for further details). All the groups included both men and women from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. All the discussions were tape recorded and transcribed and the transcripts checked for content. The six group discussions included:

- two among South Asians, one in Glasgow with 18-25 year olds and one in Southall with 25-45 year olds
- two among African Caribbeans, one in Birmingham with 18-25 year-olds and the other in Catford, south London, with 25-45 year-olds
- one with white people aged 25-45 in Birmingham
- one with a mixed group of Asian, African Caribbean and white students, aged 17-20, held in south London.

The quantitative study

The large quantitative survey was based on 1,500 street interviews with approximately equal numbers of people from the three ethnic groups.

- South Asians were interviewed in West Midlands, Greater London, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester where just under 70% of all South Asians in Britain live.
- African Caribbeans were contacted in Greater London and West Midlands where – again – some 70% of the group live.
- White people were interviewed throughout England, in areas with population densities broadly commensurate to those identified for interviews with South Asians and African Caribbeans.

In addition, efforts were made to obtain sub-samples of Asian and African Caribbean interviewees from both Scotland and Wales. There was only limited success with this aspect of the study, although useful data sets were obtained for African Caribbeans in Wales and South Asians in Scotland.

It should be noted that the data for the three separate ethnic samples have been weighted to bring their profiles into line with the broad age and sex profiles of these groups. In the 'Total' column, however, the data have been weighted to reflect each group's proportion of the population of Great Britain as a whole; that is, the data from the African Caribbean and South Asian samples have been substantially down-weighted and those from white interviewees correspondingly up-weighted. Given the extent of this weighting, the data in the 'Total' column, which is dominated by the views of the white interviewees, must be used with some care. See the appendix to this report for details of the samples and of the weightings applied.

1. IDENTITIES AND STEREOTYPES

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

A sense of mixed identity

Perceptions of culture and identity among all the discussion groups were varied and complex. Most of the participants spoke of a sense of mixed identity and did not want to pin themselves down to one cultural or ethnic category. A few even expressed suspicion and unease at the idea of being asked to categorise themselves in racial or ethnic terms:

M: I would be suspicious of someone who wanted to know the answer to those sorts of questions ('Where are you from?'). If I am speaking to you and we are speaking the same language, nationality does not come into it. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

However, when asked how they preferred to describe themselves, most of the participants emphasised two aspects of their identity: where they saw themselves as 'coming from', in an emotional sense, and, more practically, the place where they were actually living out their lives.

British, plus ...

Both South Asian and African Caribbean participants were anxious to emphasise that they were British: they lived their lives here – many had been born here – and they saw their future and that of their children in Britain. However, they also felt it was important to remember where they had 'come from'. For those born outside Britain, this literally meant the place where they were born and grew up, while for those who were born in Britain it referred to their emotional ties, through their parents, to a particular part of the world. Some African Caribbeans felt that knowledge of the past was important for self-respect, and that use of their preferred terminology demonstrated that they were respected by others. Thus, terms such as 'British Asian' and 'Black British' were both popular:

M: British Asian. People know what you mean. It says where you are coming from, it accurately describes what I am. I was born here, raised here, I speak English, it is my main language. But going back to India, sometimes it can be home. You can have more than one place. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

F: British Asian. We are British, but we like to stick to our own culture, and we are Asian. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

F: I would say Black British, Afro-Caribbean. I would say I was born in Britain and my parents are from Jamaica. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

A small number of people were more specific about their place of origin, such as a particular Caribbean island or a region in India.

Interestingly, few participants felt that they could claim to be 'English', a term very strongly understood to mean 'white', whereas 'British' offered a more inclusive concept:

You can't say that you're English, it sounds like you are white and you believe in the Queen and all those types of things – patriotic, St George and the dragon. English is if you are white. (African Caribbeans, 18-25 years, Birmingham)

'Muslim first'

The main exception to this style of identification came from the group of 18-25 year-old Muslims in Glasgow, for whom religion was the most important source of identity. Both Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people felt that Islam was central to their identity, providing a moral and social framework for their lives and behaviour, and that everything else came afterwards. Some said they were 'Muslim, Pakistani and Scottish', for example, while others described themselves as 'Bangladeshi Muslims'.

F: Muslim first, obviously. That's the most important, that's what you are. (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, 18-25 years, Glasgow)

'It's not your place, you don't belong'

The white participants in the 25-45 year age group had less defined notions of ethnic or cultural identity. While proud, in theory, of being British, it was not very clear what this meant for them. Some gave the impression that Britain's glories were in the past, and that British identity was now being diluted and eroded by the many 'foreigners' – be they British people from ethnic minorities or people from the European Union and other European countries – whom they saw as 'taking over'. Clearly, this opinion had been formed in response to the changes they had seen in the areas where they lived, making some say that they felt like strangers in their own streets:

M: That's what it's like, you feel inferior. You think it's not – you're not in – Birmingham. It's not your place, you don't belong there.

M: It feels as if Great Britain is losing its identity. We are all going to turn into one big place, that's how I feel.

M: Great Britain has been booming for centuries. We owned half of the world at one time. Now look at us. I mean, even the royal family are a laughing stock.

(Whites, 25-45 years, Birmingham)

STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE

Individuals v groups

Most of the participants felt that getting to know people from different ethnic backgrounds, as individuals rather than as members of another ethnic group, was a good way of breaking down barriers. They had friends, colleagues or neighbours from different ethnic backgrounds (some also had relatives) and they spoke of good friendships, helpful neighbours and harmonious relations.

F: I have an old white couple next door: very nice, very supportive. Opposite is a policeman, not so nice to begin with. I think he thought all Indians were tax evaders, benefits dodgers, but he has found out we are not, and he likes Indian food now. I think we have learned from each other. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

M: The biggest problem is that the majority of white people have got preconceived ideas about black people. The attitudes of white people who live among blacks are completely different to those of people who have never lived among them. They know us better, they know we are human and not some alien from another planet. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

F: This Asian lad next door was a lovely lad, you couldn't wish for a better person, and he had all abuse and everything done to him from white people, and that, where he worked ... I felt terrible. He said: 'I would never do that to anybody', and they wouldn't. (Whites, 25-45 years, Birmingham)

However, as these quotations imply, stereotypes about different ethnic groups persist in spite of good relationships between individuals. It was clear from our group of white people aged 25-45 years in Birmingham that their black and Asian friends and neighbours were seen as exceptions to the general rule.

Kinds of stereotypes

The different stereotypes white people have of African Caribbeans and South Asians (see p12) are an index to the kinds of prejudice they are likely to face. While both African Caribbean and Asian members of the groups said they were perceived in these ways, the African Caribbeans in particular felt they were judged as a group and rarely as individuals. Some even said that white people treated black people so poorly that they provoked these reactions, thus leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Others pointed out that black people have endured a great deal throughout their history, and that their references to this should not be construed as 'having a chip on our shoulders':

M: If we don't stand up for ourselves they'll take the piss, and when we do they say 'you people have got such a bad attitude, you have all got chips on your shoulders'.

Negative stereotypes of African Caribbeans among white people

- 'they have a chip on their shoulder'
- 'they have an attitude problem' / 'they are rude'
- 'they are aggressive'
- 'they use drugs'

Negative stereotypes of South Asians among white people

- 'they overclaim benefits'
- 'they have too many children'
- 'they have backward religious practices, eg halal meat slaughter, call to prayer'
- 'they have dirty shops'
- 'they dislike white people'

F: We are in a no win situation in their country.

F: They say we have got a chip on our shoulder but that is nonsense, it just shows their lack of understanding of we as a race of people and what we have gone through so that we are here today, and to a large extent what we still go through now. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

While the South Asian members of the groups also felt that white people had stereotyped views of them, they were more inclined than the African Caribbeans to believe that these could be overcome. For example, one woman suggested that the perception among white people that Asians acquire their money through semi-legal means – say, by defrauding the benefits system – was a sign of economic resentment:

F: Indians have a tendency to build extensions and [when] some [Indian] neighbours moved in and started doing all this work on the property – getting it double glazed, building extensions – [an older white neighbour] said, 'I don't know where these people get the money from. I haven't got money to change my windows. It's not right, it's not from working,' he kept saying. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

The younger Muslims in the group were also acutely aware of the stereotypes of Islam that prevail in British society, and were at pains to emphasise the positive aspects of their religion:

F: A lot of people see a girl in a scarf and they think she is being forced to wear it. But she is wearing it because she wants to. (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, 18-25 years, Glasgow)

Television and advertising

'No black man I know is like that'

Both South Asians and, especially, African Caribbeans in the discussion groups thought that television programmes frequently typecast them in limited roles drawn in stereotyped or inaccurate ways. The African Caribbeans believed that they were either portrayed negatively – as criminals, dysfunctional parents, or psychologically damaged characters – or in flattened, one-dimensional ways, not as real people with complex personalities:

M: Look at Eastenders, there's Lenny, a layabout who does very little other than have schemes which never work. The other black one, Alan, not in it any more because he is just stupid, he is brain dead. No black man I know is like that.

F: The BBC had this programme on a couple of weeks ago with this mixed race girl and she had so many social problems ... she was taking heavy drugs and attempted suicide. What's all that about?

M: It wouldn't be so bad if you had lots of mixed race characters on TV, but you don't, so the one they've got you don't want to see her all strung out. (African Caribbeans, 18-25 years, Birmingham)

Students, in particular, appreciated a lighter approach to race issues. For example, they all thought that the funniest thing they had seen recently on race was the Harry Enfield sketch where Waynetta Slob and Wayne broke up because Waynetta wanted a 'brown baby', like all the other mums on the estate. The African Caribbean participants did not think this was offensive, partly because of the skill with which it had been executed, but also because it addressed a race issue head on, with a sense of humour, and without 'going all around the houses'. The Asian comedy programme, Goodness Gracious Me, was liked for similar reasons – it showed Asian people in a wide range of roles without taking itself too seriously. The only concern expressed about using humour in this way was that,

FROM THE STREET SURVEY

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about advertising?

	Agree %	Disagree %	Don't know %
Base: All informants (1,500)			
People from ethnic minorities are too often stereotyped, as when Asians appear in curry ads ¹	64	34	2
Too much advertising uses negative stereotypes showing people as figures of fun ²	53	46	1
Not all stereotypes are bad, and, anyway, many ads have to use this technique as a quick way of communicating their message ³	69	29	3

1. 72% of African Caribbeans agreed with the statement against an average of 64%.

On the whole, younger interviewees were particularly likely to agree.

2. Again, 62% of African Caribbeans agreed compared with an average of around 50%.

3. 71% of white interviewees agreed compared with an average of around two thirds.

FROM THE STREET SURVEY

Which of the following statements do you agree with:

- Ethnic minorities still tend to be stereotyped in TV soap operas
- Soap operas are much better now

	Asian	Black	White	Total
Base: All informants (1,500)	%	%	%	%
Ethnic minorities still tend to be stereotyped in TV soap operas	37	48	32	33
Soap operas are much better now	55	48	59	58
Don't know	8	5	8	9

while black and Asian people might see the joke, white people might take it to be a true representation of the group in Britain.

'Show us as we really are'

Views on the representation of ethnic minorities in advertising were mixed. While the partici-

pants thought that, on the whole, people from ethnic minorities were shown in limited and stereotyped ways, they also acknowledged that things were changing. The South Asians, in particular, complained about being used frequently in advertisements for curries and Indian foods, especially when they were portrayed inaccurately, as in an advert for a curry sauce which showed a Sikh man in a turban, but with no beard:

F: You would think that a big advertising company would make sure that they got our culture right. Like these books we have in school where they always have one Sikh kid and one black kid. In a way you want that, but you also think it's just a token. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

The South Asians also felt that, while black people were appearing more often in advertisements, it was still rare to see an Asian person in a 'non-ethnic' role:

F: [For example] Coke – they have black and Chinese people.

F: More West Indians than Asians. You wouldn't see an Indian girl with her plaits and *salwar kameez* [traditional Punjabi dress]. They [black people] are more similar to white people.

F: I would love to see more Asian people as they really are, not just to sell something. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

The students made a similar point. They wanted to see people from ethnic minorities in 'normal roles' in advertisements, not just in roles where their ethnic origin was used to sell an 'ethnic' product. However, there was some recognition that things were changing – the Army's recruitment advertising, and recent TV advertisements for AXA insurance and for the AA were mentioned as examples where black and Asian people were cast in more varied roles.

M: There are very few adverts with just black people.

F: I'm happy to see the washing-up liquid one with the black people. (Students, 17-19 years, London)

The question of the ironic use of racial stereotypes in advertising elicited the same worries as programmes such as Goodness Gracious Me – while black and Asian people might understand the irony, there was no telling what white people would read into them. An example brought up in one discussion was an advertisement for Lilt, which shows two elderly Caribbean women dancing and singing. The African Caribbeans in the group were in two minds about it: on the one hand, they could see that it was an amusing representation of a typical Caribbean character, but on the other they worried about how it might be interpreted by the rest of the population.

In general, the feeling seemed to be that while some stereotypical representations could be funny and appealing, advertisers needed to move beyond this stage and show people from ethnic minorities in a much wider variety of realistic roles, ‘as we really are’.

FROM THE STREET SURVEY				
People from ethnic minorities are treated more sensibly nowadays in TV commercials.				
	Asian	Black	White	Total
Base: All informants (1,500)	%	%	%	%
Agree	65	64	75	73
Disagree	17	24	9	10
Don't know	18	12	17	17

2. RACISM: ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCE

Most of the participants in the six groups thought that racism and racial discrimination still exist in Britain, although perceptions of the seriousness of the problem, and its causes, varied widely.

SOUTH ASIANS

The South Asian members of the groups felt that racism was still a problem for them, but they mostly agreed that, overall, race relations in Britain were improving and that they suffered less racism than their parents' generation. While they thought there were far fewer instances of blatant racism today, it

had not disappeared because people had found more subtle ways of discriminating; those who wanted to discriminate had learned to be less obvious about it, but they had not really changed their underlying attitudes.

A striking feature of the South Asian participants was their willingness to admit to the existence of prejudice in their own communities as well as among white people. There were

some people within their communities, they said, who saw white people as dirty, morally inferior, poor parents, and prone to drunkenness and marital infidelity.

M: A friend of the family thought that cot deaths were a white thing, because white mothers don't look after their children properly. There was something on the TV and it's always a white child, you see, so she thought it was a white thing. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

The South Asian participants also acknowledged that there were many prejudices between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and that Sikh parents would be very upset if one of their children were to marry a Muslim:

F: I was brought up in Birmingham, in a predominantly Muslim area. We are Sikhs, and when we got to a certain age my dad said, 'Right, that's it, we're off.' [It was] because of the boys – their greatest fear was of our running off with a Muslim boy. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

FROM THE STREET SURVEY

Have race relations in Britain improved or got worse in the last 20 years?

	Asian	Black	White	Total
Base: All informants (1,500)	%	%	%	%
Improved	66	68	70	68
Got worse	12	14	13	15
Stayed the same	2	4	2	2
Don't know	20	14	15	16

Discussing the racism they experienced from white people, South Asians did mention discrimination in employment (although not as forcefully as African Caribbeans), but their greatest worries were about:

- racial abuse and attacks, and
- racist attitudes towards their culture and religion, often in the context of schools.

Racial abuse and attacks

Members of the groups spoke first of general abusiveness – people throwing stones, calling names, and smashing the windows of

their council flats. Asked how they knew these were racist incidents rather than general bad behaviour, they usually pointed to the explicitly racial name-calling which accompanied the incidents. Some also added that when they were among only a few Asian families on an estate and suffered most of the abuse, it seemed reasonable to assume that racism lay behind the harassment:

F: From the day I was old enough to walk along the street by myself practically till now I have experienced [only] one month in my life that someone hasn't said something about my colour or my scarf or whatever, and I'm not feeling that I have to stay in the house because of it. But it's a natural part of life. It's just 'what are you doing here?', 'get back home'.

F: When I was at school, when I was like third year, from third year up to sixth year I was, like, so much ... [inaudible] It was like during hockey and stuff like that. I would be hit with hockey sticks and called 'Paki, go away' and this kind of stuff.

F: I think young children are just as bad as old people, because I get a lot of abuse from children. When I go to Paisley there are a lot of children and I get a lot of abuse off them. I get it every day when I go into work and back again. (Pakistani and Bangladeshi, 18-25 years, Glasgow)

An Indian woman said her son was repeatedly picked on by an older white boy at his school. She was not certain whether this was racially motivated or just a case of general bullying, but she suspected that race was a factor because her son was the only one out of a group of younger boys who was picked on, and he was the only Asian.

In Glasgow the picture was quite different. There, unlike Southall, the Pakistani community was relatively isolated. Verbal abuse was such a regular occurrence for the young Muslims in the group that they described it as background noise to their lives. They said that younger white people, including children, regularly shouted racial abuse at them in the streets and near their homes.

FROM THE STREET SURVEY				
Will race relations get better or worse in the next five years and beyond?				
	Asian	Black	White	Total
Base: All informants (1,500)	%	%	%	%
Get better	62	62	63	60
Get worse	12	14	16	16
Stay the same	2	2	3	3
Don't know	24	21	19	22

Culture and religion

Racial hostility was often directed at South Asians' culture and religion. This frequently occurred at school, where children were bullied by white children because of a particular religious garment or practice. For example, one Sikh woman said her son had his top knot pulled by white boys in his school. He found this very distressing and wanted to stop wearing it, but his mother was against this. The young Muslim women in the Glasgow group said they got routine abuse for wearing head scarves. One of them said she had her scarf pulled off in primary school, which was very upsetting. In both cases, the women blamed the schools for not taking the incidents seriously and failing to resolve the problem.

AFRICAN CARIBBEANS

Overall, African Caribbean members of the groups felt most strongly that racism was an endemic feature of British society. They were more likely to say that racism was everywhere and to see it as an inescapable fact of life. Few thought that the situation was improving, and some lamented the fact that, even though black people had been in Britain for many years, we were still talking about racism.

African Caribbeans tended to experience racism as a result of the stereotypes which they felt were frequently applied to them (see p12), principally in the areas of employment, education and policing.

Employment

It was commonly believed that employers discriminate against black people who apply for jobs. This seemed to be taken for granted by younger participants and was not something which required any explanation: it was assumed as a fact. They found it difficult to provide evidence for this view, although of course it is never easy to know why one is rejected for a job:

M: I never fill in those things where it says please state your nationality. What do they want to know for? You put those kinds of details down and you know you

FROM THE STREET SURVEY

Where is racial discrimination or victimisation most likely to be a problem?

	All %
Base: All informants (1,500)	
In the workplace/at work	42
Getting job interviews	28
In contacts with the police or courts	13
In education	7
As a customer in a shop	5
Getting benefits, like housing benefit	3
Getting bank loans	1
Getting access to social services	1

Note: Over 40% of all white interviewees mentioned the workplace first, probably reflecting the problems they know their ethnic minority colleagues face. Asians were more likely than the other groups to mention job interviews as a problem area. As a follow-up, interviewees were asked if there were other areas which might be a problem. Over half (including 67% of Asians) did not add any other situations. The following were suggested by more than 5% of interviewees:

	Asian %	Black %	White %	Total %
Base: All informants				
On the streets/on estates/ from neighbours	7	10	14	13
Pubs/clubs/discos	7	8	13	12
Watching/playing sport	2	3	8	8
In specific jobs (bus driving, security, etc)	4	6	4	4
Other public places (shops, parks, etc)	6	7	2	2

ain't gonna get no interview, your application is going straight in the bin.
(African Caribbeans, 18-25 years, Birmingham)

Education

African Caribbean participants believed just as strongly that the British educational system fails to provide for the needs of black children. On the one hand, white teachers were seen to be misunderstanding black children by failing to take account of their experience of racism; that is to say, the behaviour of children perceived as troublesome might be related to the way they were treated, inside and outside school:

F: They say black pupils in schools are more troublesome than others, but what they don't say is that the teachers come in with such an attitude towards them in the first place that they are bound to feel bad, because from their first experience with the society outside their home they see racism. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

On the other hand, schools and white society were deemed to regard black people as being suitable only for certain occupations and roles in life: black people were seen as being good at practical skills but lacking intellectual abilities. By not pushing them intellectually, schools, it was felt, failed to bring out the best in black pupils, and thus reinforced black people's disadvantage in the labour market:

M: Black kids are never encouraged to push for success or to go forward, because the teacher doesn't think they are up to it.

F: They never saw us as academics, so we were never given the same opportunities by virtue of the fact that we were black, and it was considered that we could be carpenters and the like ... (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

Lastly, some African Caribbean participants commented on the fact that black history was not taught in schools, and that black youngsters remained ignorant of the ancient civilisations of Africa, and of their own heritage:

M: You never see in history, they don't show the great civilisations of Africa because they could not deal with that. It would be admitting that we are as good as, if not better than, them, and they can't have that. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

Policing

African Caribbean participants felt they were stopped more often by the police as a result of the common stereotype of the black mugger. One man quoted Sir Paul Condon's comments on street crime as evidence of this:

M: That London police chief Condon he actually went on TV and said that most of the street crime is committed by black youths. What is that saying to people?

F: If you are walking down the road and a black man is coming towards you, run

the other way quick, because he is going to rob you, that's what it's saying.
(African Caribbeans, 18-25 years, Birmingham)

WHITE PEOPLE

The attitudes and experiences of the group of white people in Birmingham were particularly interesting. They tended to think that things were getting worse for them, and saw black and Asian people as 'taking over' an area which they had considered their own. They saw themselves as a minority who suffered from discrimination at the hands of the authorities as well as members of ethnic minority communities, and there was a strong sense of resentment at this uninvited 'invasion.' This resentment appeared to have two sources:

- their perception that black and Asian communities were using resources – housing, education, health care – which rightly belonged to white people; and
- their perception that Asians, particularly Muslims, refused to integrate into the British way of life and insisted on maintaining their own cultures and beliefs.

'Unfair, not "equal opportunities"'

White participants' understanding of 'equal opportunities' was part of the reason for this resentment. Some of the men were convinced that local firms were obliged by law to employ a certain number of black and Asian people, irrespective of whether or not they were the best people for the jobs. They concluded from this that whenever they failed to get a job themselves, it was probably because the job had been 'given' to someone from an ethnic minority group who was not as well qualified as they were. They felt very strongly that 'equal opportunities' meant unfair opportunities for ethnic minorities, and that if they complained about this they would be accused of being racist.

M: You should go for the best man for the job and forget all these equal opportunities.

M: That's part of what equal opportunities is there for. It was set up by the government because of coloureds and Asians claiming they couldn't get a job because of their skin colour, that is why equal opportunities was set up, so you have a percentage of each race. That is the only reason it was ever set up.
(Whites, 25-45 years, Birmingham)

Similarly, some white participants believed that Asian people were given preferential access to council housing and that they then proceeded to sell these houses for a profit. One woman seemed to think that there was a

direct connection between any Asian family getting housed by the council and the fact that her relative was still waiting for a council house:

F: In our road, as soon as a house is empty an Asian family gets it. I mean it's very very rare you see a white family move in.

M: If they don't get it it's like, 'Right, you're being racist.'

F: My sister-in-law went for the house next door to us and she was turned down. Now this Asian man [who had] lived in this country for 14 months was living there on his own. He sent for all these kids that weren't his, they were his brothers' children, and they gave him the house. Then he bought it, and he moved on to another council house, and the kids he brought over with him bought the house off him and then the council put him in another house and he bought that. I am not against them, don't get me wrong, but they are not daft are they? It's like, 'Oh god, I can go here now, get that for about six grand and sell it for about 40, get the council to move me to another one and buy that.' (Whites, 25-45 years, Birmingham)

Clearly, such perceptions of competition for resources provide ample breeding ground for resentment and racist sentiment.

The resentment was directed mostly at Asians, specifically Muslims, and focused more on their cultural difference than their colour. One man criticised the building of mosques and said the call to prayer would be noisy and irritating. He suggested that the money used to build mosques would be better spent on hospitals or care for the elderly, apparently assuming that mosques were funded by the tax payer.

M: They come over here and they've got the mosque and everything over here. I'm sorry but I don't relish the thought of having rahhhh in the early hours in the morning, down my earhole.

M: But you complain and it's racial discrimination comes up.

M: They're getting money to build more mosques when we're out of hospitals and we have old age pensioners who can't afford to put two bars on the bloody fire. (Whites, 25-45 years, Birmingham)

Resentment also centred on the changes introduced in schooling and education, with especially strong objections to aspects of multicultural education. One parent was most upset that her son had been taught a few words of an Asian language, while another young man said he had walked out of an RE class where the subject was Islam, on the grounds that 'I'm C of E'. The same man said that Asians got preferential treatment at lunchtimes:

M: It was like the Asian kids have a menu of fish and something else ... and the English kids have pie and chips or beef burger and chips. 'Can I have fish instead?' 'No, sorry that's for the Asian kids.' That's it.

F: I was just going to mention that my son, when he was in the juniors, came home from school and he had learnt Hindu and he was talking it and I wasn't very happy about it.

Q: Why not?

F: Well, why does he want to learn Hindu? What good is it going to do him? He is English, you know, and I don't want him to learn it. He was only a junior and they didn't even ask if we minded, they were already teaching him. I feel that Hindu would serve no purpose to him at all. German, French, Spanish, fine, but not Hindu. (Whites, 25-45 years, Birmingham)

Finally, they disliked the fact that Asians spoke in their own languages in public places, particularly in shops:

F: If you go into one of their shops I think they should show you a bit of respect and speak English. When you're in their shop, if you're at the counter and they are having a conversation, they could be saying anything. (Whites, 25-45 years, Birmingham)

Most of these objections seemed to be rooted in the white participants' belief that Asians were 'taking over', and it fuelled their opinion that they, and not people from ethnic minorities, were the ones suffering racial discrimination. Although the white members of the groups did acknowledge that black and Asian people suffer from racial discrimination, there was general agreement that 'they bring it on themselves' by their bad behaviour.

3. DEALING WITH RACISM

Very few members of the groups had received useful help or assistance from organisations, institutions or official bodies in coping with racist incidents, and few expected any help from them. Both African Caribbean and South Asian participants usually expected to have to deal with racism themselves or with the help of their family and friends. However, they tended to take slightly different approaches.

South Asians were more likely to say that if they were racially abused they would probably ignore it at first, and advise their children to do the same. Some of the men were more in favour of physical retaliation, but overall they were more likely to ignore it, initially at least.

African Caribbeans tended to say they would challenge racist abuse, either verbally or physically. Many said they had brothers and relatives who would be willing to back them up and that a straightforward show of force was the best way to stop racism:

F: Too many of us just let it by as if it doesn't really matter. But each time you do that you're saying to that racist, 'We can't do nothing about you and your kind with these attitudes, it's OK to do it again.'

F: If there was a racist man who was giving me trouble I would just get my brothers around there to sort him out. It's the only way people like him are going to understand that he can't mess with us.

M: You have to stand up to them physically, because if you don't they are just going to keep tramping you down. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

Few of the participants in the groups expected to get help from institutions or official bodies. In schools, for example, neither of the incidents of bullying of Sikh boys referred to in this report was successfully resolved by the school. In both cases, the mothers said they had gone to the school to complain to the teachers. In both cases, they said the teachers appeared not to take what they were saying seriously and to think that the parents were making a fuss. One lady was told that her son was the troublemaker, while he insisted that he was being bullied by the white boys. After some efforts, both women abandoned official channels and tried other routes. One asked an older Asian boy at the school to see if he could exert some influence on the white boy who was bullying her son, but this did not work. Finally, her husband and brother-in-law went to the school at the end of the day and threatened the white boy with physical violence if he did not leave their son alone; that did

the trick. The other woman went to the school herself and threatened the bullies, who then left her son alone. The two cases are revealing in showing how institutional failure leads people to take the law into their own hands:

F: The school said he started it, and he told me 'I didn't start it'. He told me 'I don't start anything.' I thought maybe it was him, but then the incident got out of hand. I told him to tell his teachers, but he said 'the teachers just ignore me.' I said if it gets worse, you come back to me, but he didn't, so I assume ...

Q: Who can you go to? What can you do now?

F: When my son got bullied we had a word with the head and it was obvious they were not going to do anything. My son was in the second year and there was this big sixth former, a white boy. I suppose it was racism because all his other friends were white. They would pull his trousers up. We had a word with the teacher and head and they just thought it was play. I said 'Tell him to stop, he's still not stopping.' I said, 'Are you going to suspend him?' They said, 'No'. We had a word with an Indian boy in the sixth form and he tried to stop it but it didn't work. Eventually, in the end, my husband and somebody else – I am ashamed to admit it – went to school and found this boy and said, 'You just leave him alone or you will not be going to school, you will not be walking,' and that worked. I just think there should have been something else done about it.

F: I did that, I asked my son who is the kid, and I went to him and said, 'You touch my son and I will break your flaming legs.'

(Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

The Muslims in the Glasgow group experienced a lot of verbal abuse from local young people, but they assumed that the police would not be able to do anything about it. They commented that it was very hard to prove such allegations and that the police would probably not consider verbal abuse as a serious offence in any case.

Most African Caribbeans in the groups had no faith in institutions to help them challenge racism. The police were seen as racist themselves and therefore unlikely to help, and it was assumed that other organisations were also unlikely to be effective. There was some support for black-run campaigning groups: according to one participant, white people would be incapable of understanding racism, whereas black people would investigate more vigorously. One young Asian man also thought that organisations like the Anti-Nazi League might be able to help:

F: Who do we rely on? Who in the past has shown us that we can trust them to help us in the problems that we have? Nobody, that's who.

M: It would be different if we had trust in things like the police and the council and all those kind of things. If in the past they had shown that they were concerned about the hassle and violence against ethnic minorities then we would tell them and leave them to deal with it. But look how many times you hear about some man who gets beat up by the National Front. And what happens? Nothing, man. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

It would be wrong to suggest that no institutions at all were perceived as being potentially helpful in these situations. Members of the Glasgow group mentioned a local ethnic minority law centre as being very helpful, and in other areas there was a general assumption that you could probably get help from a Citizen’s Advice Bureau if you wanted to, although few knew exactly where to find one. Also, two Asian men in the Southall group commented that local councils were much more strict about racial abuse than they used to be, and could evict people if they were abusing their neighbours. There were also two mentions of the CRE providing help (see p 26).

Overall, nevertheless, it is fair to say that most people in the group discussions expected to have to help themselves if they suffered abuse or discrimination.

Discrimination in employment

Most of the participants were aware that, in theory at least, there was some means of redress if one experienced discrimination in employment. Some referred to ‘equal opportunities’ or ‘the race relations’ as legal principles which could be invoked to challenge racism, and there was a vague idea that you could probably sue an employer if you could prove you had suffered racial discrimination. A minority knew that employment tribunals were the arena where such disputes could ultimately be resolved. However, the extent to which people thought they could actually use this legislative framework was much more variable.

Most of the participants did not believe there was anything they could do if they thought they had been discriminated against in applying for a job and had not got it because of their race or ethnic origin. They usually decided that they would not want to work for such a firm in any case and were unlikely to take the matter any further. They also assumed that it would be very hard to prove that discrimination was the reason they had not been given the job:

M: I wouldn’t complain. What’s the point in complaining if obviously you haven’t got this job because this person doesn’t want you to take it. There’s no point complaining. If they were forced to take you on, they would just dislike

FROM THE STREET SURVEY				
Which of the following would you approach if you were discriminated against or abused, or if you didn’t get fair treatment because of your ethnic origin?				
	Asian	Black	White	Total
Base: All informants (1,500)	%	%	%	%
A Citizens’ Advice Bureau	42	48	45	44
A solicitor	28	20	29	29
The CRE	27	30	26	27
Friends or family	34	26	20	20
The police	19	9	20	19
The Equal Opportunities Commission	15	15	16	16
A local Racial Equality Council	17	18	14	14
Don’t know	8	5	8	9

Note. 2% of all the interviewees said they wouldn’t look for help from any of these organisations because it would be a waste of time; they would either go somewhere else or sort it out themselves. A separate 3% of the sample said they would not look for help at all but ‘look after it themselves’.

you, because of the colour you were, so what's the point? (Students, 17-19 years, London)

F: My son said, 'Shall I put in some applications with an English name?' I said no, if they don't want to give you a job they won't give you a job. (Indians, 25-45 years, Southall)

Those who were already in a job were more likely to do something about it if they thought they were being discriminated against.

Most of them said that, in the first instance, they would challenge the person who had been discriminating, but they admitted that in practice that could be difficult. One African Caribbean man pointed out that if your boss were the one doing the discriminating there would not be much point in complaining:

M: If there was someone higher than them I would go and see them. But first I would tell that person to stop bugging me. I would give them a chance, but not forever. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

M: How can you tell your boss you are getting racial abuse when usually your boss is just like those you are complaining about? How can you complain about your boss to your boss? You are just going to make things far worse for yourself. (African Caribbeans, 18-25 years, Birmingham)

There were three cases where people felt they had witnessed or suffered serious racially discriminatory behaviour in the workplace. In the first case, a Sikh woman who had once worked for an insurance company when she was younger heard one of the staff there refer to a client as a 'silly Paki'. When she complained to the manager and her colleague she was told she was making a fuss, and left the company soon afterwards. In the second case, a black young woman was working in a shoe shop. Unknown to her, some black girls stole some shoes and the manager accused her of being involved. She denied the allegations and left the shop soon afterwards. In the third case, a black woman approached the CRE for help in proving that she had been discriminated against when she had been turned down for a promotion:

F: It was a long time ago. People, white girls, kept coming in and getting promoted over me, and I had more qualifications. It just got to the stage where I had to do something or leave, and I didn't see why I should. A friend mentioned the CRE and I phoned them up and they were really helpful. If it had not been for them I don't think anything would have happened. They dealt with all the procedural things and looked at all the issues, and I took them [her employer] to an industrial tribunal, and I won. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

FROM THE STREET SURVEY

What role should government, society and the individual play in standing up for people's rights?

	Asian %	Black %	White %	Total %
Base: All informants (1,500)				
People must stand up for their rights instead of depending on official bodies	21	23	22	23
Government and society should take full responsibility for ensuring individual rights	22	20	17	17
Government, society and the individual have equal roles to play in standing up for people's rights	51	52	58	56
Don't know	7	6	3	7

These cases seem to confirm the assumption made by many of the participants that, even if they complained they were unlikely to get very far, since discrimination was very hard to prove and a white employer would not regard the incident as seriously as the black or Asian person. In effect, they would be told they were 'making a fuss about nothing':

F: Nine out of ten times, though, nothing will really happen. That person won't get the sack or anything. (African Caribbeans, 25-45 years, London)

APPENDIX

The qualitative study

The research sample

Groups	Ethnic group	Age/lifestage	Location
1.	Indian Punjabi Sikhs	25-45 years, with children	Southall, west London
2.	Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims	18-25 years, single, no children	Glasgow
3.	African Caribbeans	18-25 years, single, no children	Birmingham
4.	African Caribbeans	25-45 years, with children	Catford, south London
5.	White, UK origins	25-45 years, with children	Birmingham
6.	White, African Caribbean and Asian	17-19 years, single, no children	Catford, south London

The quantitative study

Sampling points

Interviews were held in the following places.

South Asians	African Caribbeans	White	
Glasgow	Birmingham	Perth	Hereford
Edinburgh	Wolverhampton	Dundee	Rugby
Bradford	Cardiff	Glasgow	Nuneaton
Kirklees	Bristol	Edinburgh	Tamworth
Bolton	Hackney	Bradford	Solihull
Oldham	Lambeth	Kirklees	Cardiff
Birmingham	Lewisham	Hull	Portsmouth
Wolverhampton	Southwark	Rippon	Abingdon
Cardiff	Leeds	Sheffield	Cromer
Bristol	Hull	Middlesborough	Chatham
Newham	Southampton	Manchester	Bromley
Hackney		Bury	Kingston
Harrow		Birkenhead	Eastbourne
Brent		St Helens	Guildford
Hounslow		Leeds	Kings Lynn
Wellingborough			

Fieldwork dates

Field work on the quantitative stage of this project was undertaken from 5-28 May 1998.

The sample

The sample obtained in each region, by ethnic group, was as follows:

	South Asian	Black	White	Total
England	375	384	427	1,186
Scotland	105	2	77	184
Wales	54	82	15	151
Total	534	468	519	1,521

Weighting

Since approximately equal numbers were interviewed from each of three age bands, the data were weighted according to the factors shown below in order to bring the samples back to the correct age profiles of the three ethnic groups.

Age	Asian	Black	White
16-24 years	0.76	0.75	0.51
25-44 years	1.12	1.04	1.03
45+ years	1.13	1.26	1.40

As mentioned elsewhere, the figures in the 'Total' columns were weighted both by age and by the correct proportions for each ethnic group within the population of Great Britain, thus significantly down-weighting the data from the South Asian and African Caribbean samples and up-weighting the data from the white respondents. The combined weightings used are given below:

Age	England			Wales			Scotland		
	Asian	Black	White	Asian	Black	White	Asian	Black	White
16-24	0.068	0.045	1.346	0.015	0.005	5.1	0.008	0.068	1.209
25-44	0.101	0.062	2.719	0.022	0.006	10.3	0.011	0.094	2.441
45+	0.102	0.076	3.696	0.023	0.007	14.0	0.011	0.113	3.318