ONE

Key Concepts and Theories About 'Race'

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- This chapter attempts to explore the meanings of some central concepts in
- the field of race, ethnicity, and identity, and to show how these underpin
- contemporary arguments about multiculturalism, migration, and 'Britishness'.
- The aim is to provide initial clarification of the issues explored in more
- detail in subsequent chapters. In pursuit of this, the chapter moves from a
- discussion of fundamental theories of race, in their historical development
- and their current expression, to an exploration of some of the key issues in
- recent political and policy debates. It explores the move away from biological
- understandings of 'race' towards the more sociologically and culturally sensitive
- concept of 'ethnicity', and how racist ideology has followed a similar path, from
- claims based on a biological hierarchy of 'races' to claims about the threats to
- traditional and national identity posed by cultural diversity and difference.
- The chapter explores, and takes issue with, recent claims that policies of
- multiculturalism have promoted segregation and eroded national identity.
- It also shows how anti-racist arguments have also become more complex, as simple polarities of white and black, oppressor and oppressed, have been
- replaced by a less essentialist appreciation of the complexity and ambiguity of
- racial identities.

The Meanings of 'Race'

- Many writers have commented on the problems of definition and usage
- that arise in discussions of race, racism and associated concepts (Goldberg
- and Solomos, 2002). Well-founded unease about the meaning of 'race', in
- particular, has led to the practice of putting scare quotes around the word, to
- show that the writer does not suppose that it can be used unproblematically;
- to avoid this awkwardness, some writers have preferred the term 'ethnicity',
- which suggests a more socially situated, less biological concept (just as 'gender'

is often preferred to 'sex' by writers wishing to convey a sense that the differences between women and men are not simply a matter of biology). This preference does not, however, remove all difficulties. Social scientists often speak of 'essentially contested concepts' when dealing with terms whose meanings are inherently unstable and liable to shift over time and in different contexts: Bowling and Phillips (2002, pp. xvi-vii), for example, treat not only 'race', but also 'ethnicity', 'crime', and 'discrimination', as 'essentially contested'. They describe their discomfort in the face of a tension between 'empiricism' and 'social constructionism'. Empiricism, in this context, assumes that race and crime are real, that they exist in some objective, essential sense, which allows them to be observed and measured: social constructionism takes 11 these terms to refer to 'dynamic social processes', and therefore assumes that 12 their meanings are multiple and fluid. The dilemma for Bowling and Phillips, 13 as for other writers in this field, is that they need to use apparently objective 14 and factual data on racial (or ethnic) differences in offending, prosecution, 15 sentencing, victimization, etc., for the purposes of analysis, while 'contending 16 that race is not "real" outside the racist ideologies and discriminatory practices 17 that bring it into being' (p. xvii). But, even though race is a social construct, it has real, material effects, and the approach of Bowling and Phillips is 19 therefore to reject essentialist views of race while 'retaining race and ethnic 20 categories in order to illuminate the racialised patterns of everyday human 21 experience' (p. xvii). 22

This approach is broadly that which informs the following discussion. Race is the key term in the vocabulary of this field, from which many of the other terms flow, either by direct derivation from it or through a rejection of its implications. From the beginning, the idea of race was bound up with ideas of racial difference and superiority and inferiority. Considering only Europe, it is possible to find a conception of race and racial distinction in the writings of the ancient Greeks, for whom non-Greeks were generically 'barbarians' (people whose language sounded like 'Bar-bar'), and usually regarded as by definition inferior to Greeks (de Ste. Croix, 1983, pp. 416-7) - although in the fifth century BCE Herodotus argued in the second book of his History that the Greeks had borrowed from the Egyptians in culture and religion, and not vice versa (Bernal, 1987). In mediaeval Europe, religious hatred and suspicion was mixed with ideas of racial difference in Christian hostility towards Jews, and later towards Muslims from the Middle East and North Africa. According to Wieviorka (2002), however, 'race' in something like its contemporary sense is a later European invention, associated with the beginnings of maritime empire-building in the fifteenth century. What Wieviorka (2002, p. 460) calls 'protoracist' conceptions of race and difference were articulated from the seventeenth century, in European accounts of the African and native American peoples whose lands they invaded. Physical differences between these peoples and the supposed European norm were noted, described, treated as signs or causes of inferiority, and explained mainly in terms of differences in the

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- natural environment, especially climatic differences. Towards the end of the
- eighteenth century, the first 'scientific' conceptions of race began to appear
- 3 (thus considerably preceding Darwin and the theory of evolution, which is
- sometimes blamed for providing the basis for a scientific classification of racial
- 5 differences and the establishment of a racial hierarchy).

Scientific Racism

Gould (1996) describes the development of such a hierarchy from an originally relatively neutral description of the geographical distribution of human types (defined as races). The first account of human races with scientific claims was produced in 1758 by the Swedish Carolus Linnaeus, regarded as the founder of the modern system of biological taxonomy (genera, species, and individuals). Linnaeus proposed a four-fold classification: homo sapiens Americanus, 12 Europeus, Asiaticus, and Afer (African). This was modified by the German naturalist J.F. Blumenbach, who by 1795 had developed Linnaeus' scheme into a five-fold classification. Humans belonged to one of five varieties: Caucasian (for light-skinned inhabitants of Europe and adjacent areas), Mongolian (for East Asian people), Ethiopian (for dark-skinned Africans), American (for the indigenous people of the Americas), and Malay (for the people of the Pacific 18 islands and the aboriginal people of Australia). The classification was by now not merely geographical but explicitly hierarchical, ordered by Blumenbach according to the eccentric and subjective criterion of physical beauty, which 21 supposedly had reached its apex (according to the evidence of skulls) among the Caucasus Mountains in modern Russia and Georgia. Blumenbach attributed the degeneration of the non-Caucasian races to the effects of climate, and believed that it was in principle reversible: the descendants of 'Ethiopians' transported north out of Africa might eventually become white. While such thinking is offensive to modern readers, according to Gould (1996, p. 405), Blumenbach 'was the least racist, most egalitarian, and most genial of all Enlightenment writers on the subject of human diversity'; he believed in the fundamental unity of humanity, and that the moral and intellectual differences among the racial groups were minor - certainly not enough to justify the exploitation of one by another. It is his classification, however, that became the most influential scientific account of human races, and elements of it remain in official use. 34

A simpler and more overtly racist classification of humanity was devised by the French aristocrat Gobineau, who published his views on 'the inequality of human races' between 1853 and 1855 (Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was not published until 1859). Gould (1996, p. 379) describes Gobineau as the 'grandfather of modern academic racism' and 'undoubtedly the most influential academic racist of the nineteenth century'. His scheme, which divided humanity hierarchically into whites, yellows, and blacks, was enthusiastically embraced by ideological racists. According to Gobineau, civilizations prospered

to the degree that they maintained racial purity, and declined as a result of miscegenation; the white races would maintain their superior position only if they remained relatively pure and avoided diluting their stock by breeding with the inferior yellow and brown races. This kind of argument, of course, became familiar in the twentieth century, not only in the genocidal programme of Nazism but in advocacy of eugenics and controlled reproduction to maintain the purity and strength of national stocks. Vanstone (2004) shows that the eugenicist movement, by now reliant on a particular view of evolutionary theory for its scientific basis, was a far from negligible influence on the early development of the probation service: the only solution for offenders deemed degenerate, it was argued, was 'permanent detention and complete segregation' 11 (Vanstone, 2004, p. 39). In the early years of the twentieth century, eugenic 12 thinking often formed part of a package of 'progressive' ideas for social improvement and modernization, sometimes in the form of 'Lombrosianism'. 14 Lombroso, as all students of criminology know, began his work with the study 15 of differences in human skulls (on which Gobineau also based his theories). 16 and received from this his insight that criminals were examples of evolutionary 17 'atavism', throwbacks to an earlier stage of human development; in this, even if 'white', they resembled the inferior races as described by Gobineau and 19 his followers. 20

Eugenic plans for the maintenance and improvement of national racial 21 stocks ceased, for most people, to be morally or intellectually defensible after 22 the Second World War and the revelation of the Nazi programme for the extermination of Jews and other groups considered a threat to racial purity. 24 The point of discussing the roots of racial theory here is, as it was for Gould 25 (1996) in his additional chapters for the second edition of his book, that in spite 26 of this discredit the basic ideas of racial theory persist in ostensibly respectable 27 academic writing. Gould was particularly concerned to refute the arguments of 28 Herrnstein and Murray (1994), whose book received much critical attention, 29 especially for its supposed demonstration that intelligence was stratified not 30 only by social class and status, but by race. Herrnstein and Murray studied IQ results, not the size and shape of skulls, but their method of argument 32 and their results were similar to Gobineau's, and they were as confident as 33 he had been that 'race' was a scientific biological category, not an ideological construct. Intelligence (as measured by IQ tests conducted on Americans) was 35 treated as an irrevocable hereditary fact, and the results showed that Asians were slightly superior to Caucasians, and Caucasians substantially superior 37 to people of African descent (Gould, 1996, p. 369). It is worth noting in 38 this context that both Herrnstein and Murray have had considerable, though controversial, influence in the fields of criminology, criminal justice, and social policy, in Britain as well as the USA (e.g., Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985; Murray et al., 1996). Herrnstein and Murray themselves claimed after its publication that their arguments about racial differences were only a minor topic of their book; but its publication and reception showed the continued

- vitality of ideologies of racial difference, when given a new veneer of science
- 2 and statistical rigour.

Identity and Difference

Essentialism and Hybridity

Rejecting the claim that race is a natural category that denotes a biological reality, we must, like Bowling and Phillips (2002), recognize that in using the term we are referring to an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) - but it is an imagined community with real, material effects. Race and ethnicity need to be understood as social constructions, a means by which differences can be recognized and accorded meaning (Goldberg and Solomos, 2002). As socially constructed categories, they are liable to change their boundaries across time and context, depending on who deploys the terms and for what 12 social or political purposes. For example, 'black' has quite different meanings when employed by Gobineau and his intellectual descendants and when used as a signifier of political affiliation and solidarity by groups formed 15 to resist racism and its effects, as it was in USA from the 1960s. In this instance, a term whose origins lie in ideologies of racial difference and hierarchy was subverted and used as an element in a political struggle against racism; 'black' came to refer not primarily to race or even colour, but to the experience of social subordination and oppression. But this subversion also illustrates the difficulty of using a term that implies a fixed, biological 21 essence in a non-essentialist way. Whatever its value and success as a political statement, this use of 'black' arguably obscures important differences among minority ethnic groups. Modood (1994), for example, suggests that in resisting the categories of racial difference, the term risks implying another false essentialism, that the experience of all minority ethnic groups in Britain is the same. Modood argues that the political conception of blackness that was dominant in the 1980s denied the particularities of the experience of racism among Asian communities, by equating racial discrimination with discrimination on the basis of colour, not culture, and that the majority of Asians rejected the attempt to impose on them an overly politicized 'black' 31 identity. In the contemporary probation context, this tension is reflected in the different positions of the Association of Black Probation Officers and the National Association of Asian Probation Staff, the first promoting a political 'black' identity and the second insisting on the specificity of Asian experiences of discrimination, for example, over religion and dress (e.g., Heer, 2007). 37 Modood's (1994, p. 859) support for the 'new emphasis on multi-textured identities' is reflected in much recent work that has sought to break with the over-simple formulations of the past and to develop concepts that reflect

the complexity and differentiation within categories like 'Asian' or 'African-Caribbean', or the catch-all category of 'Black and Minority Ethnic' (BME)

groups which is now generally used by the Home Office and other government departments (e.g., Jansson, 2006). Hall (1992) for example, wrote of 'new ethnicities' that call into question what it means to be black and, in a local context, 'the dominant coding of what it means to be British' (Back, 1996, p. 4). Others (e.g., Gilroy, 2000) have explored the nature of 'hybrid' identities (such as African American or British Asian) in increasingly cosmopolitan and globalized societies in which the traditional distinctions of nation and race have (it is argued) become less important. In a more critical spirit, May (2002) distinguishes hybridity theory from multiculturalism (which is discussed below), arguing that the idea of hybridity, conceived as a positive resource for social change, entails a rejection of ethnic and cultural rootedness 11 as a basis for identity; such traditional sources of identity are, according to those 12 who celebrate hybridity, inherently conservative, introverted, and backwardlooking. May argues that hybridity theory exaggerates the extent to which 14 'postmodern' identities are in fact hybrid rather than singular, and that it 15 removes a political resource for resistance to racism and discrimination by 16 suggesting that 'all group-based identities are essentialist' (May, 2002, p. 133) – 17 and therefore liable to practices of exclusion, racism, and violence. As part of a defence of multiculturalism, May distinguishes between race and ethnicity, and 19 argues that while categorizations based on race have historically always been 20 essentialist, and associated with hierarchy and exploitation, categorizations by 21 ethnicity or nationhood need not be essentialized, nor do they necessarily entail 22 exclusion and conflict (Jenkins, 1997).

Ethnicity

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As used in these contexts, 'ethnicity' has been stripped of virtually all the biological connotations of 'race', and the use of the plural 'ethnicities' is 26 intended to signal a clean break with essentialism and a recognition of diversity and difference; similarly, the use of 'racisms' recognizes that 'there is no 28 one monolithic racism but numerous historically situated racisms' (Back, 29 1996, p. 9). But ethnicity too can be used in an essentialist way, even when referring to social and cultural, rather than biological and hereditary, difference: 31 culture rather than biology is conceived as an essential characteristic of a 32 particular group. Some of the literature on the Irish in Britain provides an 33 example. The most influential position on this, at least until recently, was 34 that the Irish were the largest minority ethnic group in Britain ('ethnic' here surely makes sense only as a cultural category), and that their long-term 36 experience of deprivation and disadvantage was under-recognized because of 37 their 'invisibility' (Hickman and Walter, 1997). The claim about the size of the Irish minority is based on the assumption that everyone with at least one Irish-born parent should be counted (and will self-categorize) as Irish, and this was accepted without argument by the 'Parekh Report' (Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 2000, pp. 31, 374), which declared

that, with an estimated population of 1,969,000 in England and Wales, the Irish were 'by far the largest migrant community' (the figure was arrived at by multiplying the number of Irish-born people recorded by the 1991 census by 2.5). In the event, 641,804 people in England and Wales described themselves as ethnically Irish in the 2001 census (Office of National Statistics, 2003). Howard (2006) describes the campaign by 'ethnic activists' for a question about Irish ethnicity to be included in the 2001 census, and what he sees as their special pleading after the results appeared, and showed that nothing like the predicted number of people saw themselves as Irish, or at least defined themselves as such for census purposes. Howard argues that the campaign to include the category 'Irish' in the ethnicity options in the census was a predictable consequence of policies of multiculturalism, which depend on the official recognition and institutionalization of a range of ethnic groups; if a group is excluded from an existing system of ethnic classification, it can be expected to mobilize for its inclusion. Official 'ethnic' categories are thus the product of political pressures and decisions within the context of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism and its Critics

Policies of multiculturalism have long been attacked by the political right, since they first emerged as an alternative to assimilation, initially in the Greater London Council and London local authorities in the early 1980s. The basis of this attack is essentially that multiculturalism undermines national unity and identity and is thus unpatriotic (May, 2002). More recently, as immigration has acquired a renewed political salience with the enlargement of the European Union in May 2004, such policies have been criticized from elsewhere on the political spectrum, and on rather less familiar grounds. One strand of criticism can be associated with the French republican tradition, and insists that no ethnic 27 or cultural group should have any special legal standing; what matters is shared citizenship, and (in principle) equality in education, housing, and employment. This is why the idea of using a census to count the size of minority ethnic groups is anathema to many politicians and social commentators in France. A more influential kind of criticism has been articulated since 2005 by the Commission for Racial Equality and latterly by its successor the Equality and 33 Human Rights Commission, both chaired by Trevor Phillips. As expressed on the CRE's website (see the page on 'Integration, multiculturalism and the CRE', archived since the reorganization at http://83.137.212.42/sitearchive/ cre/diversity/integration/index.html, accessed 24.2.2008), the argument is that multiculturalism has led to more polarized communities and promoted social and residential segregation. Multiculturalism is said to be characterized by particularism rather than universalism, and a stress on group differences rather than common identity and membership of some wider society (such as

might be represented by 'Britishness'). It is criticized for claiming that 'all cultures are of equal value and must be publicly recognized as such', and accommodated by the 'wider society' without any expectation of reciprocation or compromise. It is said to entail a view of ethnic and cultural groups as closed and conservative in their beliefs and practices, and as regarding membership of these groups as the key defining feature of the identity of their members. The results, it is said, are that public policy is shaped on the basis of dubious assumptions that cultural organizations represent the interests of minority ethnic groups more authentically than any other organizations can, and thus participation in institutions and political activities based on cultural identity is privileged over engagement with common democratic processes and involvement in the civic and political institutions of the wider society.

'Sleepwalking to Segregation'?

Multiculturalism's recognition of difference is then blamed for a supposed 15 increase in social and residential segregation. Phillips made a speech in 16 September 2005 on 'Sleepwalking to segregation' after '7/7' (the attacks by 17 Islamist suicide bombers on the London transport network on 7 July 2005). He revived the long-expressed fear that parts of British cities would soon 19 experience the 'hyper-segregation' and ghettoization of many urban areas in the USA. This anxiety had to some extent been laid to rest, or at least shown 21 to be exaggerated, by the findings of the 1991 census (Ratcliffe, 1996), but 22 Phillips apparently accepted the claim, to be found in much of the media and some political rhetoric, that it had increased more recently (the latest 24 Census findings, which suggest the opposite, are discussed below). In the 25 CRE/Phillips argument, segregation is bad by definition, because it prevents 26 integration, the preferred policy goal, and integration is distinguished from 27 assimilation, defined on the website cited above as (in the form it took in the 1950s and 1960s):

the absorption of minority migrant communities into the majority community with no noticeable effect on the culture and way of life of the majority, while expecting that the culture and way of life minorities brought with them would disappear.

Minority cultures are not to be suppressed in order to establish a shared identity of Britishness, but they are to co-exist with this 'national identity' in 'a common sense of belonging'. Phillips describes integration as 'a two-way street', meaning that 'settled communities accept that new people will bring change with them', and the newcomers reciprocate by accepting that they too will need to change.

There are problems with some of these formulations; for example, how long does it take to become a settled community, and how long does

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one remain a newcomer? While Phillips was writing in the aftermath of the 7 July bombings, he may also have had in mind the recent arrival in Britain of migrants from central and eastern Europe, to whom the term 'newcomers' could be applied more accurately than to the British-born suicide bombers. The implications of this new pattern of migration for concepts of multiculturalism, integration, and Britishness are discussed below. A more obvious problem with Phillips' account is that the weight of evidence suggests that residential segregation on ethnic lines has declined rather than increased since 1991. The interpretation of the census data is complex and has been disputed by geographers and demographers (Simpson, 2004; 2005; Johnston et al., 2005), but the data certainly do not provide clear support for Phillips' thesis about increasing segregation – which is not to deny that some members of some groups, in some parts of the country, do live in highly segregated conditions.

Segregation and Integration

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Simpson (2007) gives a clear and accessible account of the main issues, in 16 terms both of demography and of the implications of his analysis for public policy. He argues that the census figures do not support either 'white flight' 18 or 'Muslim self-segregation' arguments, and that some degree of concentration of ethnic groups is inevitable, for purely demographic reasons. The argument, in summary, is this: initial immigration follows demand for labour in urban 21 areas, and brings people to particular localities where cheap rented housing is available. Friends and family members follow the pioneer immigrants into the same places. If the minority ethnic population in a locality increases and the white population decreases, we should not assume that this is because of movement and retreat; births and deaths change populations naturally, and since most immigrants are in their twenties, they have many years ahead of them in which they are 'much more likely to have children than to die' (Simpson, 2007, p. 5). Housing shortages in the areas of original settlement create pressure for movement elsewhere, and those who move, and who move furthest away, tend to be those who are relatively advantaged, for example, in 31 terms of income and marketable skills. This process of dispersal can lead to new clusters of minority ethnic populations outside the original areas of settlement. and Simpson concludes that concentrations of minority populations can thus 34 grow without any segregation, and in fact with more mixing.

Between 1991 and 2001, all minority ethnic populations in Britain, except for Chinese and African groups, grew more through natural change than through immigration, as is to be expected a generation or so after the period of initial settlement. But this happened with no increase in segregation; instead, for all minority groups there was a decrease in the 'index of dissimilarity'. For example, in 1991, the index of dissimilarity (which measures evenness of distribution) for Pakistanis was 75.1, and in 2001 it was 71.7; it would

be 100 if all Pakistanis lived in areas where no members of any other group lived. It shows that the Pakistani population became more dispersed, with its members more likely to live in ethnically mixed areas. The other index used by Simpson, the index of isolation, measures lack of exposure to other ethnic groups; it would also be 100 if all members of a particular group lived in areas where no one else lived. In 2001, on average, whites lived in areas that were 93.5% white (95.3% in 1991); for all other groups, the figure was under 20% – that is, minority ethnic people tend to live in ethnically mixed areas, not areas in which their own group predominates. The index of isolation increased for African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese groups, but this is purely because these were the groups whose size grew most between 1991 11 and 2001. The third measure used by Simpson is the number of 'polarized 12 enclaves' - wards in which one minority group is dominant. The number of these remained tiny over the decade, at eight in both 1991 and 2001. In fact, 14 there was movement away from the areas of the greatest concentration of 15 their population by all minority ethnic groups, and movement into areas of 16 lower concentration, in a process of dispersal and mixing, not self-segregation 17 and retreat. Looking at the local authorities in which at least one ward had a minority white population in 2001, Simpson finds only two cases where 19 there was movement out on the part of whites and a movement in on the 20 part of BME groups. The pattern one would find if increasing ghettoization 21 was happening, as a result of white flight and minority self-segregation, thus 22 barely exists; the two cases identified by Simpson, Harrow, and Waltham Forest are ethnically diverse areas in which there is no ward in which the 24 white population is less than a quarter of the total. Thus, figures that have 25 been used to show increasing segregation, such as the forecast Simpson (2007) makes for Birmingham, that white people will be in a minority by 2027, in 27 fact reflect only the natural growth of populations in which there are more births than deaths; and in 2007, Birmingham was still ethnically diverse, 29 with a white population about twice the size of the population of Pakistani 30

Figures and projections derived from censuses of course have their limi-32 tations: a full census is conducted only every ten years, and even then not 33 everyone is counted; homeless people and people in institutional care or custody are not counted, and nor, on the whole, are Gypsy and Traveller 35 communities (treated as a distinct ethnic group by the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000)). Furthermore, as was noted above 37 in the case of the Irish, the ethnic groups covered by the census and other 38 surveys are social constructions and subject to change over time; Simpson (2007) gives the example of 'British Bangladeshi' as an ethnic category that 40 many people might find acceptable in 2007, but was barely available ten years before. Population surveys in Britain have still hardly begun to take account of the East European migrants who began to appear as a major element in media panics about migration after the enlargement of the European Union in

- May 2004, forming a relatively new target for racist and xenophobic fears and
- media panics. With all due qualifications, though, the Phillips/CRE analysis –
- 3 that segregation has increased, and that this is at least partly because of the
- excesses of policies of multiculturalism does not survive scrutiny in the light
- of the work of geographers and demographers.

The Politics of Identity

That analysis, however, reflected a widespread set of concerns. Simpson (2007) concludes his paper by asking why such persistent political attention is paid to segregation, and why political discourse tends to exaggerate the differences among ethnic groups. A possible answer is in the rise of 'the new identity politics' (Muir, 2007), a result of the forces of globalization and in particular the greatly increased scale of movement of peoples, whether in pursuit of economic opportunities or in flight from social dislocation, conflict, and war. An important outcome has been a dramatic increase in the number of ethnic and cultural groups with substantial populations in Britain. Treating language as an indicator of identity, the CRE (2007) reports that when the census team in 2001 consulted with local authorities about 17 what languages should be used for the dissemination of census forms and information, they obtained a list of 24. The census itself showed that around three million people in Britain were born in countries where English is not the first language, but many of them will have been competent in English; the problem for those concerned with segregation and separation - social if not geographical - is people who are not competent in English. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion, established by the government in August 2006, made a particular point in its report, published in June 2007, of questioning whether local authorities should continue automatically to translate their materials into locally used languages, and suggested a more selective approach, based on assessment of need and the vulnerability of particular groups (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007, p. 159). Translations into a wide variety of languages are clearly a product of a commitment to policies of multiculturalism, so the Commission's scepticism about their effects is an aspect of its scepticism about these policies more generally. 33

Muir (2007, p. 4) suggests that the mobilities of globalization have 'led some to fear that older forms of solidarity and identity are being weakened while all too familiar tensions and hostilities have gained a new lease of life'. These are the tensions of racism and xenophobia, which of course arose in part from 'older forms of identity'. As Simpson (2007) argues, we should not assume, as politicians, often do assume, that the erosion of old identities is always a negative and regrettable process; indeed, the hardening and strengthening of some such identities into what Giddens (1994) calls 'fundamentalisms'

could be a major source of racist and nationalist, as well as religious and cultural, hostility. It is this kind of consideration that has traditionally led the political left to be wary of identities based on national tradition and appeals to patriotism, but Muir (2007, p. 5) argues that a sense of national identity is necessary for the realization of some of the 'key collective goals' of the left in Britain, such as support for public goods like the health service and greater participation in civic and political activities. Hence, the revival of interest in 'Britishness' and what this means, which according to Gordon Brown (2006) includes 'a sense of fair play, a belief in individual liberty and a sense of civic responsibility'. Whether there is anything particularly 'British' about this list is open to question, and it is vague enough to command general 11 assent (which was perhaps the intention); it is quite compatible with the 12 established appeal to Britishness, and sometimes Englishness, as a justification for xenophobia and nationalism, often expressed politically as opposition to 14 the European Union. But the fact that the liberal, social democratic left has begun to explore the meanings of Britishness as part of its concern 16 with questions of citizenship and social cohesion (ETHNOS, 2005) reflects a 17 growing sense that the question of identity has both become problematic (it can no longer be taken for granted) and is crucial for the achievement of peaceful, 19 reasonably harmonious social relations and a safe, mutually supportive fabric of social life. National identity, it is argued, needs to interact with local 21 senses of identity and belonging in the interests of 'community cohesion' -22 authoritatively defined as the means of reducing inter-ethnic conflict (Cantle, 2001; 2005).

Racism, Anti-racism, and Diversity

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The catalyst for the community cohesion agenda, and the origin of widespread anxieties about segregation and identity, was the rioting in Bradford, Burnley, 27 and Oldham in the early summer of 2001. While the vocabulary of 'community cohesion' tends to avoid specific engagement with issues of racism, there is no 29 doubt that racist hostilities and exclusions lay behind much of the anger and 30 resentment that were eventually expressed in collective violence (for Oldham in particular, see Ray and Smith, 2004; Ray et al., 2004). Like 'race', racism is 32 difficult to define. Back (1996, p. 9) discusses the development of the term as 33 he moves towards his own definition (I have removed several references from the quotation): 35

Early writers concentrated on criticizing the legitimacy of the 'idea of race' or they accepted the existence of 'races' and focused on the way in which they were constructed in congenitally superior/inferior relationships. I will refer to racism as an ideology that defines social collectivities in terms of 'natural' and immutable biological differences. These are invested with negative connotations of cultural difference and inferiority, whereby the presence of other 'races' can be correlated with the economic and social health of either a

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- specific region or the nation as a whole. Racism is defined within particular historical and
- 2 social contexts where past racial ideology can be used alongside new elements; thus there
- 3 is no one monolithic racism but numerous historically situated racisms.
- This is a useful explanation in that it acknowledges much of the complexity of racism and the ways in which it is expressed, and Back's work itself fully illustrates this complexity in showing how racist sentiments and attitudes are often only one element in subtle and nuanced relationships among young people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Arguably, though, Back's definition does not cover the full range of ways in which racism is manifested in contemporary Britain (and elsewhere). Back (1996, p. 67) himself writes of the 'new racism' that defines outsiders (in this case, Vietnamese people) in terms of cultural rather than 'racial' difference, and 12 this shift from biology to culture is also identified by Wieviorka (2002) as an important development in European racism since 1945. Racist rhetoric came to place less emphasis on a biologically based hierarchy of superiority and inferiority, and instead argued that cultural differences could be such as to 16 produce an inherent incompatibility between national or European values and 17 practices and those of some minority groups (Wieviorka, 2002).

This process, of defining and justifying racist hatred in cultural rather than 19 biological terms, can be seen, for example, in the propaganda of the British National Party, which has increasingly been directed at 'Asians', especially Muslims, on the grounds of cultural incompatibility, while disavowing overt 22 racism. Most of the white perpetrators of racist violence interviewed by Ray et al. (2004) also denied holding racist views, even when there was plentiful evidence that their offending had involved terms of racist abuse. Since they were quite ready to talk about their use of violence, it is unlikely that they were simply giving the interviewer what they judged would be socially acceptable (or politically correct) answers. While this may have motivated some (just as it may partly explain why broader surveys consistently show low levels of support for overtly racist opinions (e.g., Ipsos MORI, 2007)), another interpretation is that at a rational, cognitive level, they did not regard themselves as racist, at least in relation to a biological conception of race. What they felt is another matter, and Ray et al. argue that strong, barely acknowledged emotions of shame and resentment lay behind their outbursts of violence against South Asian people whom they perceived as undeservedly more successful, socially and economically, than themselves. Very few articulated racism as an ideology, and they generally saw themselves as disadvantaged relative to their South Asian victims, not in a position of racial, or even cultural, superiority. It is clear that some forms of racism, or some racisms, cannot be understood in terms of an ideology of superiority derived from scientific rationalizations of imperialism, but in terms that are cultural, situationally specific, and rooted in emotions rather than beliefs.

Further shifts in the meanings of racism have emerged from the new patterns of migration in the twenty-first century. In Britain and other Western European countries, refugees and asylum seekers from countries devastated by war, ethnic conflict, or civil breakdown, in parts of Africa and the Middle East, have featured prominently in political and media discourse, often with an implication that their claims to be fleeing from persecution and possible death are false, and that they are actually motivated by the hope of economic improvement (see Chapter 8 by Claire Cooper,'s in this book). This is certainly the motive attributed to those who are supposedly the latest threat, migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, and particularly from Poland, since May 2004, when ten countries were admitted to membership. An Ipsos 11 MORI survey (2007) found that anxieties about immigration had grown 12 over the past five years, and that generally positive attitudes towards ethnic 13 diversity co-existed with a widely held view – among people from minority 14 ethnic groups as well as the white population - that there were too many 15 immigrants in Britain. The survey cites (p. 4) the European Social Survey 16 of 2002-03, which found that only a quarter of British respondents would 17 like to live in an area where almost nobody was of a different ethnic group than themselves, a lower proportion than in other European countries apart 19 from Germany and Sweden. On the other hand, according to Ipsos MORI 20 (2007), more people identified immigration and race relations as the most 21 important political issue than any other, ahead of education, health, and 22 international terrorism. In relation to migrants from within Europe, many of whom intend their stay in Britain to be temporary, racist sentiments are most 24 often justified not on biological or even cultural, but on economic grounds -25 though no doubt economic arguments often mask less socially acceptable 26 hostilities. Enthusiasts for a globalized economy must logically support the 27 free movement of labour across national boundaries (Legrain, 2007), and it is widely accepted that migrants have contributed to the British economy 29 by bringing scarce skills, particularly to the building industry, and being 30 prepared to do low-paid, often seasonal work that no one else will do, particularly in agriculture (Travis, 2007). The dominant political rhetoric, 32 however, emphasizes the economic threats posed by migrants, in undercutting 33 wages, taking jobs that would otherwise be done by British citizens, and placing an extra burden on local housing, health, and social services – and the criminal 35 justice system.

As the expressions of racism have become more complex and their targets more diverse, anti-racist policies have had to discard the relatively simple formulations used when they were first articulated in local government, welfare, and criminal justice organizations in the 1980s. Then, racism tended to be seen as monolithic, all-pervasive, and institutionalized (cf. Macpherson, 1999); the political conception of 'blackness' criticized by Modood (1994) was generally accepted without much critical scrutiny; and multiculturalism was rejected as a patronizing, if well-intentioned, concept that was a legacy of

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colonialism and served only to reinforce the 'power of the white community'
[Gardiner, 1985]. Walker (2002) discusses the origins of anti-racist discourse
in the field of social work, the successful efforts by groups of black practitioners
to incorporate it into social work training in the late 1980s, and the eventual
reaction in the name of common sense and resistance to 'political correctness'
on the part of Conservative ministers and media commentators. Practical
competences came to replace anti-racist and anti-oppressive values at the core
of the curriculum, and the discourse of diversity joined, if it did not quite
replace, that of anti-racism. 'Diversity' is clearly a broader, more diffuse term
than 'anti-racism', and it perhaps lacks the same sense of political purpose and
commitment to action. It covers, in a sample text from 1995 cited by Walker
(2002, p. 111):

people from ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, people with HIV/AIDS, people with different religions and cultures, people with different class backgrounds, people whose first language is not English, gay and lesbian people.

As Walker notes, in the discourse of diversity, the emphasis is on numerical minorities and lack of representation, not on the experience of exclusion and disadvantage. It is about valuing and respecting difference, not taking political action against discrimination. In view of the shifts in meaning of 'race' and 'racism' outlined here, however, and the demographic changes that have accompanied them, it has become impossible to use the terms with the former sense of certainty and confidence. A simple black/white binary division, in which the whites have all the power and only they can be racist (since racism involves not only the expression of prejudice but the exercise of power), is inadequate for understanding the complexities of inter-cultural relations, tensions, and conflicts in globalized twenty-first century societies.

Conclusion

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This chapter has tried to explain some of the complexities and ambiguities of the key concepts and debates involved in discussing race and racism. It has argued that the term from which the others flow, 'race', is a social and historical construction whose meanings and uses have changed over time. It denotes an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983), but an imagined community that has real, material effects, through processes of exclusion, discrimination, and violence. This sense of 'race' is far removed from that given to it by biologists and psychologists who, with or without the aid of Darwin's account of evolution, claimed that it had an objective, scientific status which allowed for the hierarchical ordering of hereditary human types. While much of their work now seems (or ought to seem) little more than historical curiosity, it is important to remember that scientific racism is far from dead, and continues, lightly disguised to inform supposedly objective studies of the distribution

of intelligence across social groups. Contrary to the assumptions of some commentators in the period immediately after the Second World War, the biological conception of race survived the holocaust.

Rejecting biologically essentialist conceptions of race, social scientists and, for different reasons, political activists, began in the 1960s to use the term to describe social divisions and patterns of exploitation and discrimination, particularly in the USA and Europe. 'Black' became a politically charged term, denoting the experience of racism perpetrated by dominant white groups; later, it became the banner under which a wide variety of disadvantaged groups united in an anti-racist struggle. But this was itself criticized from the early 1990s for substituting a cultural and political essentialism for a biological one: 11 ethnicity, the term preferred to 'race' because it carried less biological baggage 12 and recognized that the categories in question were socially constructed, could 13 itself be used in narrow and exclusionary ways. The case of the supposedly 14 distinctive ethnic character of the Irish in Britain provides an example. It was 15 argued (Modood, 1994) that different minority ethnic groups had distinctive 16 experiences of racism and discrimination which needed to be acknowledged. 17 Furthermore, ethnic identities were not simple and singular but complex and multiple: in a world of global flows and mobility, identities were increasingly 19 hybrid. Patterns of migration also became more diffuse and varied, bringing to 20 Western Europe and North America people with whom there had previously 21 been little direct interaction, for example, from parts of the former Soviet 22 Union and Yugoslavia.

Policies of multiculturalism, entailing the institutional recognition of a range 24 of ethnic groups, developed to take account of this increasing diversity. After 25 the riots in northern English towns in 2001, however, and still more after the suicide bombings in London by British-born Islamists in July 2005, these 27 policies came under attack, not only from their traditional enemies on the 28 political right but from Trevor Phillips the Chair of the Commission for 29 Racial Equality. He argued that multiculturalism encouraged a sense of the 30 essentialism of difference and, by accepting uncritically the equal validity of the beliefs and attitudes of all minority cultural groups, promoted mutual ignorance 32 and suspicion instead of participation by all groups in common social and 33 political institutions. In particular, he blamed multiculturalism for fostering 34 increased residential segregation, which had been identified as an important 35 contributor to the divisions and hostilities that lay behind the 2001 riots (Cantle, 2001). Work by demographers and geographers suggests that in fact 37 there is very little sign of the processes of 'white flight' or Muslim withdrawal 38 into mono-cultural enclaves identified as the motors of ghettoization and ethnic separation, but the critique of multiculturalism has led to a new stress in 40 government policy on national identity - what it means to be British, and how a shared sense of Britishness can be encouraged. 42

Understandings of racism also became more complex in response to the growing complexity of patterns of discrimination and inter-group conflict.

The old political conception of racism as 'prejudice plus power' came to seem inadequate to reflect new patterns of hostility and conflict, in which whites constructed themselves as victims, and tensions between minority groups became increasingly apparent (as in the violence between young black and Asian people in Lozells, Birmingham, in October 2005). While there was some evidence of a decline in overtly racist attitudes among the white population by 2005 compared with five years before (and certainly compared with three decades earlier), there was also evidence of a heightened concern about immigration, not only among whites but among minority ethnic groups. In response to these contradictions and the increase in the number of minority ethnic groups with substantial populations in Britain, as a result of new patterns of movement and migration, commentators began to think of racism as complex and polymorphous, its expression varying over time, place, and social and political context. It followed that anti-racist strategies needed to 14 evolve beyond the simple didactic certainties of their original formulation, and from this process emerged the concept of 'diversity', encompassing not only ethnic difference but differences of faith, (dis)ability, and sexual preference. 17 Public bodies were encouraged to develop policies that recognized and valued diversity; they were to foster diversity among their own staff, and ensure that they provided services appropriate to the different needs of different groups. Anti-racism's focus on relations of oppression and subordination was 21 replaced by a blander, but perhaps more politically manageable, commitment to achieving a diversity of services that mirrored the diversity of service users. This is the diversity agenda to which all the agencies of the criminal justice system are ostensibly committed.

Summary

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This chapter explains some of the complexities and ambiguities of the key concepts and debates involved in discussions of race and racism, and provides a grounding for the chapters that follow. It argues that while the term 'race' is a social and historical construction whose meanings and uses have changed over time, to some degree 'scientific' racism persists. Rejecting biologically essentialist conceptions of race, social scientists and, for different reasons, political activists, began in the 1960s to use the term 'race' to describe social divisions and patterns of exploitation and discrimination. 'Black' became a politically charged term, denoting the experience of racism perpetrated by dominant white groups; later it became the banner under which a wide variety of disadvantaged groups united in an anti-racist struggle. But this was itself criticized from the early 1990s for substituting a cultural and political essentialism for a biological one: ethnicity, the term preferred to 'race' because it carried less biological baggage and

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recognized that the categories in question were socially constructed, and could itself be used in narrow and exclusionary ways. Furthermore, ethnic identities were not simple and singular but complex and multiple: in a world of global flows and mobility, identities were increasingly hybrid.

Policies of multiculturalism, entailing the institutional recognition of a range of ethnic groups, developed to take account of this increasing diversity. After the riots in northern English towns in 2001, however, and still more after the suicide bombings in London by British-born Islamists in July 2005, multiculturalism came under attack, and was blamed by the Commission for Racial Equality for fostering residential segregation and contributing to the divisions and hostilities that lay behind the 2001 riots. Although work by demographers and geographers suggests that in fact there is very little sign of the processes of 'white flight' or Muslim withdrawal into mono-cultural enclaves, the critique of multiculturalism has led to a new stress in government policy on national identity and on encouraging a shared sense of Britishness.

Understandings of racism also became more complex in response to the growing complexity of patterns of discrimination and inter-group conflict. The old political conception of racism as 'prejudice plus power' came to seem inadequate to reflect new patterns of hostility and conflict, in which whites constructed themselves as victims and tensions between minority groups became increasingly apparent (as in the violence between young black and Asian people in Birmingham in October 2005). While there was some evidence of a decline in overtly racist attitudes among the white population, there was also evidence of a heightened concern about immigration amongst all ethnic groups. In response to such developments, racism has increasingly come to be seen as complex and polymorphous, its expression varying over time, place, and social and political context. It followed that anti-racist strategies needed to evolve beyond the simple didactic certainties of their original formulation, and from this process emerged the concept of 'diversity', encompassing not only ethnic difference but differences of faith, (dis)ability, and sexual preference. Anti-racism's focus on relations of oppression and subordination was replaced by a blander, more politically manageable, commitment to achieving a diversity of services that mirrored the diversity of service users. This is the diversity agenda to which all the agencies of the criminal justice system are ostensibly committed.

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