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Author name: Singh, G.
Title: Social research and 'race': developing a critical paradigm
Article & version: Published version
Original citation & hyperlink:
Singh, G. (2009) 'Social research and 'race': developing a critical paradigm'. In J. Schostak & J. Schostak *Researching Violence, Democracy and the Rights of People* (pp.87-99). Abingdon: Routledge: 87-99
http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415478786/

Available in the CURVE Research Collection: March 2012

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Chapter 5

Social research and 'race'[1]
Developing a critical paradigm

Gurnam Singh

Introduction

This chapter engages in a critical discussion of the different orientations of social research with black people (throughout the paper the term 'black' will be used in reference to black and minority ethnic (BME) groups). In doing so, it seeks to develop a model that is more responsive to oppressed groups whilst remaining committed to methodological rigour. The first section provides a historical context to the orientation of social research with BME individuals and communities, outlining, in particular, the ways social research has often acted to generate and reinforce racist oppression. The second section engages more directly with methodological issues and delineates the key components underpinning an emancipatory research paradigm.

Under conditions of relative powerlessness, black people are more likely to come under the gaze of state authorities and professionals. This has ramifications for both the practice of social research by members of these professions, and the collection and keeping of information relating to minority populations (Johnson 1996). Research activity in such circumstances takes on specific and conflicting functions. On the one hand, it can become complicit in reinforcing and reproducing oppression by seeking to explain the problems faced by black people in terms of their individual and collective (cultural) pathologies. One can see how through a process of racialization, research on minorities in Britain has tended to reinforce stereotypical and colonial constructions of black people (Ahmad and Sheldon 1993). Whilst the field of epidemiological research is particularly culpable in this respect (Bhopal 1992), there are many examples of the way researchers have legitimized racist oppression by making direct and indirect associations between physiology and real or imagined phenotypical characteristics and/or traditional cultural practice. Ahmad and Sheldon (1993) point out how such tendencies are evident in the ideological constructions of such things as "black people's reproductive capacity, sexuality, intelligence, ability to control the universe, 'rascality', mental breakdown, desire to run away from their slave-masters, lack of political achievements, and so on" (Ahmad and Sheldon 1993: 18).

In educational research there is a tendency to pathologize black people

through the construction of deficit models which tend to focus on the individual weaknesses or differences as 'a problem' rather than on the institution as a whole. As pointed out in a recently published systematic review of widening participation:

> The terminology being used to refer to students from non-traditional backgrounds fuels the dominance of the 'deficit' model. Such students are frequently referred to as 'widening participation students', and moreover, contrasted with those from more traditional backgrounds. Institutions refer to the need to identify students from non-traditional backgrounds for tracking and monitoring purposes which, despite good intentions, fosters a 'them and us' divide.
>
> (HEFCE 2006)

On the other hand, through connecting individual problems to social, structural, economic and political domains, social research can and should function to counteract the processes of discrimination and oppression (Everitt et al. 1992).

Historical perspective: models of research

Although the level of interest in ethnic minority and refugee communities across Europe has never been greater, sadly, questions about their welfare have always been subservient to larger political concerns with the 'problem' of immigration and integration. It is not surprising then that, with few exceptions, much of the research on ethnic minorities has been problematic (Ahmad and Sheldon 1993; Humphries and Truman 1994). Three perspectives have characterized most public policy discussions and research about the provision of welfare services to members of minority ethnic communities in Britain: 'positivistic', 'phenomenological' and 'critical'.

Positivistic perspectives

The dominant and perhaps most enduring perspective is one that has set out to address 'race' from, essentially, an 'information-gathering exercise'. This policy-oriented research paradigm has been born out of both liberal sentiments to help black immigrants and refugees to integrate, and right-wing fears about maintaining social order and controlling immigration (Layton-Henry 1984). Primarily through the use of quantitative methodologies, certain facts about the scale and nature of minority populations, coupled with the range of problems they may be encountering, have been seen as critical to informing the decision-making process. In Britain, for example, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, large demographic surveys into 'race relations' set out to identify both the number of minorities in the country and the extent of discrimination and

disadvantage they were encountering (Rose 1969; Daniel 1968; Smith 1977; Brown 1984). The positivist perspective has continued to hold the centre stage as can be seen in, for example, the work of Modood et al. (1997). Whilst there is no denying the value of empirical evidence that exposes discrimination and disadvantage, there are many problems with such an approach, mostly ones that echo the more general critiques of positivism made by feminist researchers (Roberts 1981; Harding 1987; Letherby 2003). Without delving into a detailed critique of the positivist empirical paradigm, I would like to offer a few words of caution.

First, whilst statistics may reveal interesting features about, for example, the age profile of a particular minority community, they are unable to tell us much about the particular needs of children and elders in that community, which may be influenced by a complex range of factors. Moreover, this type of policy research does little to help one understand the underlying social and political processes that may result in the production of social problems, such as, for example, higher rates of physical abuse and neglect amongst minority families (Creighton 1992). Further, the potential consequence of simplistic correlations based on statistical averages runs the danger of reinforcing stereotypical images of minority communities. Ahmad and Sheldon (1993), for instance, highlight examples where epidemiological studies that reveal disproportionate levels of disease or ill-health amongst minorities uncritically attribute these different levels to cultural and ethnic factors:

> Higher rates of consanguinity among Asians, particularly Pakistanis, in Britain has become the ultimate 'explanatory hypothesis' within medicine. This includes serious researchers who wish to disentangle the complex interplay between socio-economic, lifestyle, environmental and health service factors in influencing, for example, birth outcome – perinatal mortality and congenital malformations. A larger group, however, is happy to hang anything from poor birth 'outcome' to blood disorders, cancers, diseases of the eye, and much more onto this new found explanatory peg.
>
> (Ahmad and Sheldon 1993: 21)

Phenomenological perspectives

The second perspective is one that has sought to develop a more 'textured' dimension to 'race'-related questions in the lives of members of black communities. Here minorities with particular attributed labels (e.g. immigrants and asylum seekers) are not reduced to 'social facts'. To the contrary, through qualitative methodologies such as focus groups, participant observation and life-history work, researchers have attempted to map out the complex texture of their lives. Another important aspect of this paradigm is the rejection of

the 'problem' finding/curing mentality and a corresponding concentration on describing the concrete interactions of minority communities, both between each other and with state agencies. Above all, this approach attempts to subjectivize otherwise highly objectified and abstract conceptualizations of black minority communities. At the most fundamental level there is a change from enumerating 'the exotic' to describing, with some level of understanding, the needs and aspirations of black ethnic minority communities in terms of their new cultural contexts and perspectives. These inevitably constitute a complex synthesis of past and present. By placing the concepts of culture and ethnicity as central to the analysis, texts written during the late 1970s and 1980s began to influence social work practice of the time (Cashmore 1979; Watson 1977; Khan 1979; Cheetham 1972).

However, a major criticism with what became known as the 'ethnic sensitivity approach' was the tendency to underplay the structural and political issues centred on the unresolved issues of racism, poverty and social exclusion (Ely and Denny 1987; Dominelli 1988). Indeed, by focusing too narrowly on black minority communities, explanations for the problems they were facing tended to reinforce and reproduce the kinds of frameworks emerging out of the black family pathology model, evident in much of the social work and health literature of the 1970s and 1980s (Lawrence 1982; Barn 1994; Prevatt-Goldstein 1999).

Emerging from these early attempts to address questions of ethnic and cultural difference (by mostly white researchers) was a series of misleading stereotypical representations of black communities. For example, studies often portrayed Afro-Caribbean families as being decadent, culturally deficient, disorganized and disintegrating – the high incidence of single parenthood, offending behaviour and low educational achievement being seen as evidence for this assertion (Cashmore and Troyna 1982). On the other hand, Asian family life was portrayed as an island of morality in a sea of (Western) decadence. It attempted to take a positive view of how the Asian community, in contrast to broader trends in society of chronic family breakdown (evidenced by high divorce rates and growth of single parenthood) and the contingent problems of juvenile delinquency and homelessness, had managed to retain a sense of piety, financial independence and social and familial cohesiveness. Ironically, the problems with such families were seen to lie in their inherent rigid traditional conservative outlook and repressive 'feudal' familial regimes (Singh 1992).

One of the major preoccupations of researchers was the issue of 'cultural conflict'. This referred to second-generation black young people who were seen to be trapped between the traditional expectations of their parents, on the one hand, and the conflicting social norms associated with Western culture into which they were being assimilated, on the other (Watson 1977). Particularly in relation to what became popularly known as the phenomenon of Asian girls running away from home to escape forced marriages, a number of influential

social work texts during the 1960s and 1970s sought to construct 'cultural conflict' within Asian family life as a matter of fact (e.g. Fitzherbert 1967; Davies 1967; Cheetham 1972; Triseliotis 1972). These highly problematic and simplistic representations were given official credibility by organizations such as the Community Relations Council (CRC), which, ironically, was established to promote a better understanding of the 'ethnic minorities' and their respective cultures (Lawrence 1982: 112). It wasn't until the late 1980s that critiques of this approach began to register and somewhat ironically, it was young Asian women social workers and researchers that offered some of the most powerful challenges. Patel (1994), for example, in her research on homelessness amongst young black women, concludes that along with other factors they were running away because of "physical violence, emotional and sexual abuse" (Patel 1994: 35). Thus, whilst researchers were seeking to incorporate a 'race' perspective, there was a tendency to underestimate the importance of class, gender, sexuality and disability, particularly in the context of family violence (Mullender 1996; Mullender et al. 2002).

Leaving aside broader epistemological questions, at the level of research design and execution one can identify key elements that can characterize the failure of both perspectives described above. There has been the tendency to present ethnic identification as a given fact, and ethnic minority groups as being essentially homogeneous and self-contained. Such an approach, where policy makers and service delivery planners seek "to treat all Asian needs as one, or to wish to find a single point of access to the black and minority ethnic population", may be convenient, but it is inappropriate (Johnson 1996: 11). In doing so, a number of critical questions have been ignored.

First, as discussed earlier, quite apart from the variety of religious affiliations and languages involved, there are questions of gender, class and sexuality and their impact on both the ability of members of minority communities to resist oppression and on determining need for delivery of appropriate social services.

Second, research has tended to ignore the relationship between 'white ethnicity' as an undefined entity and 'black ethnicity' as something 'other'. Indeed, the whole question of identity formation and difference as social and psychological mechanisms has received little or no attention within social policy research until fairly recently.

Third, with the exception of feminist researchers, the importance of difference between researcher and researched, and how this may shape the research process – from question formulation through to dissemination of findings – has tended to be neglected. The failure to take into account the cultural, social and economic position of both the researchers and research subjects has resulted in a 'tendency of research to reinforce and contribute to the plethora of stereotypes and derogatory myths that prevail in the dominant society' (Mama 1989: 28) Indeed:

Alternative knowledge claims in and of themselves are rarely threatening to conventional knowledge. Such claims are routinely ignored, discarded, or simply absorbed and marginalised in existing paradigms. Much more threatening is the challenge that alternative epistemologies offer.

(Hill Collins 2000: 270–1)

Critical perspectives

As a direct consequence of the failure of academic and research institutions to develop critical understandings of the politics of research and their own Eurocentric bias (Ladner 1973; Mama 1989), debates within and outside social work emerged during the late 1980s and 1990s. In contrast to the previous perspectives which tended to take a functionalist approach, a critical perspective sets out to make politics, structural inequalities, power and oppression its prime concerns (Everitt et al. 1992; Barn 1994; Trinder 1996).

Drawing on many of the themes of community and radical social work of the 1970s and feminist, anti-racist and more recently anti-disablist, and service-user perspectives, this approach takes on very specific modes. By employing and developing skills and by linking individual concerns to wider social, political and economic factors, perhaps the singularly most important aim of a critical approach is to challenge oppression at all levels (Mullender and Ward 1991). Inevitably, in seeking to confront power relations, one immediately politicizes the process of research. Whilst the collection of good quality information remains important, it can no longer be the only concern for critical researchers. Trinder identifies two specific strands to research that is driven by political rather than 'scientific' or managerial imperatives. First, the researcher/practitioner needs to be located 'alongside members of oppressed groups in a non-hierarchical way, drawing links between an individual's situation and structural factors' (Trinder 1996: 239). The second strand seeks to disrupt the privileged location and knowledge of the expert in order to create space for 'the voices of the oppressed and their subjective experiences' (Trinder 1996: 239).

It is often assumed that in seeking to give 'voice' to the experiences of the oppressed, critical approaches are only interested in qualitative methodologies. Harvey (1990), however, emphasizes the danger of reducing critical social research to one domain alone. He argues that, with an overall aim of unmasking the nature of oppressive social structures, critical researchers should employ a range of methodologies and analytical techniques. Revealing a Marxist orientation, Harvey suggests that critical research can be characterized by a number of key elements of abstraction, namely, 'essence', 'totality', 'praxis', 'ideology', 'history' and 'structure'; but most importantly, they must be rooted in a materialist and dialectical conception of the world. More specifically, Mama (1989), in her study of professional responses to violence against black women in the home, identifies four specific steps that researchers can take to reduce racism

in the research process: first, to minimize the possibility of miscommunication and to rectify some of the power imbalance, 'ethnic matching of researchers' should be considered; second, to give credence and priority to the accounts given by research subjects; and third, to analyse research findings in the light of the collective histories and cultures of minority groups, paying particular attention to colonial conquests, enslavement and economic exploitation. In short, critical researchers should not underestimate the ongoing legacy of the past and how this can affect relationships in the present.

Within the critical model, a three-way mutually beneficial partnership between academic researchers, frontline professionals and research subjects emerges. For academic researchers, one of the obvious benefits of such a partnership is the opportunity to overcome problems in obtaining access to research sites, subjects and, in some instances, funding. For professionals, the opportunity to participate in the construction, execution and dissemination of research offers the potential to enhance professional autonomy and to participate in a process that seeks to promote social change (Everitt et al. 1992; Broad 1994). Finally, for research subjects, the clearest benefits are the possibility of defining research agendas, gaining self-confidence, raising consciousness, and establishing support networks.

The language of classification

In nearly any case of social research, particularly when seeking to explore issues related to social diversity, it will be necessary to classify or label people. The point needs to be reiterated that such classifications need to be seen as a means to an end, and not the object of the study, as Humphries and Truman (1994) point out:

> Studies of different forms of inequality need to differentiate, for instance, the experiences of black people from the experiences of white people, disabled people from those of non-disabled people. However, it is neither the *blackness* or *whiteness* nor the *disability* or *non-disability* that forms the focus of the investigation but the differential *experiences* of being black or white that fundamentally reveal how inequalities are maintained.

(Humphries and Truman, 1994: 3)

Many research texts warn against the dangers of essentialist assumptions, the use of a group label as if it was somehow real and by itself explained difference – and these are not confined to 'race and ethnicity' (Ahmad and Sheldon 1993). Similar dangers can arise in relation to gender (Humphries 1997), religion (Macourt 1995) or sexual relations and family structures – including the often uncontested nature of 'marriage' and household relationships (Graham 1993). Researchers should need no reminding that a person may be 'described' in all of these categories – for example, as a black, female, Buddhist

and (lesbian) lone parent; and disadvantaged or advantaged by membership of each group. Equally, one should pay attention to the undefined 'control' 'white' majority category; very seldom is this group examined or explicitly defined (Frankenberg 1993; Dyer 1997). Therefore, in drawing attention to subdivisions amongst black groups, one should not forget the same consideration applies to the majority 'white' society.

The question may be rephrased – it all may be seen to depend upon how one addresses identity and difference (researcher and researched) within the research process. Spivak (1987) makes an important observation that for very specific, often political, purposes most people operate and deploy a form of 'strategic essentialism' whereby identity is presumed to be 'real' but cannot be said to be 'real' in any other sense that will determine their complete being. The danger is that the label becomes used in place of the person. Most importantly, one also needs to avoid categories that end up racializing individuals and groups. Arguably, if one argues against racism, then logically one must say that 'race' is an invalid empirical category (Miles 1989; Carter 2000). Yet, whatever category one uses, given the wider context, it is likely to assume some degree of racial intent. For example, the religious category Muslim, increasingly employed by social researchers (e.g. Modood *et al.* 1997), has, historically, within the context of Orientalism (Said 1978) and, more recently, Islamophobia, become extensively racialized.

For communication, it remains true that certain stereotypes and clichés, however dangerous, remain necessary; life is really a series of approximations and simplifications. Researchers must communicate, but at the same time be clear about the limitations of the terms and labels they use and how these are understood and mobilized by others. In sum, it is accepted that, as Humphries and Truman (1994) insist, there is no such thing as an unproblematic reality – even research is not based solely on objective knowledge, but on (as well as, in the process, making) constructed reality. Therefore, researchers are faced with the kinds of paradoxes, particularly so since it is often through deploying labels and categories that they exercise power. Perhaps the best that can be hoped for is that labels are used consciously and with the sort of footnote that Barn feels constrained to add to her discussion of anti-discriminatory research in social work: "Although the author accepts the concept of race to be a social construction and not a biological entity, the term is being employed here in the absence of other suitable terminology" (Barn 1994: 55).

It follows that when conducting social research of any kind, one needs to be explicit and aware in our use of such words in conducting and writing up research.

Towards an emancipatory paradigm

So far, I have concentrated on developing a broad discussion of a range of research approaches and how these have historically been deployed to research

black people. I have argued that critical research perspectives are most suited to promote emancipatory goals. In the remainder of this paper, I will develop a more sustained discussion of the research paradigm that underpins emancipatory research. I begin this section with a discussion of the qualitative versus quantitative debate.

Theories of research are often divided into quantitative (emphasizing the collection of numerical data and statistical analysis) or qualitative (emphasizing the non-numerical and interpretative analysis of social phenomena). However, Silverman (2000) suggests that such polarities are problematic in that the resulting antagonisms do not help one group learn from another. Whilst this may be true, in some cases the use of mixed methodologies shows that researchers do value both approaches, but that each paradigm will answer a different question. For some, either approach may be emancipatory. Scott (1999), for example, identifies the strength of quantitative research in revealing the extent and systematic patterning of social inequalities in health and illness, whilst qualitative research brings into focus personal experience.

When it comes to research funding, quantitative is still seen as the gold standard (Forbes and Wainwright 2001). This may in part be due to methods employed within quantitative research tending to produce clear answers, which are easy to reject or accept according to whether or not they favour government policy. The most powerful defence of quantitative research is its claims to objective and value-free enquiry, although this is a claim that has been questioned, notably by feminist researchers (Harding 1987; Letherby 2003).

Bryman (1988) and Hammersley (1993) suggest that qualitative methodology is more likely to empower as it focuses on the self-generated meanings and understandings of participants, rather than on their actions and behaviours alone. It is also particularly useful for the study of sensitive topics and marginalized and/or difficult-to-access groups. This is mainly due to its flexible (and naturalistic) approach, typically using small samples for semi-structured, individual and group interviews intimately linked to agendas that are important to the research subjects. However, the intimacy involved in qualitative research raises additional questions about the identity of the researcher and the influence this may have on what respondents reveal. To conceptualize the knowledge and power differentials, which may facilitate or impede researchers from pursuing anti-racist goals, Boushel (2000) develops a notion of 'experiential affinity' and 'experiential interdependence'. She suggests researchers need to develop a 'costs and benefits' framework to decide what might be the most appropriate course of action. One needs to insert a word of caution about an uncritical acceptance of 'ethnic matching' in research. No one individual possesses by virtue of their ascribed identity, a 'natural' inclination to empower 'their kind'. Whilst, matching may open up the possibility of greater affinity, it doesn't guarantee it. As Ratcliffe points out, 'simply being black is not enough' (Ratcliffe 2004: 163).

Jayartine and Oakley (cited in Hammersley 1993) suggest that researchers

using qualitative methodologies should work towards minimizing power differentials and exploitation. For example, in conducting face-to-face in-depth interviews, researchers should adapt, rephrase and clarify questions. Moreover, they should 'check out' answers as well as observe the body language and demeanour of participants, and query them if necessary. The potential benefits are clear: participant involvement is promoted; through the development of trust and empathy, respondents feel more able to tell their own stories and voice their own views; misunderstandings are likely to be reduced; rapport and validity may be enhanced; and more in-depth information is gained as a result.

Although the benefits outlined above are difficult to deny, qualitative research can be exploitative, particularly when interviews are conducted within a sensitive environment and/or when researching sensitive topics (Finch, quoted in Hammersley 1993). Therefore, the establishment of integrity must be a priority with study participants, and study findings must not be used to increase their oppression. Qualitative approaches are criticized by Forbes and Wainwright (2001) as overly focusing on the micro level at the expense of the macro level. Concentration on lived experience alone may 'blind' researchers to the wider social context.

Whilst qualitative research may also be criticized for its lack of structure, its relative flexibility allows researchers to be more responsive to the requirements of the participants. Conversely, there is a danger of a flexible approach that is not in some way accounted for. As Humphries (1997) warns:

> Commitment to self-reflexivity is fundamental, although this can deteriorate into a self-indulgence which places the researcher as the norm. An emancipatory intent is no guarantee of an emancipatory outcome. A self-critical account that situates the researcher at the centre of the text can perpetuate the dominance our emancipatory intentions hope to fight. Our own frameworks need to be interrogated as we look for the tensions and contradictions in our research practice, paradoxically aware of our own complicity in what we critique
>
> (Humphries 1997: para 4.10)

Research as politics

Whilst the purpose of all research is to generate new insights, a critical anti-racist perspective would seek to extend this remit by identifying political imperatives that transcend the desire to generate new knowledge, theory and insights alone. Thus, anti-racist researchers must seek, as a bare minimum, to diminish the effects of racist oppression for the research subjects. French and Swain (2004), speaking from a disability perspective, propose that emancipatory research needs to goes further in its liberation of the participants: participants should control the research agenda, process and outcome, and the researcher/s should place their knowledge and skill at the disposal of the researched. Whilst

such perspectives offer an important ideal, a more realistic position may be to ensure a high degree of reflexivity and openness between researcher/s and researched in order to develop sensitivity to the potential for oppression at each stage of the research process. Cotterill and Letherby (1993) point out how, even if one has managed to be inclusive and participatory from the outset, participants have little control at the writing-up stage. Ribbons and Edwards (1998) point out that, more often than not, the researcher chooses what to leave in and what to discard. A way to deal with this power imbalance could be to make findings available to research subjects for them to offer their own critiques and conclusion, which in turn could be incorporated into final reporting.

Despite good intentions, social researchers need to be aware of the near impossibility of equalizing the power relationship. In analysing qualitative researchers, Fine (1994) draws attention to the potential for self-deception and the dangers therein. She argues that qualitative researchers often reproduce a 'colonizing discourse' of the 'other' whilst maintaining a self-delusion that they have given voice to the oppressed. The challenge, therefore, for the critical anti-racist researcher is to relay the story of the research subjects; interpretation yes, but total reconstruction, no. Even where the researcher is from the researched 'other' group, s/he cannot assume that membership alone will be sufficient to prevent this from occurring.

Conclusion

Whether or not one feels that research should be a neutral, dispassionate, fact-finding activity, one cannot escape the historical, political and social contexts in which it takes place. The distribution of power within society is undoubtedly influenced by 'race', gender, class and other axes of social differentiation. It follows that the process of research – from funding, the types of questions asked, the methodologies adopted, and the writing-up and dissemination – becomes implicated as political activity, even if this goes unacknowledged. Social research is rarely a benign activity; it serves to explain and explain away, and therefore it can serve different functions. Moreover, depending on such disparate factors as personal motivation, circumstance, funding sources and access arrangements, conflicts of interest will always be a factor. An approach that is complacent about the insidious modalities of power is likely to lead to oppressive outcomes, even where there is no obvious intent. Since people's lives are structured by the unequal distribution of power, social research can either be used to ignore, obscure or reinforce such inequalities, or it can be used to uncover, confront and reduce them (Trinder, 1996). In this paper, I have sought to outline key aspects of an approach that is capable of doing the latter. Yet one needs to be realistic about what can be achieved given the inherent power inequalities in the research process. For example, as no two human beings share exactly the same experience of living, degrees of ontological separation will always exist. A more realistic and honest approach will be where the researcher

seeks to maximize and encourage participation, whilst recognizing the limits of one's own subjectivity.

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Reflections on Singh's chapter

Singh's chapter critically discusses the different orientations of social research with black and minority ethnic groups (BME). He argues that a new model for research is needed, as mainstream models are inappropriate. In particular, being relatively powerless, BME groups more frequently attract "the gaze of state authorities and professionals" who commission research. In this context, research can become "complicit in reinforcing and reproducing oppression". Thus, Singh "seeks to develop a model that is more responsive to oppressed groups whilst remaining committed to methodological rigour". To do so he describes the three perspectives that, for the most part, public policy and research on provision of welfare services have adopted: 'positivistic', 'phenomenological' and 'critical'. In his view, "Social research is rarely a benign activity; it serves to explain and explain away, and therefore it can serve different functions". Conflicts of interest will always be a factor. Indeed, in analyzing and writing up, self-deception lurks in the dark shadows ready to overwhelm the writer into the possessive act of "a 'colonising discourse' of the 'other'", whilst being self-deluded into thinking that a voice has been given to the oppressed. In response to such a view, Singh considers what would be needed for a genuinely emancipatory research practice.

Research questions

In the work of research:

- Where does interpretation end and reconstruction begin?
- How can the political stakes be changed? Would it amount to reversing

prevailing practices, where participants might control the research agenda? Or is such an intention too ambitious?
- Is it possible to bring about "a high degree of reflexivity and openness between researcher/s and researched in order to develop sensitivity to the potential for oppression at each level of the research process"?
- Should research findings be offered to the researched in order that they are able to add their own critiques and conclusion?
- In reality how exactly can one equalize the power relationship between researcher and researched?