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Living the differences: ethnicity, gender and social work

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Gail Lewis

Living the Differences:Ethnicity, Gender and Social Work

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ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the entry of black women into local authority social services departments as qualified social workers in the 1980s. It argues that this entry needs to be understood in the context of a moment of racial formation and social regulation in which specific black populations were managed through a regime of governmentality in which 'new black subjects' were formed. These 'new black subjects' were constituted as 'ethnic-minorities' out of an earlier form of being as 'immigrants'. Central to this process of reconstitution was a discourse of black family forms as pathological and yet governable through the intervention of state agencies. As such, social work as a specific form of state organised intervention, articulated to a discourse of 'race' and black family formations. This articulation suggested that the management of those black families who could be defined as pathological or 'in need' required a specific 'ethnic' knowledge and in this way a space for the entry of black women into qualified social work was created. This process also intersected with a time of riotous rebellion in many inner city areas and a moment of municipal socialism in which demands on the part of social movements for social reparation for inequality had been incorporated into the manifestos of political parties. This made it incumbent on such authorities to promote equality of employment opportunity within their departments. Whilst the discourses of 'race'/ethnicity and equal opportunities provided the impetus for the employment of black women as qualified social workers the understanding and experience of this employment was mediated through a sense of organisational and managerial exclusion. Thus the thesis ends with a consideration of the accounts of numerous black women social workers and their multi-racial, female and male managers.

Table of contents.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1986 Ahmed, Cheetham and Small published an edited collection of essays entitled 'Social Work with Black Children and their Families'. In their introduction they identified a number of thematic and practical issues which in their view needed to be addressed by Social Services Departments if they were to better meet the needs of black children and families. Thematically there was a need for change in three areas. Firstly, in place of the existing propensity for social workers and other welfare practitioners to pathologise black families they should begin from a perspective which valued the strengths of black families. Secondly, diversity of perspective and opinion between and within different ethnic minority groups should be welcomed as evidence of the heterogeneity of Britain's black populations. They argued that such a recognition was necessary if the racist tendency toward homogenisation of these populations was to be undermined and prevented. On the other hand recognition of diversity of opinion within black populations should not be used by white practitioners as evidence of major division within these groups and therefore used as a means by which to avoid responsibility for devising strategies aimed at meeting the needs of black children and their families. Finally they argued for acceptance "... of the positive changes in the experience of black people which can flow from social work practice which tries to combat racism and to reflect Britain's multi-racial society"(p.4).

From these thematic issues followed a number of practical concerns to which local authority social services departments (SSDs) needed to attend. Firstly, positive action policies should be devised and implemented, including recruitment of black families as foster and adoptive carers, and the location of community based measures in areas where black children and families live. Secondly, the location and staffing of SSD agencies needed to recognise the special needs of ethnic minority groups who are relatively new to Britain so that the relevant information

and services can be delivered. Thirdly, SSDs should devise measures to recruit black social workers to their staff teams. This is

> "because of the problems of communicating across cultures, and the consequent dangers of wrong assessment and decisions, special efforts must be made to recruit and train ethnic minority social workers who will enlarge their agencies understanding, make their approach more appropriate and their staffing more representative of a multi-racial society" (p.17).

While professional practitioners and trainers were arguing the case for the recruitment of qualified black social workers, the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) was similarly promoting recruitment of black students to social work qualifying courses and attempting to ensure that the content of the courses it accredited promoted anti-oppressive practice. Figures from CCETSW show that in 1993 14.3 percent of all those entering either a diploma in social work course (DipSW) or a certificate course (CQSW) were classified as black in the Councils' ethnic monitoring categories. This figure had fallen from a peak of 16.9 percent in 1992, but was still above the 1991 figure of 13.6 percent. Notwithstanding the call from within the profession and the evidence of some sustained increase in the numbers of black students entering qualifying courses, figures from the General Household Survey[1] in 1995 showed that nationally only three black women qualified social workers were computed, a figure equal to .03 per ecent of the total GHS sample (figures supplied direct to author). How then to make sense of these disparate calculations? Where are the black women (and men) who qualify as social workers going and through which theoretical frameworks can convincing narratives of the process of recruitment of such women to local authority SSDs be produced?

In the autumn of 1992 when I had just begun work on the thesis and in an attempt to define its parameters I wrote:

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[1] The GHS is based on a random sampling of 10,000 households nationally.

This thesis is concerned with the quantity and quality of change in the employment experience and occupational positioning of black women which has been brought about by and within the context of rapid restructuring and organisational change. It focuses on employment within the state welfare sector, in particular on qualified social workers in local authority social services departments.

It attempts to examine the relationship between macro-economic change and the subjective, lived experience of a specific segment of the labour force. Contextualised within a discussion of certain theoretical debates about how to characterise and understand the directions and effects of economic change in Britain, the category 'black woman' is conceptualised as being situated dialectically within the dynamics of economic change. Thus the category is used in two ways. Firstly the theories are used as a means by which to try and make sense of the structural location and subjective experiences of black women workers within social work. Using the theories to help unpack the relation between economic imperatives and the workings of the labour market as they bore down upon this group of workers. Secondly, I use black women's own lived experiences and understandings as a means by which to reconsider the analytical purchase of these theories.

The emphasis on the economy with the suggestion that this is a determining sphere, together with the use of concepts like 'dialectic' clearly show the Marxist influence on the thinking reflected in this note. Yet situated alongside it, in rather uncomfortable fashion I would now argue, is a precognition of another theoretical framework - one in which discursive categories such as 'lived experience', and 'black women' are postulated as a starting point from which to begin an investigation into the allocation of types of labour to occupational sectors. However if these are a starting point, precisely because they are discursive categories this formulation also carried with it a rejection of them as foundational subjects existing outside of the social. As the thesis proceeds it will become clear

that this latter approach - rooted in post-structuralism - is the one through which I have attempted to construct a narrative about black women social workers.

That this should be so is not surprising. Firstly there is already a hint of this in the note referred to above yet what is also interesting about it is that it contains an example of a 'marginal' subject cross-cutting a central one in that I am clearly fore grounding class as the category of analysis whilst simultaneously wanting to challenge the centreing of a one dimensional subject by placing a multi-layered subject at the centre. Secondly, the political and intellectual antecedents which gave rise to the project were concerned with the constitution of new forms of belonging, new positions from which to speak, new 'imagined communities' organised around and articulated through particularity and diversity. In short the struggles and debates with which I had been connected had all been concerned with effecting a decentreing of the old grand-narratives and their attendant political subjects (including that of Marxism). In their stead the political and intellectual projects I had been involved in sought to substitute other locations and codes through which to articulate a more diverse range of subjects and constituencies who might be harnessed to a hegemonic project of democratic transformation. These collective concerns were to disrupt the old certainties and to introduce the idea of new political constituencies which had emerged from the margins but whose existence embodied and represented the anxieties and fears of difference and the 'other', which paradoxically, had partially produced the old certainties and universal subjects. To be sure it was not that the 'new social movements' (Touraine, 1981) and other constituencies of struggle were unambiguously divorced from Marxism and class based politics. A particularly clear example of this being many of the anti-colonial and national liberation struggles in parts of the 'third world', and indeed in the black trade union organisations and struggles within Britain. Rather it was that this disparate range of forms of contestation to dominant political, economic, social and cultural relations attempted to articulate their oppositional

practices around and through the formation of political actors outside of the proletarian/bourgeois binary at the heart of Marxism. What link there was between the class subject and the gendered, 'raced', colonial, or sexual subject was the object of much agonised, heated and at times antagonistic debate as activists in these diverse movements sought to construct economies of sign and practice which would have the effect of re-configuring the boundaries of belonging.

In this sense the tensions which are so apparent in my early note are also the *product of this project's roots. If this is so what are the points of convergence* among the various sources which led me to jettison the more orthodox Marxist approach in favour of one more in sympathy with the project of decentring and re-articulation outlined above? To understand this I shall chart the political and intellectual struggles in which I was involved.

Chief among these was what was to become known as black feminism as it emerged in Britain from the mid 1970s. As with any of the new political constituencies, black feminism was no more singular or unitary than any other, but having said this it is possible to identify some common characteristics by which to discern its political project. In its earliest incarnation black feminism had at its heart a critique of black masculinist and white feminist ways of storytelling both of which erased and silenced black women. In constructing their narratives of 'race'/racism and gender these two political constituencies failed to include the possibility that 'race' needed to be gendered and gender needed to be 'raced'. In other words black feminism was concerned to struggle for a politics which was both grounded in the 'experiences' of black women and which theorised those experiences. Alongside this many black feminists focused their political activity on the relationship between black women and aspects of the welfare state both as a site of employment and as a provider of services. Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe's 'Heart of the Race' (1985) was an early example of this focus and it is important for

how it identifies welfare institutions as sites of professional practice which served to reproduce black women's gendered and 'raced' subordination in British social relations. Since that time black feminist texts have proliferated and in carving out a speaking position within and against the dominant narratives of class, 'race' and gender they have served to deconstruct the myth of black homogeneity.

In this regard the emergence of black feminist positions within Britain intersected with the rise of black cultural criticism, which in engaging in a 'war of position' over representations, was also articulating a challenge to the myth of internal homogeneity amongst the diverse black populations present in Britain. This in its turn was linked to a broader concern which centred on the question of who could be included in the 'imagined community' of England/Britain. The dominant narratives of post-imperial Britain sought to produce a 'little Englandism' through a nostalgic reconstruction of imperial greatness. At one end of the spectrum this was to manifest itself in the fascination with the Raj as exemplified in the 'Jewel in the Crown' or the expressions of anxiety and uncertainty contained in the numerous Merchant Ivory films. At the tabloid journalism end this nostalgic expression of national anxiety is summed up by Alfred Sherman, writing in the Daily Telegraph in 1979:

> The imposition of mass immigration from backward alien cultures is just one symptom of this self-destructive urge reflected in the assault on patriotism, the family - both as conjugal and economic unit - the Christian religion in public life and schools, traditional morality, in matters of sex, honesty, public display, and respect for the law - in short, all that is English and wholesome.

In contrast much black cultural production (such as the films of the Black Audio and Visual Collective, the paintings of Sonia Boyce or Chaila Burman, and the photography of Ingrid Pollard and David A. Bailey) sought to challenge and

interrogate the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that statements such as Sherman's constructed.

For my purposes, the relevance of such cultural production is twofold. Firstly, is the attempt to disarticulate forms of and claims to national belonging from notions of 'race' and ethnicity. This constituted a vastly counter-hegemonic project which also sought to produce the terrain on which it might be possible to imagine forms of coalition between an array of political subjects and constituencies organised around multiple identities without privileging or essentialising any of these. Secondly, such a disarticulation of forms of representation from processes of 'othering' has much to offer in the analysis and critique of social policy and practice precisely because much of the understanding of 'race' and ethnicity in current social policy is premised on fixed and essentialised categories. Thus in so far as policies embody and produce representations as much as they provide the frame within which professional practices are enacted, cultural production which acts to unsettle established ways of seeing can offer much to the development of a critical social policy.

In this sense the work of black British feminism and black cultural production was joined by the arguments of the post-colonial critics which were also a part of the challenge to Enlightenment epistemologies and its universal subject (see for example Said, 1978, Spivak, 1988). Post-colonial theory takes as its object colonial texts and discourses, reading them in such a way as to reveal the forms of cultural knowledge - the ways in which colonial power is justified and perpetuated. By close textual reading - often against the grain - it aims to bring to light that which remains present but unspoken, trying to undermine established notions of truth, especially about the erstwhile colonised nations, but also about the colonising ones. All variants of post-colonial theory, as Bill Schwarz (1996) notes, recognise linguistic and discursive ordering of the real, the contingency of

meaning, the fluidity of the text, the ambivalent and contradictory properties of discourse itself. In this way it is profoundly influenced by post-structuralism, making use of psychoanalytical insights to focus on the irrational, disorderly, unstable, the place of fantasy and desire in the creation of racialised order.

This too can be said of the black cultural critics within Britain. What is specific about the British context is that all these projects of re-articulation were developed within the context of what the authors of 'The Empire Strikes Back' (1982) termed an 'organic crisis'. To suggest that the crisis which Britain has faced since the mid to late 1970s is organic means "... that it is the result of the combined effect of economic, political, ideological and cultural processes". Moreover 'race' was to play a central role in articulating the deep anxieties which accompanied such a crisis and increasingly became "one of the means through which hegemonic relations are secured in a period of structural crisis management"(p.11). The ideological response to this organic crisis from sections of the establishment can be summed up in the above quote from Alfred Sherman. What this carried was the concern of this section of British society, and especially that which became known as the New Right, with issues of law and order, family values, an (at best) ambivalence to Europe, attacks on the 'loony left' - all those areas which were identified as the 'natural' province of small c conservatism, respectability and indeed 'greatness'. The rhetorical turn to the terrain of 'family values' involved an attack on single-motherhood and other forms of 'non-traditional' household, an outlawing of the 'promotion of homosexuality' in the Local Government Act of 1988, a reassertion of parental rights and responsibilities as contained in the 1989 Children Act and the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Among other things what 'law and order' and 'family values' articulate are racialised representations and codes which help to configure the crisis in a binary split between 'Englishness' and its 'aliens within'. Thus, the then Secretary of

8

State for Education, Mark Carlisle could state in July 1981, that the spate of riotous protest which had spread throughout many of Britain's inner cities over the preceding year, was a result of "a breakdown in the stabilising forces of society: the nation, patriotism, the family and the whole community". Explicit racialisation was left to John Brown, one of the architects of 'Community Policing'. But Brown did not offer the same racialisation for those of Asian and Caribbean origin or descent. He wrote:

> Beyond the contextual forces lie what seems to me the most primary force of all: that of 'culture', by which I mean the characteristic ways of life, relationships and values of people of different regions and countries. This may be clearly seen in the microcosm of Handsworth, for example, where it is of utmost pertinence to compare the capacity for care and order (including crime control) of Asian groups, with their strong communal traditions and value system, with those of Caribbean groups, with their relatively weak communal traditions framed within a dependent culture (1981, p.8).

Mercer (1994) has made the point that the ground for this approach had already been laid some twelve to fifteen years earlier since it is just such a discursive strategy which marks the significance of Enoch Powell's speeches of the late 1960s about the black presence in Britain.

> The 'conspiracy theory' expressed (by Powell)... already acknowledges the populist rupture created by the April 'Rivers of blood' speech: Moreover the splitting which Powell reveals is not the antagonism between whites and blacks but the antagonism between 'the people' as silent majority, against the media and the 'establishment' which thus represent 'the state'. Through this bipolar division, Powell's discourse set in motion a system of equivalences predicated on a textual strategy of binary reversal, which culminated in his 'enemies within' speech on the eve of the 1970 General Election.
>
> This text marked a crucial turning point in the popularisation of a New Right perspective in British politics. In it, Powell depicts the nation under attack

from a series of enemies, thereby linking the 'anarchy' of student demonstrations, the 'civil war' in Northern Ireland, and the racially coded image of the 'United States engulfed in fire and fighting'. The signifying chain is underpinned by the central issue in the conspiracy: 'The exploitation of what is called 'race' is a common factor which links the operations of the enemy on several different fronts'.(p.306).

In this analysis Powell had already set the terms within which the New Right, under the helm of Mrs. Thatcher, was to go about its radical restructuring of Britain. Racialised 'others' were already among those defined as the 'enemies within' from the late 1960s/early 1970s. But if 'race' was central from early on in the hegemonic strategy which sought to re-invigorate and re-legitimate traditional authority relations, the introduction of 'the family' opened the possibility for the institutions of the welfare state to be articulated to this project. Education had of course already been established as a central site upon which the struggle was to be fought. This is clear both from the centrality of this sector in issues about immigration and nationhood and from the fact that Keith Joseph, a key architect of Thatcherite strategy, had placed education at the fore in the 1970s. However as the post-war welfare consensus crumbled under the onslaught of economic, political and ideological attack from the New Right 'think tanks' and politicians, the way was set for the inclusion of more aspects of the welfare state in the project of restructuring. In this way, social work as a specific set of institutional practices became a location from which to attempt to re-authorise forms of family formation and practice in general, and to negotiate crisis management of racialised populations in particular.

This then returns me to my starting point - how to understand the spatially specific entry of black women (and men) into the occupation of social work in qualified grades from the early 1980s. It should be clear that in attempting to answer this question I do not adopt the traditional approach to analysing black workers' place

in British labour markets. Traditional approaches have tended to develop their analyses of recruitment of black and migrant labour within a labour shortage/labour surplus framework and then have sought to apply this to either the economy as a whole or specific industrial sectors. I have rejected this approach (for reasons elaborated in the literature review) and begin with three, inter-related questions - What was the relation between entry into a specific and highly gendered occupation of those previously under-represented, the organic crisis and systems of representation of racialised populations? By what processes of interpellation were racially gendered subjects articulated to this project? Through which discursive repertoires did these subjects then mediate the terms of this occupational inclusion? The general argument I make is that the recruitment of 'ethnic minority' social workers to SSDs took place at a time when the structural location and discursive positioning of racialised populations was being challenged from a number of directions. These included the rise of equal opportunities agenda; economic and organisational restructuring of welfare; and the development of critiques of current social work at both policy and practice level by black professionals within the field. These were accompanied at a more macro level by aspects of the 'organic crisis' outlined earlier and in this context I argue that social work emerged as a site of management of racialised populations in the context of a transition of these populations from 'immigrant' to 'ethnic minority'. Thus I develop an analysis of the entry of black women (and men) into social work which begins with the macrosocial level, moves to the legislative framework established by central Government, through a discussion of policy development at local authority level, and on to a discussion of interview material gathered in the study.

Why professions: why social work?

> *Racist power is expressed through the construction of black people as 'other', which in turn is based on a construction of white people as the 'standard'. This permeates the ideas and practices of the caring professions in ways which are often not clearly articulated, but which create services that continually reproduce the dominance of white over black personally, culturally and structurally. It is more than an issue of inappropriateness in service*

delivery, although that is a crucial element, it is about the exercise of racially ordered power in every aspect of professional structure and action (Hugman, 1991, p.46).

I decided to focus on the caring professions in general and social workers in local authority SSDs in particular for a number of reasons. Firstly, the state welfare sector has been a major employer of black and other racialised labour forces since the migrations from the Caribbean, south Asia, other parts of the New Commonwealth, and indeed Ireland, began in the wake of the second world war. Initially much of this employment was in numerous occupations in the NHS. As such there is some historical continuity in employment in state welfare, which paradoxically has not been reflected in the research on black people and employment.

However, SSDs have not traditionally been an area of employment for black women or (men) particularly as qualified practitioners in the professional sector. It has only been since the 1980s that there has been an increase in the numbers of qualified black social workers in some specific local authority departments. To a large extent this is the result of the pressure for, and adoption of equal opportunities policies across the local authority sector. In terms of SSDs, the pressure to promote and increase the employment of black social workers was also linked to the awareness of the increasingly diverse and multi-ethnic population in certain parts of the country. This has both a structural and a discursive dimension. Since the majority of clients of SSDs are drawn from the economically poorer sections of the population and because there is an over representation of black people amongst the economically poor, ethnic diversity was amplified amongst social work client groups. However the relative material circumstances of large sections of the black populations is not the only reason why black people are over represented amongst the client groups of SSDs. The impact of racist discourses and practices is also a factor because they have meant that black clients and their forms of familial and community life have often been pathologised. Thus they have

more easily been positioned as potential clients of SSDs. However the convergence of a concern for 'ethnic sensitivity' and the professional discourse of 'care' was to result in an ever growing call for the staff profile of SSDs to reflect the populations they serve. This led to an increase in the numbers of black staff in some of these departments. As a relatively new area of employment for black women (and men) and one which has some, admittedly contested, claim to professional status it offers an opportunity to focus on an area outside of those sectors traditionally associated with black women workers, such as nursing. As such it offers a potential for an enriched understanding of the intersection of 'race', gender, class and ethnicity and as they are deployed in new arenas of employment opportunity.

A second reason for focusing on this sector is that state welfare, including local authority SSDs, are undergoing major structural and organisational change in the wake of the new priorities which have been established by consecutive Conservative governments. To a large extent this new thinking is expressed in particular pieces of legislation which have the effect of redefining and codifying many of the statutory duties placed on social workers. The new priorities have also been expressed in the changes to the funding of local authorities, other aspects of state welfare, such as the NHS, and in the establishment of the Audit Commission as a kind of accounting and efficiency watchdog. For many local authority SSDs these legislative, funding and institutional developments have resulted in the need for major organisational changes including in the priority given to equal opportunities issues. This is a complex process. It has not meant that the issue of 'equality' has vanished from the policy agenda or rhetoric of local government. Rather 'equalities' issues have become harnessed to and articulated through a stated commitment to 'quality'. In its turn the delivery of 'quality' is presented as being dependent upon the implementation of missions, markets and managers. The result of this is that equal opportunities discourses have become

subordinated to, or rather embedded in, a rhetoric of service and/or new managerialism. This is part of the changed discursive context in which black women (and men) live out their social work lives. However the extent to which the overlapping and competing constructions embedded in EOP discourse compared with new managerialist discourses has been adopted by lower level managers in SSDs is less clear despite its importance for the 'everyday' of organisational relations structured by the interplay of 'race', gender and grade.

These two themes: the new but spatially specific area of employment opportunity and the evolving context in which 'equality' discourses are operationalised also provide the sites for the construction of specific subject positions and subjectivities. The tensions and contradictions which arise from the interface of competing constructions, and the implications this may have for the ways in which black women social workers negotiate the everyday of paid work is also a focus of the thesis. As already mentioned, part of the impetus behind the attempt to increase the number of black social workers has been the increasing ethnic diversity found in some parts of the country and the recognition that this may have implications for service delivery. The idea is that ethnic diversity of clients needs to be reflected in the make up of staff in social services departments. At the same time, incorporation into a professional ideology and culture places people in a discursive field where they are differentiated both structurally and symbolically. In other words, rigid structural, social and symbolic boundaries are established between sets of people defined on the one hand as 'social workers' and on the other as 'clients'. However for black social workers this bipolar positioning is overlain and to some extent undermined by the racialising discourse of 'ethnic matching' which has the effect of constructing them as the same. This raises the question about to what extent and by what means black women (and men) social workers are able to negotiate this contradictory positioning.

These then are the issues which I consider and I have organised the thesis in a way which follows this thematic structure. Chapter two is the literature review in which I discuss some of the key texts on black workers' entry to and role in the labour force and consider some of the limitations of the traditional approaches to this subject. Chapter three outlines the methodology adopted in the study and discusses the reasons for the choices made. Chapter four is a more macrosocial level consideration of the entry of black women (and men) into qualified social work. Here I argue that Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' provides analytical purchase on understanding this entry at the level of the national formation. Thus I argue that the transition of 'immigrants' into 'ethnic minorities' carried with it the constitution of new forms of racialised subject and that the constitution of such subjects was articulated through specific sites of welfare. Social work was just one of these sites but its place as the agency dealing with the family - albeit specific families - meant that it had a particular role to play in the process of bringing racialised 'others' into new forms of regulation. Chapters five and six respectively, discuss the central and local government policies which were used in, or developed for, the recruitment of qualified black social workers to SSDs. In each I consider the discursive terrain upon which the policies were argued for and adopted and I then consider the implication these had for processes of racialised 'othering'. In the next chapter (seven) I turn my attention to professional discourses of 'race' and ethnicity which circulated within social work and became increasingly hegemonic in the 1980s. Having done this I then consider the accounts given by participants in the study. Thus chapters eight, nine and ten discuss accounts given by black women social workers and some of their managers. In so doing I provide some data on issues of 'race', ethnicity and gender as they structure and saturate the 'everyday world' of social work practice in the two authorities. The accounts also provide some sense of the points of tension and contradiction between policy and professional discourse on the one hand, and the discourses of 'race' and ethnicity which practising social workers and some of

their managers use to understand workplace interactions. In a similar way the accounts also provide a sense of the tensions and contradictions between the understandings of 'race' and ethnicity which arise in managers' discourse in contrast to that of black women social workers. Chapter eleven provides a brief concluding section which summarises the argument and indicates areas of further investigation.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the introductory chapter I argued that an orthodox Marxist approach to issues of black women's employment was inadequate because it centred a masculinised yet abstract labourer thus closing off the theoretical and political questions with whichI wish to engage. As a consequence this chapter has two main aims. I want to map out how black labour has been conceptualised in the literature, particularly in relation to its purported role in processes of labour force composition, decomposition and recomposition. Following this I want to indicate what I see as the limitations of these established approaches which in my view cluster around three inter-related points. The first relates to the dominant strand in the literature dealing with black and migrant labour which consistently conceptualises such labour as objects who are always positioned as victims of capitalist (super)exploitation and racism. As a result the idea that black workers are constituted subjects who invoke agency as they resist the conditions of their employment is occluded. This is the second point. Finally, such approaches fail to periodise the constitution of the black labouring subject. Since much of the literature is influenced by a Marxist approach this is a problem even in its own terms since Marxism would suggest that in considering the processes of class formation it is necessary to identify the specific phases and stages of national/global economies. Only in this way is it possible to grasp the complexities of class relations and develop an effective opposition to bourgeois domination. In terms of the constitution and position of black labour in contemporary Britain, failure to periodise suggests that this labour stands in a fixed and unchanging relation to the economy and labour market - a suggestion that is clearly belied by the empirical detail. In part this shortcoming in the literature is related to an overly economistic approach which has meant a theoretical separation between investigation into black people's role in the economy and their position in other aspects of the social formation. As a result utilisation of the developments in social and cultural theory - including those offered by black cultural criticism and feminism- where some of the best work on processes of racialisation has occurred is denied to those wanting to explore aspects of black employment. Yet it is vital that the employment

implications of the changing position of black people in Britain which have occurred over the last fifty years are understood if racism, and the exclusions it leads to, are to be undermined in the future. From this starting point I am concerned to explore the ways in which the *discursive and social* (as opposed to economic) location of black populations have given rise to spatially concentrated entry into a specific occupation that has some claim to professional status. This is an approach which is distinct from (but indebted to) that of traditional Marxism where the line of causality would move from the structural to the ideological.

The existing literature on economic restructuring and employment which might be utilised to analyse aspects of black women's employment falls into two broad categories. On the one hand, there is that concerned with post-fordism or flexible specialisation. On the other hand, there is that which is concerned with processes of class composition and recomposition and how 'race' might enter into them. The literature dealing with post-Fordism or flexible specialisation in many ways attempts to develop a meta-theory about the nature and form of work organisation in the context of rapid change. Much of the debate has concentrated on whether the purported increase in flexible production processes, associated with, for example, the 'Third Italy', or the USA 'Sunbelt', represent changes in some 'leading edge' sectors only, or whether they represent a shift of much more fundamental dimensions, such that we are witnessing a change to a new regime of flexible accumulation. Most of the work to date has been conducted at a fairly high level of abstraction, with relatively little work devoted to investigating the general premises empirically (however see for example Hudson, 1989; Gottfried, 1992).

However in attempting to characterise the nature and import of the changes which are occurring in economic organisation certain theoretical and empirical issues around the concept 'flexibility' arise. It is clear that for black women engaged in paid labour, the issue of whether there is a shift toward a flexible mode of accumulation raises two possibilities. Firstly, and in keeping with the more optimistic interpretations of the changes which are

18

occurring, such as that of Piore and Sable (1984), it may be that flexibility will allow 'difference' to be valorised and notions of what constitutes skill may be widened. These in turn may result in black women being provided with a structural space within which to begin to undermine the forces which have tended to locate them within a narrow range of occupations and employment statuses within a racialised sexual division of labour. On the other hand, it may be that flexibility is simply a means by which capital increasingly casualises and deskills labour, bringing the latter increasingly under a 'real subordination' of labour to capital, in professional as well as manual occupations. If this formulation is correct black women will find themselves placed within similar structural positions within the division of labour, as in the earlier, Fordist regime of accumulation.

This set of arguments connects to a second. These relate to what mode of regulation characterises British capitalism at the end of the twentieth century. There are debates as to whether a new mode of regulation is emerging in parallel to the development of a regime of flexible accumulation. For my purposes here, this raises the issue of how we characterise the state and the labour processes which are to be found within its aspects. That is, to what extent are state labour processes themselves Fordist or post-Fordist? Following from this we can ask if the changes which are occurring in the state welfare sector give rise to more potential for specific marginalised sections of the labour force to enter the professional occupations found within state welfare, and to exercise a greater amount of autonomy and self organisation in their working lives.

However if it is possible to argue that the debates on Fordism/post-Fordism have some potential for helping to develop an understanding of the location and experience of black women workers, there are problems. Not least this concerns the different emphases to be found in the two sets of literature. Much of the debate on post-Fordism concerns itself with a multifaceted notion of flexibility. These are numerical flexibility; functional flexibility; pay flexibility; and distancing (especially in the form of sub-contracting). Whilst the first two of these are the most important in the literature (Walby, 1989), the different forms of

19

flexibility are sometimes used interchangeably without sufficient regard to the implications of doing so. There are some knotty issues related to this definitional problem but the issue I wish to highlight concerns the issue of class recomposition. In so far as the post-Fordist literature is concerned to elicit how different forms of flexibility are used by collective capital to overcome the limitations of Fordism and the form of concrete class relations which were said to accompany that regime of accumulation, it is not explicitly concerned with examining the processes of class composition and recomposition. This is especially so in terms of the gendered and racialised aspects of class composition and as such these markers of differentiation are absent from much of the work on post-fordism.(Piore and Sabel,1982; Atkinson,1986; Jessop,1988; Aglietta, 1975; Murray,1989.)

In contrast, much of the theoretical and empirical work that has focused on black women, or is of direct relevance to them, has centred on class composition/recomposition, particularly in terms of debates about the reserve army of labour (e.g. Sivanandan, 1982, Castles and Kosack, 1972, 1973) and class fractions (Phizacklea and Miles, 1980). In other words much of the material on gender and 'race' has had this focus. However, even this body of work still tends to objectify black labour and issues concerning the formation of a black labouring subject are erased. Instead its focus is on either the ways in which core/periphery patterns amongst labour forces and across sectors are reconfigured, or the obstacles to and potential for labour struggles which erode barriers of 'race' and sex.

Thus the issues of where black women may be located within specific labour markets, and why, remains unattended. It is my argument that it is not possible to know black women's position in the economy in the late twentieth century because of what it was forty to fifty years earlier. Instead we need to elicit the factors that produce a particular structural and discursive positioning within specific sectors and occupations. This requires that we locate the position and experience of black women workers in terms of the intersections of gender, 'race'/ethnicity, and class as they are manifested within particular sectors and occupations at a specific moment in time-space. Among the questions which need to be addressed are: what forces act to allocate black women to particular occupations? How do

20

black women themselves survive and understand these forces, and what strategies do they develop to negotiate and/or subvert them? What are the spaces between and within these structural forces which enable such strategies to be developed and thus give rise to agency? What reactions may such negotiation and agency on the part of black women workers give rise to on the part of employers? These are the kinds of questions which I have asked in the analysis of black women's employment as qualified social workers but which are occluded in the prevailing literature as I will now show.

BLACK LABOUR IN THE FORDIST ERA

There are four characteristics usually associated with what has been called the Fordist production era. These are the production of standardised products on standardised, special purpose machinery, in which there is a continuous flow line of the commodity, which passes a 'fixed' worker who is subject to Taylorist management techniques (Murray, 1989). Production forms such as this were not amenable to quick and easy adaptation to changes in the shape or size of the product and as such mass consumption predominated, thus creating the mass consumer.

This regime of accumulation was accompanied by a particular mode of regulation (Aglietta, 1975),which in Britain took the form of the Keynesian welfare state. This form of state ensured the reproduction of mass consumption in the sense of a minimum standard set at social security benefit levels. Moreover the co-ordination and regulation of the regime of accumulation was ensured via Keynesian tripartite policies in which the 'historic compromise' between capital, labour and government took form.

These aspects of the Fordist era provided the framework within which black (male and female) workers were recruited to Britain in the aftermath of the second world war. They formed part of a mobilisation of a relative surplus population to be found among married women in Britain, immigrant labour from the (ex)colonies, and, to a lesser extent, migrants

21

from the southern Mediterranean periphery and European displaced people and refugees (Kay and Miles, 1992) In economic terms all of these were mobilised to meet the serious shortage of labour which Britain needed to overcome if it was to accomplish the task of reconstruction. In social and political terms each of these pools of labour were to face distinct, if at times overlapping, labour market destinies and forms of representation. For example, indigenous married women, overwhelmingly white, were largely recruited into the labour forces as part-time workers, where they were occupationally segregated. In both practical and ideological terms the idea that the main responsibility of these women was in the domestic sphere, as wife and mother, was rarely, if ever, challenged. The increasing incidence of "women's two roles" was itself to give rise to a whole discourse of the family which was reflected in Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation (1953) and the 1960s notion of the 'latch key' child, to cite two well known examples. The Beveridge report (1942), the key document in the establishment of the Keynesian welfare state, was imbued with patriarchal and nationalistic notions of the role and place of women in the new order which was to be ushered into Britain in the "you've never had it so good years." Indeed the achievement of such years would not be possible if gender relations became challenged. As a consequence Beveridge saw women's work in the home as "vital though unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue" (1942 ,p.49, quoted in Williams, 1989 p.123.) As Williams points out, married men and women were consequently considered a single unit and the whole national insurance policy was developed on this basic assumption.

This, however is often overlooked in analyses of Fordism. As Clarke has suggested (1991) the family, as a gendered economy and institutional form is the cement which linked mass production and mass consumption. This means that

> ...the family was itself reconstructed. Mass consumption meant the thorough-going invasion of the private space of the family by the public realm of the market: aiming to intensify and validate the private pleasures of the Home. Women's domestic role was reconstructed: their function becoming that of transforming the family income

into the materials needed to fulfil the family's wants. In the process, new forms of domestic labour were substituted for the old. Much of what mass consumption offered was the commercial provision of goods and services previously produced within the domestic economy ('convenience' foods supplanting food production and preservation; ready made clothes in place of sewing and knitting; laundries or washing machines in the place of hand washing, and so on. Not all of the old labours disappeared, of course, but acquired a more subordinate (and to some extent culturally denigrated) place alongside the new skills of consumption. What the growth of mass consumption achieved was to place the family at the centre of Fordism - linking the family wage to the family shopping"(p.96.)

Just as gender was a key element in the post-war settlements which characterised Fordism in Britain so too was 'race'. Beveridge's reference to "the nation" indicates that there was as an explicit construction of 'the British' as there was of male/female domestic relations and roles. In this sense it could be expected that early notions of the 'black woman' were different from that of the 'British woman'. Elsewhere (Lewis, 1993) I have suggested that a differential construction of the relationship of black and white women to domestic duties helped to shape the patterns of black and white women's employment. The assumption that newly migrant women had no domestic responsibilities of importance to attend to, especially in relation to the hallowed tasks of nation building, can in part explain why black women, especially those of Caribbean descent, have traditionally been more likely to be engaged in full time paid employment. Of course other factors help to determine the shape of labour market participation for these women. One of these was the way in which racism served to exclude black women from certain sectors and occupations, whilst directing them to others. Usually these occupations were not those which were increasingly being organised around part-time hours, such as office, secretarial and administrative jobs. An example of this is given below in the discussion of the relationship of the NHS to immigration legislation. Thus changes in the structure and composition of the female workforce were to intersect with racialised notions of womanhood in a mutually

23

reinforcing way (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, 1985).

Both black and white women entered the workforce in increasing numbers as a result of the post-war recruitment needs. However black women workers have different patterns of paid employment to those of white women and have been differentially constructed in the process. Moreover their place as 'white' or 'black' women workers was often overlaid by the differential juridical position which resulted from their status as immigrants, aliens or citizens. Thus tensions were often thrown up between these two groups as a result of the different structural and discursive locations of Caribbean workers as a whole and European volunteer workers. Kay and Miles (1992) quote the following from a 1947 minute from the Ministry of Labour and National Service which reflects this

> It may become extremely embarrassing politically if at a time of labour
> shortage there should be nothing but discouragement for British subjects
> from the West Indies while we go to great trouble to get foreign workers
> (e.g. EVW's)(p.161).

IMMIGRANTS, SETTLERS AND MIGRANTS

In attempting to understand the factors which led to the early differential patterning of black and white women's employment reference needs to be made to the role which immigrant/migrant labour has played in the economies of Britain and western Europe since the second world war. This has been analysed in two main ways. Those analyses referring in the main to workers whose origin or descent is in the Caribbean or South Asia, that is former colonies and those analyses referring more directly to other migrants, usually working as contract labour, such as workers from Turkey; parts of Africa and the Arab world; Latin America; and in the 1940s and 1950s eastern and southern Europe. In addition to these categories of incoming workers, were those from the Republic of Ireland, who were and still are, the largest single group of labour migrants entering Britain. However as a result of the particular colonial relation between Ireland and Britain, together with the terms of the 1926 settlement, Irish citizens have never been subject to control

24

under the various immigration and nationality acts. Two aspects differentiate the first of these groups, although there is some degree of overlap. There is the issue of immigration and citizenship status. Thus the 'colonial' group originally came to Britain for employment with full rights of settlement and citizenship status. These rights were progressively eroded as successive immigration and nationality acts turned these workers from "settlers to migrants" (Bhavnani, 1983; Gordon, 1985; Sivanandan, 1982; Solomos, 1989). The second group did not have any automatic right to settle and were subject to control from the beginning. Analysis of their position has centred on them as a group subject to discrimination, like the first, but whose status was always in a state of flux. In this sense migrant labour has been of two kinds, subject to two parallel sets of legislation. Moreover the differences between these two statuses have been used in a beneficial way for certain sectors of the economy. For example during the 1960s, the NHS was able to benefit from this division despite the introduction of increasingly restrictive immigration legislation. For labour from the New Commonwealth, especially the Caribbean (nurses) and India (doctors) the NHS was able to continue getting labour after the 1962 Act because both nurses and doctors were included in category B status which defined people with certain skills as exempt from the legislation. It was workers defined as unskilled who were increasingly limited entry. However the NHS was still ensured a supply of such labour because aliens were still able to obtain work permits from the Ministry of Labour for specific jobs. Moreover "the NHS has been treated as a special case and hospitals have been able to recruit an annual quota of overseas workers specifically to fill posts as nursing auxiliaries and resident domestics" (Doyal, Hunt and Mellor, 1981, p.56). Given the nature of the majority of the jobs and the sexual division of labour it will not go unnoticed that most of this labour was female. However there has increasingly been a move toward a similarly precarious status for both groups, bringing the former closer to the latter.

Added to the differing legal status another feature which distinguishes the two groups centres on the nature of the political relation between the 'sending' and 'receiving' nation states. In both cases the economic relation was one of subordination and domination.

25

However in the former case this relation was replicated in the political and ideological field, whereas for the latter this was not the case (Phizacklea and Miles, 1980). It is possible then to distinguish between the two groups of labour migrants in terms of their legal status with regard to citizenship and settlement rights and also the nature of the political relation between the country of origin and that of residence.

However whilst it is important to bear this distinction in mind, in the context of a consideration of the location of immigrant/migrant workers structuralist analyses have offered a definition which foregrounds the economic. Consider, for example, the definition of migrant labour proposed by Phizacklea and Miles (1980,)

> "as that labour which is geographically mobile for the purpose of individual
> self-advancement but which simultaneously satisfies the demands of
> capital... there is a sense in which one can talk of economic compulsion in so
> far as the 'sending' formation is characterised by structural unemployment
> and underemployment"(p.10).

This definition has the advantage of according the migrants themselves some agency, whilst simultaneously recognising that this agency is itself exercised within the context of the structural constraints imposed by the international division of labour. Importantly, in placing an analysis of immigrant/migrant labour in terms of the dynamic of capitalist needs, we may be offered the opportunity to assess the role which workers differentiated along axes of 'race'/ethnicity or nationality may play at any moment in the accumulation cycle.

Indeed Castells (1975) argues that an examination of the phenomenon of migrant labour from the perspective of the dominant (receiving) formation shows us that international migrant labour has become a permanent feature of the world capitalist economy. As such there will be a growth in this sort of labour despite the appearance of structurally generated unemployment. An approach such as this signals the need for an analysis of the role and experience of black workers at a time of major recession, restructuring and organisational change such as is current in contemporary Britain and is of central concern

26

here.

The idea that migrant labour has taken a new and more permanent form in the second half of the twentieth century is one shared by Castles and Kosack (1972,). Indeed for them labour migration into Western Europe has two new features compared with earlier times, of which this purported permanence is one. The cause of this permanence is that

> large numbers of immigrant workers have taken up key positions in the
> productive process, so that even in the case of recession their labour cannot
> be dispensed with (1972, p.6).

It is this incorporation into "key positions" which ensures that migration itself will no longer be simply determined by the economic cycle. In addition, migrant workers have another, even more central role to play in the economies of Western Europe. That is their centrality as the industrial reserve army, a central feature of the capitalist mode of production. Thus in the absence of alternative sources of surplus population which can be reconstituted as a reserve army when necessary, labour immigration will remain a key aspect of the economies of Western Europe.

The effect of this reserve army of labour is to act both as a downward pressure on wages and to help foster divisions within the working class along lines of 'race'/ethnicity and nationality. Whilst it is empirically the case that there have been major divisions along axes such as these within the working classes of countries receiving immigrant labour, Castles and Kosack are somewhat functionalist and determinist in their outlook. Thus they write:

> ... the employment of immigrant workers has an important socio-political
> function for capitalism: by *creating* a split between immigrant and indigenous
> workers along national and racial lines and offering better conditions and
> status to indigenous workers, it is possible to *give large sections of the*
> *working class the consciousness* of a labour aristocracy (1972, p.6 my
> emphasis).

27

Stated like this many questions are begged: what factors ensure that such a split can be created and reproduced?. How does capital "give" a certain class consciousness to particular sections of the working class? In other words, it is too deterministic, taking no account of class struggle, as opposed to class divisions, and according no room for agency or fluidity on the part of both migrant and indigenous workers. In Britain at least the segregation of black workers into specific sectors of the economy was sometimes such as to place them into areas of the economy where pay and conditions were not those at the very bottom of the hierarchy. This often had a spatial dimension. Thus for example in the Greater London area, where approximately 50% of the population of Caribbean origin and descent are to be found, many workers were employed in larger organisations, often public sector, which were better unionised and had managed to win relatively better pay and conditions. Clearly racism was still a factor in determining the position and experience of black workers here as much as in the metal works of the West Midlands or the textile mills of Yorkshire, however it does caution against too simplistic or sweeping generalisations about the place of black workers in any particular economy. Moreover, as Phizacklea and Miles (1980) point out, it is inaccurate both empirically and theoretically to postulate an homogenous and united national working class and suggest that the only lines of cleavage in twentieth century Europe are those along national, racial or ethnic lines. This would suggest that a theoretical perspective that avoids privileging any instance of the social formation, as either the primary structure or the primary vehicle through which identities are formed, might offer richer analyses of the complex social, economic, political and cultural configurations which structure working experience and organise moments of solidarity.

This raises the issue of subjectivity in the sense of the creation of labouring subjects. Like national and ethnic identities, one's sense of oneself as a worker of a specific type is fluid and subject to variation - that is it is contingent and relational. As such it is at least possible to hypothesise that unity and divisions amongst groups of workers are conditioned not just in the general abstract level of relations between capital and labour,

28

but also at the level of the economic sector and the firm, and the general political environment, which itself will be composed of forms of belonging and differentiation around numerous axes, none of which can be grasped by reading them off from some static notion of class and the forms of belonging associated with it. This suggests that the issue of division or unity along or across markers of social differentiation such as 'race' or nationality, are open to variation according to particular sectoral and occupational histories.

Bearing this in mind, and given that immigrant workers "were no longer filling gaps in peripheral branches like agriculture and building but were becoming a vital part of the labour force in key industries like engineering and chemicals" and there was "growing competition... to obtain the 'most desirable' immigrants..." (Castles and Kosack, 1972, p.9) it may well be that the marginal advantages of "local workers with regard to material conditions and status" (p.16) were being eroded. This is an empirical matter but it does caution against adopting an abstract theoretical position which sees racial/national divisions as mechanistically created by capital. Moreover it suggests that both empirical and theoretical analysis is required to assess the historically specific role which racially differentiated workers, in all their diversity and complexity, may play in any particular economy at a given moment.

BLACK WORKERS IN BRITAIN

Just as there may be no simple or singular division between 'immigrant' and indigenous workers so too 'immigrant' workers themselves cannot be assumed to be straight forwardly homogenous. As already mentioned there is the distinction between migrants from 'colonial' and those from 'proximate' countries, with the resultant difference in citizenship status. In addition migrant workers are subject to a process of internal differentiation in terms of their location within a particular national economy as in the case of black workers in the Greater London area referred to above. There is also the distinction between the location of migrants in any one national economy and that between

29

the economies of different nation states.

In terms of the former, Castles and Kosack (1972) recognise this process of differentiation. Thus they refer to one section of what they call the "immigrant labour force" being kept in perpetually mobile and transient state, floating between firms within sectors; between sectors themselves; and between the home and receiving country. The other section is differentiated in that it is offered better employment prospects and the opportunity to settle. Despite this however they will still remain part of the reserve army of labour because of their role as a deflationary pressure on wages; their inferior position as compared with indigenous labour; and their lack of political rights. It is clear that these general characteristics reflect the situation of migrant workers in many of the countries of Western Europe more than they do that of Britain.

Certainly it is true that black workers were concentrated in particular sectors and occupations in the British economy (Lewis, 1993). Moreover these were often relatively lower paid, with worse conditions than pertained throughout much of the economy. In a report by the Unit for Manpower Studies (1976) it was stated that despite immigrants forming only 6% of the economically active population they were heavily concentrated in particular occupations and industries. These were car manufacture, textiles, clothing, brick and metal manufacture, and catering. They tended to be in occupations defined as unskilled or semi-skilled, working awkward and unsocial hours, particularly in terms of being over-represented in shift work, on low pay and with bad conditions. In this sense the 1950s and 1960s saw similar processes at work in Britain as in other west European labour importing countries. This was particularly so in that the strategy often used in certain sectors of the economy "was neither to replace men with machines nor to adjust wage rates in order to attract indigenous workers back into areas of labour shortage, but to import labour" (Braham et al., 1981, p.17). That the employment of black workers was to act as a substitute to investment in capital equipment as if the matter were a rather simple either/or has been challenged in relation to at least one sector of the British economy, a

30

point to which I shall return below. Here I simply point to a general similarity between the situation in Britain and other west European states.

There were however two ways in which the migration of black labour to Britain, predominantly from the New Commonwealth, differed from elsewhere in Europe. The first was in terms of citizenship status and has already been discussed. The second was that the levels of immigration into Britain were equal to, or even less than, levels of emigration from Britain. This had the overall effect of limiting the level of growth of the labour force, which helps to explain both why the degree of sectoral and occupational segregation was not as tight as elsewhere in Europe and why there was no automatic correlation between high employment of black workers and low levels of capital investment. In terms of the key features of a Fordist regime then, it is possible that black workers in Britain had a key role to play in the general proliferation of this method of organising production. For as Duffield has shown:

> The development of the mass market in consumer goods in post-war Britain was synonymous with the modernisation of all branches of manufacturing industry... As a general rule, immigrant workers were absorbed as part of the process of change and modernisation (1988, p.2).

Moreover the fact that most black workers in Britain who entered the country prior to the implementation of the 1971 Immigration Act in 1973 had full de jure political rights limits the applicability of those analyses of migrant labour which centre on the lack of political and legal rights (see for example, Castells, 1975, and Nikolinakos, 1975). The foregoing then outlines the general contours shared across Europe. Here we need to define the specificity of black workers in Britain in terms of two factors: firstly, the role of black workers in relation to Fordist labour processes; and secondly the more or less explicit supposition in much of the literature, that the reproduction of the structural location of black "migrant labour, having been 'produced' by the demand for labour in socially undesirable and low wage sectors of the economy, is confined to those sectors, often by specific policies and

practices..." (Phizacklea and Miles, 1980 p.14). In other words we need to examine the extent to which it is theoretically and empirically adequate to suggest that the structural conditions which created the need for black workers have persisted to the extent that the original structural location is continually reproduced.

LABOUR PROCESS

The labour process within capitalism has a two-fold aim at its core - to produce use values for exchange and to create the conditions for the accumulation of surplus value.

> Our capitalist has two objects in view: in the first place, he (sic) wants to
> produce a use-value that has a value in exchange, that is to say, an article
> destined to be sold, a commodity; and secondly, he (sic) desires to produce
> a commodity whose value shall be greater than the sum of the values of the
> commodities used in its production, that is the means of production and the
> labour power, that he (sic) purchased with his (sic) good money in the open
> market (Marx, 1976, p.181).

However while at a general, abstract level, the objective may remain the same as long as the formation is capitalist, the form of the labour process will vary across sector, firm and time. Notwithstanding such variation, it is common practice to talk of a particular form of labour process dominating specific phases of capitalism and from the second world war until recent times the form of labour process has been characterised as Fordist and I have already identified the main elements which characterise this system. Yet the characterisation of the post second world war era as Fordist is not without its critics (Williams et al 1992). However, precisely because it has been accepted uncritically in relation to black workers, we need to see what role black workers in Britain played in this system of production apart from that associated with the reserve army of labour discussed in the previous section.

We know from the work on Western Europe that migrant workers are often found in those

sectors and occupations in which Fordist flow line production predominates, car assembly for example. In Britain, for reasons already indicated, the concentration in such sectors was less pronounced. However like the UMS study cited earlier, Braham et al (1981) cite 1971 census data to show that migrant workers, both those from the New Commonwealth and others, still have a higher presence in vehicle manufacture than for industry as a whole. In the case of black workers from the NCW this was 3% as compared to 2.2% for industry as a whole (pp.57-58n). Moreover a very high percentage of the workers based at the car industry factories studied by sociologists such as Goldthorpe and Lockwood in the 1960s were Irish migrants, a factor overlooked by these authors but which may have had considerable implications for their instrumentalism thesis had ethnicity and migrant identity been given analytical prominence.[2]

Other industry specific studies have also demonstrated a relationship between the employment of black workers and Fordist production processes. Two issues flow from this. Firstly, where production is organised on standardised mass production lines, it is often accompanied by shift work and we have already seen that black workers, both female and male, tend to be over-represented in shift work. In periods of labour shortage or high wage bills there will be an incentive for capital to find labour from other than traditional sources and which can be constructed in some way as cheaper than this traditional labour. In this way it is possible to discern a further link between the recruitment of black/migrant workers and what has been characterised as Fordism. Approaches which focus on the overarching dynamics of the economy as they impact at sector level can then begin to delineate the structural influences on patterns of black employment. But to say this is not to say that the broad patterns will be reproduced in all sectors, for all time. Neither can this line of analysis be used to suggest that black or other racialised labour will always be used as a substitute for capital investment. Secondly, if black labour is generally cheaper

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[2]This point was suggested to me by Dr. Mary Hickman of the Irish Studies Centre at the University of North London; personal communication.

yet equally suitable in terms of the skills required for the job, it must be at least theoretically possible that rather than such labour being sought as an alternative to capital investment it may instead be a requirement for it.

Indeed in their study of part of the wool industry in West Yorkshire, Cohen and Jenner (1968/9) found a correlation between both these points.

> Thus for the purchase of new machinery to be an economic proposition it must be very intensively worked which implies some form of shift working. Additionally, much of the older machinery was worked by (white) female labour and there are institutional obstacles to the employment of females on shift work and therefore males must be employed instead to man the new machinery. In some cases females worked day shifts, males nights.... Obviously the decision to invest would depend not only on a company's assessment of the level of demand but also on whether they could obtain the *labour necessary to keep its new expensive machinery at near full capacity.* In eight instances (out of 17) the companies stated that the *reason they first employed Pakistani workers was closely associated with new capital investment that involved either shift working or very long hours* (p.113, my emphasis).

The authors caution against making any elaborate generalisations to either the wool industry as a whole or the economy in general. Nevertheless this early work does indicate a correspondence between the employment of black male labour and the introduction of new, more Fordist production methods. Sucah an indication is similar to that suggested by Phizacklea and Miles referred to above.

Fevre (1985), looking at the wool industry at a later time, takes an opposite view of the direction of cause. That is rather than migrant labour existing because low paid jobs with bad conditions exist, he suggests that these jobs exist because of the existence of a pool of migrant labour. Thus he quotes Castells (1975) favourably who says

34

immigrant workers do not exist because there are 'arduous and badly paid jobs' to be done, but rather, arduous and badly paid jobs exist because immigrant workers are present or can be sent for to do them (in Fevre, p.159).

In this way he turns the argument on its head and in so doing suggests that the abstract notion of the labour market needs to be problematised. Two points are raised in relation to this. Firstly, that employers do not just need to increase a supply of labour, rather they need a supply of labour of a given type, willing to accept a certain cluster of conditions. With this in mind he suggests secondly that labour shortages can be created by a manipulation of wages and conditions. Thus the employment of 'cheap labour' is a strategy chosen by some employers against other options, for example making jobs more attractive or developing training schemes.

Thus for Fevre there is a link between the employment of black workers and industrial change but the key factor is the relationship between discrimination and the adoption of particular strategies on the part of employers. He defines discrimination as the exclusion of black workers from types of employment (p.164). Thus it is not that black workers in the wool industry were

> particularly suited to the de-skilled jobs created in wool textiles but rather unable to reject them... the workers who provided cheap labour went along with modernisation because they had no alternative (because) they were denied access to other sources of employment because most employers discriminated against Asian applicants (p.163).

Thus the existence of discrimination creates a type of labourer which, when added to a strategy aimed at increasing competitiveness and market share, facilitates

> the transformation of the labour process ... designed to increase the intensity of exploitation (which) in accomplishing this, ... made wool textile work less attractive (p.162).

Fevre recognises that for discrimination to be possible certain signifiers of difference have

to be present outside of the workplace, and as such

> (b)lacks are made available as cheap labour by the prior existence of racial categorisation and discrimination. The *roots* of discrimination cannot be found *in* the capitalist labour process(p.171, my emphasis).

But if the labour process is only tangentially related to discrimination, capitalist relations of production in general do accommodate it. Certainly Fevre's work confirms the view that an analytical focus on discrimination in social relations of work is useful and necessary. For example Stewart (1983) looked at empirical data and found that there was a differential of between 9 and 12% in occupational attainment for a given level of education and flat experience profile. As a result discrimination acts to debar black workers from entry into a whole range of higher level jobs.

Quantitative analysis such as this would then seem to lend weight to Fevre's approach. Indeed this formulation is an advance on the approach of writers such as Cohen and Jenner, who locate discrimination in the cultural or skill characteristics of black workers themselves. Nevertheless it suffers from suggesting that racialised social relations are somehow suspended within the labour process. The labour process is implicitly presented as simply a technical relation as far as non-class relations are concerned. However no clear reasoning is given as to why and how racialised and/or gendered social relations would stop at the door of the workplace other than to debar entry to some groups of workers in some industries. This problem essentially derives from the narrow definition of discrimination so that we are led to believe that if black workers do gain entry into particular jobs then racism as a set of ideological and material relations ceases to exist. I would suggest however that we need at least to hypothesise that whilst discrimination as exclusion is one aspect of racism, it can configure in a number of ways which complicate the matter over and above mere exclusion. Indeed a central argument in the thesis is that the constitution and reconstitution of racialised populations and subjects was precisely a part of the foundation for the spatially specific entry into qualified social work which occurred in the 1980s.

So far the discussion of the relationship between black workers, cheap labour and rationalisation has been predominantly concerned with either theoretical formulations or empirical studies based in manufacturing industry. Whilst this can offer some interesting lines of enquiry it is unclear how far the general position of black workers in industry is reproduced in the state welfare sector. This is because there is relatively little work done on this sector although I have already referred to a study of the NHS carried out in North London in the early 1980s. Here I want to return to this research in more detail not least because it concerns mainly black/migrant women workers and therefore provides a useful counterbalance to the male centred approaches of analyses of manufacturing industry.

Reference has already been made to the way in which the NHS was given exemption status in the progressive immigration legislation and the parallel controls on 'aliens'. In this way it was argued various sectors of the British economy were able to ensure a supply of migrant labour. Against this background the North London researchers wished to ascertain the extent to which such labour was used as a source of cheap labour and as a means by which to introduce changes in the labour processes within the NHS in ways similar to that in industry.

In terms of the use of black/migrant labour as a source of cheap labour, defined in relation to both pay and conditions, they found that the situation was very similar to that in industry. Thus black workers filled the least attractive jobs in terms of status and conditions and this was replicated throughout the occupational and professional hierarchy. For example within the old division of nursing between SRN and SEN qualifications, black/migrant women were more heavily concentrated in the lower SEN grade both as trainees and qualified staff (Doyal, Hunt and Mellor, 1981, p58). This concentration affected all aspects of the job including pay levels, tasks and responsibilities and the career prospects of the women. Similarly this status distribution was also found to exist between and within regional health authorities, teaching and non-teaching hospitals and medical

37

specialities. A similar concentration was also found amongst doctors, who were more concentrated in low status geriatrics and psychiatric medicine.

However care needs to be taken not to simply suggest that the situation in state welfare is a simple reflection of that in industry. For

> ... if we look more closely at these structural similarities, it becomes clear that some of the underlying processes are very different .... the significance of the use of migrant labour is not always the same in the two contexts (Doyal, Hunt and Mellor, 1981, p.61)

particularly in terms of attempts to rationalise labour processes.

The main reason for this difference lies in the very different nature of labour processes within the NHS compared to that in industry. As Cousins (1986) points out a feature of state employment, particularly in the NHS, is that a whole range of labour processes are present with widely varying tasks, skills, pay levels, and degrees of autonomy and authority. Compare for example the mix of features in the occupations of doctor, electrician, nurse, cook, laboratory technician or pharmacist, particularly given the different configurations of class, gender and 'race' which are encompassed in these. Here we are concerned with labour processes in those occupations which have varying claims to professional status and which, in the context of state welfare, are subject to the contradictory tendencies thrown up by the imposition of capitalist rationality on the one hand, and non-market rationality on the other. The effect of this is that the provision of services is governed within and by the processes of public policy making, which is itself buffeted by the contradictions of both the accumulation process and the legitimation process (Cousins, 1986). The result has been what she calls an "administrative logic" with a bureaucratic form and a hierarchy of professional authority which determines the demand for and allocation of services. Clearly the introduction of the internal market and the other major organisational changes introduced into the NHS is leading to a recomposition of the professional hierarchy which is likely to have implications for both

how the state welfare sector is theorised and for how labour processes are organised within it. Clearly however if we are to understand the changes which are occurring today we need to try and unpack the ways in which gender and 'race' entered the labour process in the NHS and other aspects of state employment prior to contemporary restructuring.

In this context the North London work is illustrative because it casts some light on the relationship between the employment of black/migrant female labour and attempts to rationalise NHS labour processes. For example in nursing Doyal, Hunt and Mellor found that the employment of black nurses played an important part in the attempt to reinforce the division between the two branches of nursing (SRN/SEN) by deskilling the SEN qualification at the same time as creating a professional career structure in the SRN category which followed the Salmon Report recommendations (p.65). The authors argue that this had the effect of transforming a division between the two branches on the basis of class into one based on 'race'. As such they offer a clear example of the way in which different axes of social differentiation can become dominant at different historical moments, though having said this it is not clear why it could not be class and 'race'. Despite this they suggested that without the employment of black/migrant nurses the NHS would not have been able to meet the steadily growing demand for long term care without a dramatic increase in costs. In this way such staff have helped provide a buffer to the effects of the "fiscal crisis of the state". From this they conclude that

> attempts have been made to use migrants to facilitate the rationalisation of
> the labour process in health care as they have in industry but with much less
> success. Indeed it may well be that it is precisely the obstacles to
> rationalisation in the health sector that explain its continued use of such
> large numbers of overseas workers (p.62, their emphasis).

These obstacles lie in the fact that human services are not very susceptible to rationalisation because "production line" logic cannot be applied to the work of health care. Moreover technological developments cannot deliver either the benefits of economies of scale nor do they necessarily reduce the amount of labour needed. Indeed the exact

39

opposite is often true. Thus black and other racialised female labour was a major source of cheap labour for large sections of the state welfare at a time of increased demand and when capital intensive and labour saving reorganisations proved difficult to secure.

The works considered above were pitched at two levels of analysis - either at the level of the mode of production, or at the sector or industry level where black/immigrant workers were over-represented. The strengths of these analyses lies in the insights gained into the processes of differentiation among labour forces at a time of full employment and or the early manifestation of economic crisis. It is also possible to argue that approaches such as this can offer useful and important understandings of the mechanisms which produce the high levels of black *unemployment*, especially amongst young men between the ages of 16 and 25, which has been a feature of major crisis and the restructuring which followed it.

Where the approaches identified above are limited however is in relation to an analysis of the changes and developments in black *employment*. To understand these developments a shift in the objects of enquiry are necessary. At the level of the social formation (rather than mode of production) it is necessary to begin from the changed juridical, social and discursive position of diverse black populations. This requires a deconstruction of the ontological starting point - i.e. the black, immigrant, migrant or ethnic minority worker. For these are not the same person under a new or different name. Each term connotes a different kind of subject who stands in quite discrete social, discursive and legal positions from one another. Analyses of the employment of racialised labour needs then to specify which category is at the centre of the analysis and this group then needs to be located in the overall social formation. At the level of a specific sector or occupation a similar process is required. Here the employment of these different racialised subjects needs to be analysed from a social as well as economic perspective. This involves two connected processes. On the one hand, the role the specific sector or occupation plays in the overall regime of regulation needs to be analysed. This is especially true in regard to state organised welfare. On the other hand, the ways in which the links between regulation and

40

specific occupations connects to the reconstitution of certain populations into different kinds of racialised subject also needs attention. It should be clear that an analysis such as this is not possible within the frameworks suggested by the existing literature and in what follows I suggest an alternative approach which may prove more fruitful.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The review of the literature on black workers in the British economy showed that there had been a thematic emphasis on the advantages to capital (and the state) of employing racialised labour forces, and/or on the mechanisms and effects of discrimination. As such most of the work examines the fate of black/migrant labour within a framework foregrounding generalized labour shortage or labour surplus. Whilst this has offered valuable insights into the interconnections between 'race', racism and class in economic and political terms, two problems have emerged from the concentration of research within such a structuralist framework. One is that black and other racialised labour are treated as abstract categories, conceptualised as always and only the object of economic and political forces. *Even where there is consideration and analysis of black and anti-racist* trade union struggle, the approach still centres on the need to establish class unity by the dissolution of 'subjective' and 'mistaken' ideas which only serve the interests of capital and/or a status quo in which white workers reap the benefits of racist exploitation. The effect of this is to forego analysis of the everyday of working life as organised around and through the intersections of class, 'race', gender (and age) and to bypass the 'subjects' which are constituted thereby. The second limitation of the literature is that analysis of black and other racialised labour forces tends to proceed as if such labourers will always only occupy a position as a fraction of the reserve army of labour. Even where they enter the professions it will tend to be assumed that this will only follow on as a result of abstract processes of proletarianisation.

Aims

Most of my focus emerged from recognition of the first problem area. Although I wanted to consider an occupation with at least some claim to professional status I

have eschewed the perspectives contained in the literature on black employment patterns and experiences for my own study of black women social workers. Specifically I have been concerned to investigate two related areas: firstly, the ways in which a discursive and structural space was opened up for the employment of black women as qualified social workers; and secondly to consider the discursive fields through which black women constituted their subjectivities and constructed a view as to the specificity of their contribution to local authority social services departments. My aim has been to move away from the structuralist framework in which categories of labourer are treated merely as *objects* in the circuits of capital and the social relations which these produce. More positively I wanted to investigate the ways in which labouring subjects are produced in concrete, situated settings. Such an investigation begins to fill a major gap in the literature on both employment and subjectivity. As stated in the introduction, the origins of this concern lay in an epistemological and political commitment to conceiving of black subjects as actively involved in the deconstruction, reconstruction and contestation of their social worlds. As such, this approach has been made possible by the theoretical developments in a number of fields. These include black and white feminisms, theories of post-coloniality, and the theorisation of processes of racialisation. I have also been influenced by the related developments in post-structuralist theory. Specifically this concerns notions of the 'subject' and 'subject positions' and the related idea that these are multiple, shifting and contingent. The benefit of this approach is that it suggests that it is the interplay between social and discursive processes that open up spaces for the production of categories of labourer *and* that what it means to occupy such categories has an interiorised aspect through which one 'knows oneself' and gives meaning to the everyday. The term 'everyday' or 'everyday life' refers to the immediate environment in which a person carries out the specific tasks associated with homelife, employment, leisure etc. 'Everyday' takes place in a ready-made world comprised of "customs, tasks, judgements, prejudices, (and)

emotional patterns" (Heller, 1984, p. 48). Importantly it is the sphere in which the individual both shapes their world and shapes her or himself. It is the sphere therefore, which connects social processes and regimes of meaning. By focusing on the interconnection between social processes and fields of meaning I move away from the structuralist paradigm. In this way I hoped to show the tensions and contradictions which emerged between and within the production of a specific subject position - 'black woman social worker' - and the habitation of this position.

Design of the Study

Having established the above points of enquiry an interview aide memoire was drawn up in an attempt to capture these issues in various accounts. Bearing in mind the theoretical approach which underlay these points of enquiry I decided to adopt a discourse analytic approach (see below for a discussion of why this approach was adopted). However in order to test the theoretical and practical applicability of this method it was considered advisable to conduct a pilot study.

<u>Theoretical concerns</u>

The theoretical approaches which underlie a discourse analytic approach to research suggests that it is particularly well suited to this study. However it soon became clear that an early attempt at using the approach would be beneficial. There are two reasons for this.

The first reason stems directly from the discourse analytic method itself. In this approach the interview is seen as a productive process in which the interviewer is an active participant in the interaction. This is related to the researchers' desire to elicit the widest range possible of discursive registers through which meaning is given to the social relations in which participants are embedded. In this context the interviewer will present challenges to the participant in order to elicit the "connections between an interviewee's accounting practices and variations in functional context" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.164). This requires a fairly

detailed, but nevertheless flexible, interview schedule in which the questions and probes are clearly set out.

The second reason for carrying out the pilot was also related to the nature of the discourse analytic method but here it centres on the fact that there is no fixed or standard 'method' as such for conducting the research. Its 'method' consists of constant movement between stages in the analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, Stiven and Potter, 1987; Wetherell and Potter, 1992) and as such could be termed a developmental method in which the skill of working with discourse analysis increases through practice.

Practical concerns

If these are the theoretical issues which made a pilot study advisable there are obvious practical concerns which flow directly from these. Thus the pilot also established:

i) whether the format of the aide memoire worked: for example, the order of the topic areas.

ii) whether the language of the topic area questions was clear and appropriate for the purpose. Although I envisaged the interview as a *process* whereby meanings were constructed and negotiated, it was still necessary to ensure as much initial clarity as possible in the way I introduced topic area questions. In this respect I also wanted to see if the language used and the ordering sequence allowed for flexibility in the way topic areas were introduced. This was to ensure that discussion of such areas flowed in an organic way thus keeping the pattern and tenor of the discussion.

iii) to get some prior experience of tape recording interviews and then working with the transcripts to discern discursive patterns and the structures of meaning these produced. It was hoped that this would also help ensure that the time spent interviewing in the main study was as productive as possible.

iv) to see if there were any new areas which needed to be introduced or if any existing areas needed modification.

Format.

Drafting the aide memoir comprised three parts. First there was an initial formulation of the areas to be covered which derived from my central concerns. This was followed by a series of discussions with people whose working concerns were related to the broad area of social services, social work and 'race' and racism. Five people were approached in this way. One, a black woman researcher of south Asian descent who was working at the time of the discussion in the National Institute For Social Work. Another black woman, also of south Asian descent, who had at one time worked as a social worker but at the time of the discussion was employed in one of the regional offices of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work. Two others, one a man of south Asian descent, the other a woman of similar descent were at the time working on research projects in the Race Equality Unit of the National Institute for Social Work. The fifth person was a white woman of European origin who was attached to a research project at one of the London polytechnics investigating gender and social services employment. These discussions confirmed that the concerns and topic areas already identified were appropriate and meaningful and represented unexplored areas in the existing research literature.

The Pilot.

I then conducted a pilot study proper and interviewed four black women social workers (all qualified), none of whom worked in either the borough or city authority which I had identified for the main sample. Again these interviews confirmed the general appropriateness of the topic areas and the language used for introducing or framing them. However these interviews did establish one new area which ought to be covered in the main study interviews. This new area was that of the professional status of social work and the participants' own identities as

professional workers. As a result I introduced a new field into the aide memoir - that of 'professional identity/status' (area 6 in the aide memoire, see appendix one).

Overall then the pilot proved useful for establishing the topic areas to be considered in the interviews; ensuring familiarity with these areas and the method of recording. This in turn made for an easier atmosphere during the course of the interviews.

The Main Study.

The study was composed of three parts. The first was an analysis of a selection of Parliamentary debates as recorded in Hansard. The second involved a similar analysis of a wider range of Social Services Committee papers in the two local authorities from which the interview participants were drawn. Finally, I conducted a number of semi-structured open-ended interviews with black women social workers and some of their managers. Reading the Parliamentary papers, the Committee papers and carrying out the interviews took place during the period from January 1994 to March 1995.

The Parliamentary Debates - Hansard

Reports of all the main House of Commons debates on proposed legislation dealing with inner cities policy, local government powers, race relations, and social services work with children and adults were read. This covered a period from 1966 when the Local Government Act introduced Section 11 monies, to 1995 when this source of funds was coming to an end in its original form and for particular authorities. The pieces of legislation considered were: the 1966 Local Government Act; the 1969 Local Government Grants (Social Need) Act; the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act; the 1976 Race Relations Act; the 1989 Children Act; and the 1990 National Health Service and Community Care Act.

These statutes, and the debates which accompanied their passage through Parliament, formed the framework of successive central government policies which in turn provided part of the legal and financial context for the employment of black women (and men) to qualified social work positions in local authority social services departments. The debates played a key part in the constitution of the racialised populations from which black women social workers were drawn and amongst whom they were expected to work. In providing for local authority action in specific geographical and policy areas, a framework was established which would enable recruitment of black women (and men) to social services employment on a discursive terrain already racialised. I was interested in analysing the associations made between specific policy agendas, the demarcation of certain geographical areas and the presence of various black populations in these areas.

The Committee Papers

If central policy agendas and debates helped form part of the legal, financial and discursive fields through which black women (and men) were recruited to local authority social services departments, the specifics of their employment were established in the local policy arena. It was therefore necessary to examine and analyse the development of Social Services Committee (SSC) policy in the two authorities to elicit how black recruitment to qualified social work positions was achieved; what issues were considered to be addressed by such recruitment; and what subject positions were being constituted in these texts. I therefore analysed a large number of SSC reports (and where relevant a small number from other committees such as Finance and General Purposes or Equal Opportunities) for this purpose. As with the Hansard papers, many more were collected and read than are explicitly quoted in the thesis. All those which directly or indirectly addressed the issues of employing qualified black social workers or the delivery of services to 'ethnic minority' service users were read. In the borough authority this covered the years from 1982 to 1995. For the city authority the period ranged from

1985 to 1995. Each period starts from the point at which the authority began explicitly to address the issue of its work with a multi-racial/multi-ethnic population. Those texts which most clearly illustrated the general direction and tenor of the policy, and the discourses which were inscribed within them, are referred to directly. The remainder provide part of the general backcloth against which my argument is constructed.

Criteria for selecting the local authorities

Two local authority Social Services Departments were selected as places where sufficient black women participants in the research might be found, these were the London Borough of Hackney and Birmingham City Council. The authorities themselves were selected using data from the 1991 Census which showed population profiles for local authority areas in terms of ethnic mix (HMSO, 1992). Two main criteria were used for this selection. One was that at least ten percent of the population in the local authority catchment area be classified as 'ethnic minority' for the purposes of the Census. This would roughly approximate to half of the national population so defined and such authorities could therefore be considered as meeting that officially undefined, but often accorded, status of having a 'significant ethnic minority population'. A second criterion for the selection of the local authorities was that they had some record of, or commitment to, actively seeking to recruit 'ethnic minority' women (and men) to their qualified social work staff complement. Using these criteria I had hoped to be able to seek volunteer participants from a borough, city and county authority. In the event permission was only obtained from one borough and one city authority, with qualifying county authorities refusing to co-operate with the study.

Seeking interview participants

Having identified suitable local authorities a letter of introduction was sent to the Director of Social Services outlining the aims of the study and requesting

permission to seek interview participants. In both cases I was invited to a meeting with either the Director or a senior deputy further to discuss the project and clarify any points of concern. In both cases the project was favourably received and I was given permission and advice on how to proceed. Following this a second letter was sent to Area Office managers which again cited the aims of the project and established that I wished to interview black women members of their social work staff. In the borough department all Area Offices were contacted (four in total), though in one I had no response from Area managers. In those where there was a response I met with the manager and they then offered to circulate the call for volunteers around the teams for which they had responsibility. Where possible I also arranged a time for interview with the Area Office managers. In the city authority I selected five of the total number of Area Offices using the same criteria of 'ethnic minority' population used to select the authorities. I followed the same process of sending letters of introduction to Area Office managers and all but one replied.

The Interview Participants

Some of the theoretical perspectives underlying the selection of interview participants are discussed in the following two sections of this chapter. Here I give a basic profile of the interviewees. A total of thirty two interviews were carried out. Ten of these were with those who for the purposes of this study were identified as 'managers'. That is they were at Area Office level or above and therefore had no direct daily responsibility for caseload allocation or management. Eight were Area Office managers: four from the Community Care division of the Directorates and four from their Children and Families divisions. Of these, four were women who were defined as belonging to an 'ethnic minority'; two were white English women and two were white English men. No 'ethnic minority' men with the position of Area Office manager volunteered to participate in the study. The remaining two of the 'manager' sub-set were Assistant Directors of Social

Services: one with responsibility for the entire Community Care division, the other with similar responsibility for the entire Children and Families division. These were both white English, one a woman, the other a man.

The remaining twenty two interview participants were all black women social workers up to and including team manager level. Three were team managers and I included them in this sub-set because they have daily responsibility for allocating and overseeing caseloads. In extreme circumstances they will also have direct responsibility for specific cases. In both authorities there was a category of social worker in which there was a mix of direct case and some supervisory responsibility for other staff. The name given to this post varied but in general the grade was linked to career development and allocated on the basis of length of duty and experience of complex case loads. In the accompanying table I refer to this grade as 'senior'. Six of the interview participants held such a position. The remaining thirteen were on basic social worker grades. Nearly all the participants were found in response to the memo asking for volunteers (see Appendix 2) which was circulated by Area Office managers. In addition a small number were found as a result of word of mouth communication with other women who had already volunteered to be participants. This included one participant from the borough Area Office where no response from the Area Office managers, two of whom were black men, was forthcoming.

Table One

Summary of Interview Participants

	Grade				
	AD	AOM	TM	SNR	BG
Ethnic Origin					
White English	1(woman)	4 (2 women) (2 men)			
	1(man)				
'Ethnic Minority'		4 (women)	3 (women)	6 (women)	13(women)

| Total | 2 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 13 |

[Abbreviations: AD = Assistant Director; AOM = Area Office Manager; TM = Team Manager; SNR = 'senior' but indicates the intermediate grade referred to in the main text; BG = Basic Grade Social Worker].

All but one of the interviews was carried out in the participant's office. The one exception to this took place in my home at the request of the participant. The length of the interviews varied between one and two and one half hours, although an approximate average was one and one half hours. All the tapes were listened to at least twice after the interview, with one exception when at the first attempt it was discovered that a technical fault made it unlistenable. This unfortunately was with one of the two Assistant Directors of Social Services. Financial and time limitations prohibited the transcription of all the interview tapes, so that twenty of the total number were transcribed. Notes indicating the main areas covered, the key issues highlighted, and the discursive resources utilised were taken of the remaining twelve. This allowed me to use these tapes for direct quotation when I thought a new or particular formulation was being introduced. However in the majority of cases the twenty transcribed interviews form the pool from which the accounts utilised in the chapters which follow were drawn as these provided more than enough material. In addition it soon became clear in the interview process that different participants often returned to similar discursive terrains.

Rationale for the selection of black women as the main interview participants
In keeping with much recently published material and black cultural activity, I start by rejecting the idea that the term 'black' refers to any 'naturally' existing group of people - existing, as it were, outside history (see for example Hall, 1992, reprinted in Donald and Rattansi, 1992; Gilroy, 1987). Instead I start from the position that 'race' and racial categories are semiotic categories, or signs whose meanings are derived within and across a complex configuration of economic, social, political and

cultural relations. As such racial categories are subject to an "... ever changing nexus of representation, discourse and power" (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p.1) and are open to contestation.

From this perspective 'race' and racial categories are envisaged as always in process but this is not to suggest that the sign of 'race' and the categories which flow from it have no generalised meanings. Indeed the tenacity of the idea that 'race' indicates some essential characteristics is such that it has become part of the symbolic tool kit of all of those who live in societies where 'race' and/or ethnicity are key features in the organisation of social relations. If then there are no racial groups existing prior to their classification, the approach adopted here seeks to analyse the 'hows', 'wheres' and 'whens' of racial meanings. The feminist attempt to distinguish between sex and gender indicated a similar attempt to disconnect a signifier of difference (gender) from a signified which is attributed essential characteristics. Thus 'gender' too is a category which may not have equivalence to an assumed homogenous referent existing outside of social and cultural relations. As such it too needs to be disaggregated. In a consideration of the feminist term 'sisterhood' Brah (1992) writes that whilst the noun 'woman' refers to a "... specificity constituted within and through historically specific configurations of gender relations", this noun must be seen as only deriving its meaning in concert with a series of adjectives which give specificity to the noun and refer to, and act as symbols of "... a difference of social condition".(p.131). Such a conceptualisation is useful because it points to the simultaneous homogeneity and heterogeneity of the category 'woman' and as such provides a useful starting point for thinking about the category 'black woman'. More recent feminist work (e.g. Butler, 1993) has attempted to go one stage further and divest 'sex' and the body from a conceptualisation in which these are seen as outside the social. If this approach is adopted the task then becomes to consider how and when particular 'bodies' become inscribed with racial and sexual marks

(Guillaumin, 1995) which are then accorded a natural status. That said, the specific meanings and effects of such signifiers such as 'race'/ethnicity, sex/gender can only be investigated in specific contexts at specific historical moments. This is a question I address in relation to the idea of racialised bodies in chapter six.

It follows that I am using the concept 'black woman social worker' in an attempt to identify the ways in which racially, gendered categories are constructed and given meaning in a specific institutional setting. I do this in order to investigate how this category 'fits' with, and has effects on the lived experience of those who inhabit this subject position. 'Black woman social worker' metamorphosises from the position 'black woman' but even here I want to suggest that 'black women' do not exist outside specific social contexts - i.e. that they are constructed within a social relation conceptualised through a binary opposition: 'black woman/not black woman'. Of course those occupying the subject position 'black woman social worker' have already been positioned as 'black women' outside of the social services departmental context. In addition this positioning has also provided part of the content of their subjectivity. That is the women participants 'knew' themselves as 'black women' and the speaking positions embedded in the interviews were constructed from self-narratives which both produced and reflected this knowledge. However the discourses which produce the subject positions 'black women' and 'black women social workers' are neither singular nor unitary. This is demonstrated in the narratives through which participants constructed a 'self', although a dominant pattern was at times discernible in the accounts of the black women social workers. This discursive multiplicity and fluidity was also apparent in the contrasting 'knowledges' of 'black womanhood' spoken by the black women participants as against the dominant social services knowledges of 'black women' which circulated within the departments. The paradox is that it was precisely these dominant discourses about the contribution which black women social workers could offer SSDs that had underwritten the

initial recruitment of such staff. It is also the case that at times there are overlaps between the discursive resources called upon by the black women social workers and those articulated in departmental policy. It is the overlaps and tensions within and between these conflicting discourses that I analyse in the following chapters. Thus 'black woman social worker' should be considered as a category which is constantly shifting as it is re-articulated within fields of contestation between workers and managements; professionals and clients; and as these categories are themselves cut across by boundaries of 'race' and sex.

But who is included within the category 'black woman social worker' turns on the extent to which it is possible to postulate a specificity of social condition within the rapidly changing contexts of state welfare work and the extent to which use of the term manages to interpellate individuals and groups. Given the political context which in part helped to shape this study, a context in which a commitment to developing Afro-Asian unity was central, I would suggest that the terms 'black woman'/'black woman social worker' refer to an ethnically diverse population. That is, that they refer to female social workers whose origin or descent is African and/or Caribbean and/or Asian. I am assuming therefore that in terms of a "specificity of social condition" women from these groups do not occupy such distinct positions or have sufficiently divergent experiences within the social work employment context to justify a more narrowly focused sample. Work by Watt and Cook (1989) would seem to bear this out at the empirical level.

Having said this, in practice the vast majority of the participants were of African-Caribbean origin or descent and this was dependent on two factors. One is that in both departments the numbers of qualified social work staff from African or South Asian ethnic groups was very low relative to those of African-Caribbean descent. More significantly for the issues being discussed here is a second point related to the process of interpellation. The memo which was circulated around Area Offices

calling for volunteer participants referred to "black or other groups defined as ethnic minority" to be interviewed by a "black woman researcher". It therefore depended on attracting women who felt themselves to belong to such a category and wishing to talk to a woman whose own self-narrative foregrounded the term 'black'. Clearly the extent of identifications with either or both of these terms will have influenced those who felt they wanted to and were 'qualified' to come forward. The extent to which this may have limited the field of potential participants is a product of the risks taken when employing any given set of linguistic resources.

Conceptual Underpinnings and Methods of Analysis

The points raised above indicate that the overall approach adopted in the thesis is a social constructionist one. Use of the term social constructionism is so wide that it is difficult to suggest a single definition which is adequate to all those who write under this rubric. However I would suggest, following Burr (1995) that four general positions can be attributed to those working within this framework. These are that 'knowledge' is understood as historically and culturally specific; that a critical stance to 'regimes of truth' is adopted; that 'knowledge' is sustained by social processes, the result being that social processes carry the 'sediments' of discourses which have attained the position of 'truth' or common-sense; and that 'knowledges' lead to specific forms of social action (Burr, p.3-5). Given these general positions social constructionism rejects the idea that there is a 'reality' out there which can be discovered by disciplined social research and rather seeks to explore the ways in which diverse 'realities' become constructed by the interactions of people positioned within fields of social relations and meanings. Some have read this as resulting in a form of relativism in which the issue of evaluation is avoided. But if people are differently positioned within systems of signification the issue of power becomes central. Thus the social constructionism which I would want to adhere to is one in which systems of signification and the processes of differentiation this leads to are analysed for their power effects. That

is to what extent do these processes arise from and result in inequalities of power, voice and access.

A concept central to social constructionism as I am using it here is that of 'discourse'. Referring to research in social psychology, Burr (1995) has noted that use of this concept across a range of academic writing masks the different traditions which may underlay application of the term. For some, issues of power, subjectivity and identity are central concerns and as such they draw on post-structuralist and psychoanalytic frameworks (e.g. Weedon, 1987; Hollway, 1989). Others are more concerned with the 'performative' aspects of discourse - i.e. what is achieved by certain talk or writing (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

In this thesis both aspects of 'discourse' are drawn on and whilst at times one or other conception of discourse is foregrounded, overall I am concerned with both simultaneously. In this respect Butler's use of the concept of performativity is relevant and helpful. For her performativity refers to the effects produced by the citation and reiteration of normative judgements inherent in discursive practice.

> performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate "act", but,
> rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces
> the effects that it names. (Butler, 1993, p.2).

In this formulation a sharp division between the two conceptions of discourse noted above is refused and it is possible to hold onto the inter-relation between the two traditions then precisely *because* discourse as reiterative effect is productive of subjectivities, identities and selves and as such is "immanent to power" (p.15).

Given the approach adopted here the choice of method was dependent on the best way to hold the theoretical perspective and my aim to consider the production of

'black woman social worker' as both a subject position and a subjectivity. A 'method' which centred on the notion of texts was therefore most appropriate.

Ethnography

Participant observation, the classic formula for ethnographic work, leaves little room for texts (Clifford, 1986, p.1).

Much feminist examination of aspects of gender and employment has adopted an ethnographic approach (see for example, Cavendish, 1982; Glucksmann, 1990; Phizacklea, 1983). However given my concerns, I decided that an ethnographic approach was not appropriate. There were two main reasons for this, one practical, the other theoretical. The practical point relates to the issue of participant observation. In this study participant observation would have required that I negotiate a period of time in each authority when I trailed a social work team as they went about the allocation and management of caseloads. The fact that I am not qualified as a social worker prevented this and the central issue of client confidentiality would have been compromised in such a circumstance. In addition, I *was not interested in the social worker/client interaction, nor in observing* interactions between team members. As has been stated earlier, my concern was only with what black women social workers and their managers *say* about these interactions. Practically then ethnography was not the most appropriate method for this study.

The theoretical point follows directly from this last point. Thus my interest centred on the discursive construction of subjects and the subject positions they inhabit in concrete institutional settings. It was, to use Clifford's expression, (1986, p.10) the "expressive modes" through which an employment 'reality' was constructed that I was interested in. In this sense I did not start from a view that there was a pre-existing 'reality' that I was going to uncover and describe but rather that a set of meanings about a social world would be produced in the process of interaction

between myself and the interview participants. This suggested that a method which focused on text was more appropriate. For

> The predominant metaphors in anthropological research have been participant observation, data collection, and cultural description, all of which presuppose a standpoint outside - looking at, objectifying, or somewhat closer, "reading", a given reality (Clifford, 1986,p.11).

Whereas, once specific social or cultural settings are thought of as produced by the "interplay of voices, of positioned utterances" (Clifford, p.12) such objectification is avoided and discursive practice is foregrounded. Given the limitations for my purposes of the ethnographic approach I turned to discourse analysis as an alternative.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is concerned with how language is organised in the construction of accounts and how these accounts help construct a coherent social world for those producing the accounts. It is concerned with both how a piece of talk or other text is put together and what this text achieves. Like all analytical uses of the concept 'discourse', the discourse analytic approach is concerned with the processes by which technologies of meaning (i.e. taxonomies of classification and explanation) are given to particular social interactions which take place in a given context with a given set of linguistic resources (Wetherell, Stiven and Potter, 1987, p.60). Language, whether spoken or written, is seen as an active constitutor rather than simply a means by which to express or communicate something existing 'out there' or 'behind' the language. Because language is seen as performative, discourse analysis "... moves from using participants discourse as a *resource* for the construction of analysts' explanations ... to taking that discourse as an analytic *topic* in its own right ... (moreover) it takes the idea that language embodies the 'sediment' of social practices which undermine its use as a neutral descriptive medium" (Wetherell, Stiven and Potter, 1987, p.60, their emphases).

It is this combination which makes it a particularly powerful analytic method to adopt for this study. It allows the exploration of the correspondences, tensions and contradictions which may exist in participants' accounts as they give meaning to the everyday of the 'black woman social worker'.

The analytic power of this method is demonstrated by Wetherell, Stiven and Potter (1987) in their analysis of the views expressed by female and male university students on the status of employment opportunities for women. By analysing the effects of the combination of two, apparently conflicting, ideological forms the authors were able to show that the respondents can simultaneously perpetuate dominant ideas about sexual divisions in paid employment, while constructing themselves as free liberal thinkers committed to equal opportunities in the field of employment. Two important things were thereby demonstrated. Firstly, the processes by which a contingent social arrangement - i.e. the sexual division of labour in child care and its effects on employment opportunities for women - became represented as a natural or biological constraint about which there was little to be done. Secondly, that the "... dual combination of themes in our sample illustrates a very important point about ideology and discourse. Namely that ideology is not simply a set of propositions but is primarily a method of accounting or managing a representation" (p.63).

Clearly then the discourse analytic method can be usefully adopted in this study given my concern with the ways in which discourses construct subject positions and also act to give meaning to specific social experiences. Similarly, the approach is productive in eliciting the extent to which those occupying different and unequal structural positions within a specific institutional context may in fact draw on elements of the same discursive field(s), though not necessarily in the same way, in order to make sense of the social relationships in which they are embedded.

60

Accounts

Central to discourse analysis is the idea of an 'account'. At one level this term simply refers to any spoken narrative which reports on or explains an action or behaviour. More technically it has been defined to refer to the talk produced by people when they attempt to explain behaviour which is construed as 'odd' (Scott and Lyman, 1968). Since the introduction of the concept in 1961 by the philosopher Austin others, across a range of disciplinary barriers, have taken up and developed the idea (see for example, Semin and Manstead, 1983; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974).

To a large extent this development has concentrated on two areas. The development of a typology of accounts began with Austin's distinction between 'justifications' and 'excuses', where he sought to show that these were complex categories but nevertheless were structured by and formulated within a range of pre-existing repertoires. Later work by ethnomethodologists moved away from the focus on categorisation of accounts and sought to elucidate the structural and formal qualities of everyday conversation. Thus they attempted to reveal the structural elements in conversation and the ways in which these elements both order the sequence of talk between partners in a conversation and facilitate the construction of meaning. Thus the production of accounts is both a structured and an active process. This is true for all language use whether it be in conversation, other forms of speech, or writing. It is also in this process of language as action that 'selves' and 'others' are produced, as are the meanings of experience. Thus the 'selves' and 'others' produced in accounts are contingent subjects and in this sense it possible to discern a proximity between a notion of accounts as linguistic action and the broad approaches of post-structuralism. For

> ... in its insistence upon the shifting, transitory and contestable nature of the meaning of language, and therefore of our experience and identity, post

structuralism has identified language as a site of struggle, conflict and

potential personal and social change (Burr, 1995, p.44).

This approach to language (and the discourses embedded within it) guided my

analysis of all the data in this study - i.e. the Hansard debates, the Committee

Papers and the accounts generated during the interview process. What is at stake

in this study is competing and contradictory discourses of 'race' and ethnicity.

Given this concern, the notion of accounts used here is neither that of typology nor

structure. Rather my interest in the talk enunciated in the interviews centred on

four things:

a) how black women social workers constituted themselves as such subjects

within the discursive patterns which emerged;

b) how black and white, female and male managers constituted the category black

woman social worker;

c) how, and at what moments, 'race' and gender entered the discursive patterns;

and

d) how organisational imperatives and professional discourses mediated, and were

mediated by, 'race' and gender.

Following earlier work (e.g. Mercer and Longman, 1992; Potter and Wetherell,

1987; and Wetherell and Potter, 1992) my interest in accounts developed when the

pilot interviews suggested that racialised and gendered subjects did not exist

outside of the languages used to 'describe' them - i.e. outside history, society and

discourse - and that the operation of 'race' and gender is always contingent. In

this case they were organisationally and professionally contingent as well as

socially and culturally. I became interested in investigating accounts to see the

moments at, and methods by, which discourses of 'race' and gender were mobilised

to construct the meanings of social relations in the workplace. My accounts then

were those sequences of talk when one, some or all four areas listed above were

discernible (explicitly or implicitly) during the process of the interview.

These accounts were collected from a series of individuals occupying different structural and discursive positions within a specific organisational context. In the general approach adopted in this study these differential positionings are important because discourses are understood as constitutive of both subject positions and the ways in which people give meaning to the occupations of such positions. But if talk, understood as text, is a central element in the creation and maintenance of peoples' social worlds, it is also the case that such texts are embedded within wider discursive and structural locations and cannot be produced outside these. As Mercer and Longman (1992) have put it in relation to a method of analysis similar to and influential upon discourse analysis:

> For us, the relevance of the conversation analysis approach lies in its depiction of accounts as conversational events which, although produced by individual speakers, are most properly understood as elements of a social, interactional process (pp.108-109).

In this sense then there are two dimensions to the social nature of talk or accounts. First, the discursive repertoires that an individual has access to are themselves socially produced. Second the ways in which individuals use these resources are themselves social in the interactional sense. That is, individuals use them to negotiate their particular social world in interaction with particular others who are deemed to occupy specific positions in a given setting. Given this two dimensional focus on the social and relational process of the production of accounts, the context in which an account is elicited is important. Thus one cannot overstate the significance of these accounts being produced in the context of one-to-one interviews with a black woman researcher where the focus of the entire interview was on the meanings attached to the category 'black woman social worker'. This specific research context was itself placed within a particular occupational, organisational and public sector context with a recent history of highly charged debates around equal opportunities in the fields of 'race' and gender.

Thus the available repertoires from which meanings attached to 'black woman social worker' can be constructed emerged from this organisational context and the positions occupied by the participants to the interview process.

Limitations of the sample

As with any sample there are a number of limitations which can be identified in this study. These fall into four main areas.

Classificatory Categories

The first concerns the problem of definitional or classificatory categories. Despite the fact that it has been a central concern of this study to problematise and deconstruct the official categories used in the classification of racialised groups, at times I have had to resort to use of precisely these categories. This is immediately apparent in the criteria used to select the participating authorities where the Census categories were used.

Control groups

Conventional approaches to social science research suggest that a sole focus on a single group selected on the basis of specific characteristics limits any findings from the research because they cannot be compared to other groups not displaying these characteristics. In this view little can be made of the interview analyses because they have not been examined against the findings for a control group and therefore it is not possible to identify what is specific to the main sample. However discourse analysis, with its focus on the meanings, subjectivities and social worlds which are constituted through language in the course of a specific set of social interactions, avoids this concern with representative and validated accuracy. This is precisely because the accounts are seen as data in and of themselves as discussed above. As Phoenix (1992) has written:

> The emphasis on social construction meant that accounts could not be
> considered to be simple reflections of reality that can be abstracted from
> answers to questions. Instead, the accounts themselves require to be seen

Answers to all of these issues, and more, may have offered important additional insights into the representations of black social workers and client populations circulating within the Department at that time.

In the borough authority access to any Social Services Committee Papers for the period prior to September 1982 was refused. Despite the fact that most of these are formally public documents, access was not afforded because the public papers had been bound in hard cover with those papers which were considered in closed sessions of the Committee meetings. Given the events going on in the Borough in the period between 1978 and 1982 this was unfortunate because it is likely that some papers would contain interesting and informative indications of the shifts in the way issues relevant to my concerns were perceived and represented.[3]

A County Authority

I have already indicated that I was not able to find a county authority both fitting the criteria for inclusion and willing to support the research. This limits the potential of the study to indicate any links between spatial specificity and the discursive registers through which the issues of 'race' and social work are articulated. In relation to the two authorities which are considered here there is little evidence of any such spatial specificity but this appears to be related to the fact that both authorities cover catchment areas defined as 'inner city'. Had comparison with a County authority been possible it would have been interesting to consider commonalities in the discursive terrain through which the issues were articulated. This is particularly so given that 'race' and 'inner cities' metaphorically stand for each other in much popular and official discourse.

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[3]These events concern the official notice served by the CRE on the Housing Department which I outline in chapter six.

Research questions

Before going on to discuss the study I shall end this chapter by stating the research questions which guided my approach.

<u>Hansard and the Committee Papers</u>

i) What was the background to an identification of a need for black women (and men) social workers in local authority social services departments?

ii) How did these get (re)formulated into a clear policy objective at local level?

iii) By what means was this policy objective to be achieved?

iv) On what discursive terrain were 'ethnic minority' client populations and 'ethnic minority' social workers constructed?

v) What, if any, were the shifts in these constructions?

<u>The interview aide memoire</u>

The different sections of the aide memoire were designed to facilitate the various facets of the issues being investigated.

Topic areas for interviews with black women social workers (Appendix one).

Sections 1-3 inclusive were concerned with eliciting a description of, and discussion about, the institutional location of the individual participant and her team. They concern information about team structure, its composition in terms of 'race', gender and qualification; tasks associated with the job, etc. It then moves on to a discussion about opportunities for career progression. The aim was to facilitate a relaxed atmosphere and encourage the participant to begin to be more elaborate in her talk.

Sections 4-6 are all concerned with issues of subjectivity and identity. They move from questions about the participant's sense of communal belonging to issues about identification with other colleagues and clients on the basis of this sense of belonging. It then moves on to the issue of professional identity and status. In

both areas the aim was to see how the participant constructed the impact on their working relationships of these identities.

Section 7 continues this direction of concern but in relation to asking the participants about the benefits or otherwise of having black women social workers in the department. Specifically, it asks them to discuss if there is any particular or unique contribution that such social workers can bring to a department. Then having elicited a discussion about the participant's own views on this, in Section 8 the focus is shifted slightly to explore her perception of management's view of the contribution of black women social workers to the teams.

Section 9 returns to the issue of the organisational structure and the impact of the changes which followed the introduction of legislative change. In particular it concerned asking participants to describe the changes and then to consider if they had any particular effect on black women social workers. Finally, Section 10 acted as a summative section in which participants could add anything that had not been covered which they thought were important.

5.2.2 *Topic areas for interviews with managers* [Appendix three]

These concentrate on four main areas:

i) their own areas of responsibility and position within the organisational structure (Sections 1-2).

ii) equal opportunities policies and their links to the needs for, and benefits of, having black women social workers in the teams for which they have responsibility and the department generally (Sections 4-6).

iii) the organisational and managerial issues which result from a need for, or the benefits of, black women social workers (Sections 7-8).

iv) the impact on black women social workers of organisational change (Section 9).

Section 10 was designed to perform a similar function to Section 10 in the aide memoire for the black women social workers.[69]

In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical approaches and practical steps employed in this study and indicated the reasons for these. I now go on to outline a macrosocial interpretive framework through which to analyse the emergence of the 'black woman social worker.'

CHAPTER 4

Governmentality and the Social: Bringing Social Work to Black Communities

In chapter two I suggested that the literature on black employment in contemporary Britain was both overly economistic and at a level of abstraction which prohibited the development of sectoral analysis which could encompass both the changes in black employment profiles over the last half century and theorise the experience black people had in specific occupational niches. In this chapter I want to suggest an alternative theoretical framework through which to analyse the complexities of black women's entry into qualified social work. I argue that the Foucauldian notion of governmentality facilitates specific sector level analysis of the relation between one occupation and one group of labouring subjects within a regulationist framework.

Governmentality

By governmentality I refer to the processes by which there was an attempt to imbricate black populations within the English/British as ethnic minorities. 'Governmentality' refers to the encompassing of these populations within the net of the nation at the level of 'the social'. Family relations and household practices occupied a central role in this process of incorporation and subjectivisation. As such the term also refers to a set of simultaneous processes and practices which, though in many senses in tension with each other, functioned to cast these same populations outside the 'nation'. Paradoxically these latter processes often also centred on the family, most starkly in the form of immigration legislation, rules and practices, but also in other state practices and institutions, for example policing and education.

My use of the concept of governmentality derives from the work of Foucault (1991) and Donzelot (1980). Foucault argues that the problematic of 'government' had preoccupied western powers from the sixteenth century onwards as they searched for a means of extending new forms of social relations throughout civil society.

The art of government, ... is essentially concerned with answering the question of how to introduce economy - that is to say the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family ... and of making the family fortunes prosper - how to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family into the management of the state" (1991, p.92)

Three notions are embedded in this idea of governmentality. The first is the idea that the modern state in western society strengthened itself by the adoption of numerous techniques which were not solely premised on the threat or use of force, especially force applied directly to the body. The second is the way that 'the family' occupies a central place in techniques of government. At first this was because of the close association between the idea of 'economy' with the assumed beneficent and responsible social relations found within the patriarchal family. Indeed this is what the term 'economy' originally meant. Later - that is, by the mid eighteenth century - the word 'economy' became restricted to its contemporary meaning concerned with the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Whilst this meant a corresponding narrowing of the place of the family in the idea of government, the family still retained a central role. The family was no longer the model of government but rather

... family (was to be) considered as an element internal to population, and as a fundamental instrument in its government. No longer a model but a segment. Nevertheless ... a privileged segment (Foucault, 1991, p.99-100).

The family retains its privileged place because it is the instrument through which information on population is received. In this way we are led to the third notion: that of population. This is a key term in Foucault's idea of governmentality for two reasons. Firstly it is changes in population which occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe which facilitated the break with family as a model for government. It also gave rise to a new set of knowledges about the dynamics, regularities and contours of population. Secondly, 'population' is key because it became the aim or end of government: it is this which must be taken account of in the practice of government.

The term 'population' needs some elaboration. In discussing the switch from sovereign power to that of 'governmental' power Foucault attempts to elaborate the sets of relations with which power and authority are now concerned. The issue of land and territory are no longer the primary aim or concern of government, rather with the rise of 'governmentality' a "plurality of specific aims" arises which centres on the "complex of men (sic) and things". Physical property is one element in this ensemble but increasingly in conjunction with the social and psycho-emotive elements. In other words these latter elements are of equal importance in the newly evolving regimes of truth and power.

> The things with which in this sense government is to be concerned are in
>
> fact men (sic), but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with
>
> those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the
>
> territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, etc.; men in
>
> their relation to ... customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking, etc.; lastly,
>
> men in their relation to that other kind of things, accidents and misfortunes
>
> such as famine, epidemics, death etc. (Foucault, 1991, p.93).

The elicitation of issues of culture, patterns of behaviour and thought alongside those of demography foregrounds the key areas which were covered by the new terrain of 'the social'. Moreover, Foucault conjures up 'the family' again as an homology of governmentality.

> Governing a household, a family, does not essentially mean safeguarding
>
> the family property; what concerns it is the individuals that compose the
>
> family, their wealth and prosperity. It means to reckon with all the possible
>
> events that may intervene, such as births and deaths, and with all the things
>
> that can be done, such as possible alliances with other families; it is this
>
> general form of management that is characteristic of government (p.94).

If this formulation of the concerns and scope of 'government' were begun in the sixteenth century debates about how to rule, with the rise of the bourgeois order such a definition of 'government' was to become dominant. It is in this era that the two aspects of

governmentality which concern me are brought to the fore. It is important to note that Foucault's discussion is based on Catholic France. In Protestant England the development of a normalised family and conceptions of the self were powerfully inflected with Puritan notions of self-regulation which were deeply embedded in the reformulation of class and gender relations.

Here there is an alignment of the sexual/emotional with the social which the image of the family contains within it. Embedded within this are notions of discipline, which in turn are linked to the idea of the self-reliant subject. For as Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts (1978) have argued:

> ... in English culture the preferred forms of discipline are all internalised:
> they are forms of *self*-discipline, *self*-control. They depend on all those
> institutions and processes which establish the internal self-regulating
> mechanisms of control: guilt, conscience, obedience and super-ego. The
> exercise of self-discipline within this perspective has as much to do with
> *emotional* control (and thus with sexual repression, the taboo on pleasure,
> the regulation of the feelings) as it does with *social* control (the taking over
> of the 'morale' of society, the preparation for work and the productive life, the
> postponement of gratifications' in the service of thrift and accumulation). It
> follows that the three social image clusters ... *respectability, work,* and
> *discipline* - are inextricably connected with the fourth image: that of the
> *family* (p. 144, their emphases).

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was precisely the boundaries between and relations amongst these four images that were being refigured. In the process a 'subject' and a 'people' were being simultaneously constituted and it is on this terrain that the second area of concern to me arises. This is the aspect of governmentality which is concerned with transforming a mass of 'population' (here considered as an undefined group of human beings) into a 'people' with national, gendered, classed and even 'raced'

specificities (albeit that the last of these was largely invisible and unspoken but arose in relation to the constructions of the racialised Others of the colonies). That issues of the 'self' should emerge to take centre stage in the context of questions of individual and social discipline is illustrative of the point. But so too is the nineteenth century concern with all those diverse aspects of demography and public hygiene. This concern was expressed not only in the enumeration, distribution and categorisation of the population but also in the more sociological concerns expressed in enquiries into the hygiene, nutrition, education, household management, fecundity, fertility, health, mortality, immiseration and delinquency to be found amongst the working or 'lower' classes. As I discuss later, the exploration and resolution of these issues was to become a heavily gendered, nay feminised, social space. Such a consideration of the rise of 'the social' cannot adequately be undertaken outside an analysis of a reconfiguration of gender relations amongst the emerging middle classes and the rise of a transformed sociological category 'women'. Thus population and its dynamics both facilitates the move to governmentality as the means through which regulation is achieved (and away from sovereignty) and in so doing becomes the object of government. The 'art of government' found fresh outlets through the emergence of the 'problem of population': "... there occurred a subtle process ... through which the science of government, the recentring of the theme of economy on a different plane from that of family, and the problem of population are all inter-connected" (Foucault, 1991, p.99).

'Government' then has a plurality of aims and encompasses a range of intersecting sets of social relations all of which are concerned with ordering, mediating and regulating relations between a multifarious complex of 'things'. Such ordering, mediation and regulation also involves the constitution of a 'people' who understand themselves individually and as an imagined community to be self-reliant and 'free'. They become inscribed in a multiplicity of knowledges, practices, techniques and observations to which they are both subjected and of which they are the subject. The ability to sustain such inscriptions and subjectivities whilst simultaneously depoliticising the processes by which they are maintained is the aim of government. However the methods and channels through which to exercise powers of

definition, description, classification and subjection had to be created and continually reconstituted in the interplay of power and resistance.

Goldberg (1993) has made the point that the business of 'population' was also concerned with the development of racial taxonomies. Thus in the eighteenth century when science began to occupy the discursive position of 'truth'

> The neutrality and objectifying distantiation of the rational scientist created
> the theoretical space for a view to develop of *subjectless* bodies. Once
> objectified, these bodies could be analysed, categorised, classified, and
> ordered with the cold gaze of scientific distance (1993, p.50, my emphasis).

Thus, whilst some populations were being constituted as a people of subjects, others were being constituted as objectified populations. It is in this (often invisible) relation of differentiation and Othering that 'race' can be said to occupy a central place in the development of governmentality.

An approach centred on the concept of governmentality is useful because it brings to the centre of analysis the reconstitution of a population into a 'nation' of people who occupy new subject positions and articulate a range of new categories of social belonging. The constitution of these emergent positions and subjects takes place within specific institutional and social spaces which provide the terrain's for the operation of regimes of truth. Power then, as in all of Foucault's work, is a central component of governmentality as a social practice. McNay (1994) argues that in his later work (including that on governmentality) Foucault overcame some of the tensions and contradictions which existed in his earlier explorations of the play of power. Certainly the link between a Foucauldian concept of power and his theory of governmentality admits that models of power other than those which conceptualise it as residing in one class and/or the state, enter into a theory of social regulation (McNay, 1994). 'Governmentality' maintains the analytical distinction between power based on coercive relations and other more positive

modes of power. In so doing it facilitates a grasp of the complexity of power relations which, in their diverse modalities, intersect in multifarious and contradictory ways.

> That is to say that social control is not always achieved through a
> monotonous logic of domination but is often realised indirectly through a
> convergence of different social practices (McNay, 1994, p.124-125).

That subjects are constituted through the play of power and that this is a productive as well as repressive process is indeed one of the most important contributions made by Foucault to social scientific understanding. However to maintain an absolute divide between repressive forces and practices and productive ones can be problematic since it closes off the possibility of seeing how in fact these two aspects of power may be embedded in each other. For example the emergence of a form of policing called 'community policing' was based on a strategy aimed at the minimal use of repressive force **through the** creation of citizens/subjects who were articulated to the project of policing. The point then is not to postulate a mutually exclusive divide between repressive and productive power but rather to see how the one can work through the other. This necessarily entails an examination of the terrains on which new social subjects are constituted.

One such terrain which emerged in the context of a move from a regime of sovereign power to that of governmental power was a space which has become known as 'the social'. This new conceptual space was to play a central role in the emerging fields of social relations which accompanied the rise of governmentality as the dominant mode of ruling. Centred on the points of demarcation between social 'types' and the intersections amongst the family, the state and the market, 'the social' had the institutional practices and knowledges of charity, philanthropy and (later) forms of social work, at its core.

The Social'

If Foucault's concept of governmentality offers the beginnings of an understanding of how power operates in the constitution of subjects and 'the people', the work of Donzelot

facilitates the application of this approach to the specific set of discourses and institutional practices associated with what was to become social work.

Donzelot (1980) was concerned to analyse the transformations which occurred in the relations between the state and the realm of the family as a result of the demise of feudal forms of social organisation and control. This transformation led to the emergence of a new set of discourses and practices in the area of familial and household relations structured as they were in and through the accompanying refigured relations of gender and age. In this a new conceptual and institutional space opened up, a space which Donzelot refers to as 'the social'.

'The family' was a central figure in this new space not least because it was at the centre of *the intense struggle occurring in political discourses of the right and left over the definition and parameters of the state.* 'The family' occupied a central place within each of these discourses. Indeed it was partly in relation to their respective views of 'the family' that political discourses were defined as of the left or right. Left was equated with statist/anti-family, and right was equated with a circumscribed state, private property and a sacrosanct, *self-reliant family.*

However if this was part of the terrain on which 'the family' was conceptualised this is not enough to explain

> either the present configuration of the family or the nature of the attachment
>
> that individuals of liberal societies have conceived for it. It does not explain
>
> why this fondness for the family is associated with a feeling for liberty and
>
> how defence of the family can be effectively undertaken in the name of
>
> safeguarding people's sphere of autonomy (Donzelot, 1980, p.52).

Donzelot thus reformulates Foucault's object of enquiry into one which asks how a transformed 'family' is both articulated to a liberal definition of the state and yet ideologically separated from the realm of 'politics' and class domination and antagonism.

76

He then seeks to analyse this process in clear Foucauldian terms. The issue at hand, he suggests, was

> how was it possible to ensure the development of practices of preservation
> and formulation of the population while at the same time detaching it from
> any direct political role and yet applying to it a mission of domination,
> pacification and social integration? The answer: By means of philanthropy.
> *Philanthropy in this case ... must be considered as a deliberately*
> *depoliticising strategy for establishing public services and facilities at a*
> *sensitive point midway between private initiative and the state* (p.55 ,my
> emphasis).

The midway point was 'the social'. This hybrid complex of discursive and institutional activity reformulated relations between the fields of law, medicine, administration, education, psychiatry and the family. However in rearticulating relations between these fields an ideological separation between 'the family' (as private) and the state or 'high politics' (as public) had to be achieved whilst simultaneously according to the state the authority to set the parameters of the relations between 'private' and 'public'. The object of political demands for 'rights' to livelihoods, standards of living etc. - all those aspects of 'population' - had to be deflected from the state. Philanthropy was thus organised around two opposing poles with the aim of transforming

> ... a question of political right into a question of economic morality (p.55).

So not a question of right to assistance from the state but rather a transmission of

> ... the means to be self-sufficient by teaching you the virtues of saving
> (p.56)

in return for which the 'tutors' of such virtues would have the right to 'gaze', to subject their tutees

> ... to a disapproving scrutiny of the demands for aid that you (the
> immiserised) might still put forward, since they would constitute a flagrant
> indication of a breach of morality (p.56).

The suggestion of a differentiation between the 'tutees' and the 'tutors' indicates a division between the form of relation specific categories of family had with the state, in what Donzelot calls the tutelary complex.

Such a "tutelary complex" was itself organised around the twin tasks of 'moralisation' and 'normalisation'. Reserved for the 'deserving' poor, 'moralisation' refers to the use of financial and other means of material assistance with the aim of lifting such families out of their immiseration. They were seen as redeemable and the assistance was meant to prevent their falling into the habits of 'immorality' associated with the 'undeserving' poor. This category were regarded as being in poverty as a result of moral ineptitude and degeneracy. 'Moralisation' then, was also a discursive differentiation between those whose circumstances were the result of circumstances beyond their control, and those who had only themselves to blame. To achieve such differentiations, poor families were subjected to close scrutiny via the casework interview during which all their 'habits' and conditions were meticulously recorded. The gaze of their 'moral betters' was therefore achieved via the application of a whole set of techniques of questioning, recording, coding and tutoring.

Attempts to inculcate specific norms of living - especially in relation to gender relations within the family, marriage, parental responsibilities and associated behaviours such as temperance and gainful employment is referred to as 'normalisation'. Philanthropic intervention was not the sole means by which such 'normalisation' was to occur, but philanthropy was a central practice in this sphere not least because it was the main way in which direct access to the household, and especially the women of these households, was gained. Again as the statutory rights and duties of social work increased throughout the twentieth century such access assumed even greater tutelary authority. We can see an example of this in the increasing professionalisation of those involved in the personal social services which accompanied the Curtis Report of 1946. As Hopkins (1996) has pointed out, with the sharpening of focus in social work training "... a new profession of

child care emerged at the behest of the Curtis Committee. Their Report marks a significant rise in the influence of the 'hands-on' practitioner within the framework of a statutory service"(p.26).

In analysing the creation of a new field of social relations centred on a nexus of contacts between 'the family' and philanthropy, Donzelot's work offers a major contribution to understanding the interplay between forms of power and the constitution of subject positions through which 'difference' is organised and normalised. Importantly he shows that 'the social' is both a conceptual space and a set of practices which are embedded in class relations but not reducible to them. One of Donzelot's aims was to take issue with a form of Marxist interpretation which rendered the family no more than a key role in the reproduction of the bourgeois order (1980, p.xx). In the Marxist version of events the family, an inherently bourgeois form, suffered a crisis, reflective of the internal contradictions of capital per se, as a result of the developments in the nineteenth century. In contrast Donzelot seeks to show both that 'the family' was a key institution in the socio-political ensemble of the ancien regime, and that the transformations in the family which resulted from the rise and modification of family law and of the discourses of medicine and education served to suture 'the family' firmly "... within a new form of sociality, of which it appears to be both queen and prisoner" (1980, p.xxii).

If this is the strength of Donzelot's work its weakness lies in the way in which gender relations (a central element in 'the family') are missing from the core of his analysis. At one level this is strange given that alongside Marxists, feminists are also his stated interlocutors. However the tone in which he establishes his debate with feminists makes this absence less strange or surprising. For example he writes:

> For feminists, this history (i.e. the complexity with which 'the family' is reinscribed in new fields of social relations) seems of *slight importance* when weighed against a patriarchal domination seen as essentially unchanged across the centuries, a more than millenary oppression from which only a few heroic figures of magnificent

women in revolt have emerged ... of course it is probable that every category that undertakes a struggle to change its condition feels the need to *fabricate* a version of history that nurtures its combat, a historical mythology that justifies its conviction. It is perhaps not necessary, however, for it to *conceal* the elements that have done most to alter its condition - all the more so when it has been in part the willing agent of this alteration (Donzelot, 1980, p.xxii, my emphases).

In this schema then Marxists are just wrong or too functionalist. Feminists in contrast are particular and duplicitous, concerned only with a narrow agenda defined by the needs of the specific 'category' women. From this somewhat disguised, but nevertheless trenchant attack on what he sees as the failings of feminist analyses of the nineteenth century transformations Donzelot adds a couple more paragraphs in which he, rightly, identifies that women were indeed active agents in the emergence of 'the social' and the philanthropic practices which accompanied it. But here his analysis ends. As Denise Riley has observed:

The celebrated closeness between liberalism and sociology has received critical attention from historians, yet the oddities of the whole rise of 'the social', into which women-in-the-family are so knitted, have largely escaped unnoticed (Riley,1988,p.52).

For a more detailed analysis of the place of gender and the sociological category 'women' in the major transformations which occurred in nineteenth century Britain (and other parts of western Europe) we have to turn to the work of feminist historians. When this is done an insight is gained into the highly gendered nature of 'the social' and the ways in which this category also emerged in the context of the upheavals and anxieties provoked by the major transformations of which 'the social'(and its link to governmentality) was a symbol. Thus in Britain the re-articulation of the public and private in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was spearheaded by the emerging middle classes as part of their claim for legitimacy and power in a society which had been dominated by land. The creation of a private space of the home guarded by women was to provide an antidote to the anxieties generated by a market economy. Women had a critical role as moralisers of

men and children, both within their own classes and later as moralisers of the working class.[4](Davidoff and Hall, 1987).

In 'Am I that name?' Denise Riley (1988) develops some of these themes by specifically considering the relation between the category 'women' and the major transformations which were occurring in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Philanthropy in the nineteenth century and social work in the twentieth came to occupy the position as the forms of social practice with the set of knowledges and methods deemed most suited to the task of managing the tensions between the bourgeois market, a re-articulated realm of the private, and an "all-encompassing state" (Donzelot, 1979). It should be clear from the earlier discussion of both Foucault's and Donzelot's idea of governmentality that the reference to an 'all-encompassing state' is not to suggest that the state had actually assumed such proportions. On the contrary, the liberal democracies, which had come to characterise western nation states, were committed to the prevention of such a state arising. However the conundrum this posed for them was how to ensure the governability of the population in the wake of the erosion of older forms of integration. This erosion was accompanied by the demise of pre-existing family forms and responsibilities which had served to anchor individuals into class, authority and gender relations.

In this context two issues presented themselves. Firstly, there was the problem of how to encourage new family forms, especially amongst the working classes, through which to hook and anchor men, women and children into new subjectivities and private and public responsibilities.

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[4]Davidoff and Hall make the point that middle class women had to fight for their claim to a role as public moralisers. The implication of this is that the struggle in the mid-nineteenth century by women of the Charity Organisation Society was born out of a struggle rooted in gender relations and their re-articulation with wider economic and political relations.

Secondly, there was the issue of how to do this within liberalism with its complex and ambivalent relation to the individual liberties of those who were deemed not yet fully inculcated in the civilities of bourgeois society.

'The social' came to occupy the space between private families living in households and the public domain of the market and the state. Its 'role' was to re-figure or re-articulate the boundaries between the public and the private whilst allowing for the entry of the one into the other. This in its turn presented further difficulties. On the one hand, the ideological boundary between the public and private had to be maintained because this was central to both the creation of a liberal state and the recomposition of gender relations. On the other hand, the private was not to be so autonomous as to construct a space outside of the field of governmentality. One way in which this tension was held and managed was via the constitution of new "free and autonomous subjects", who in part knew themselves by the constitution of the 'abnormal' and 'deviant'. In the field of philanthropy and charity, deviancy and abnormality was constituted in the discursive frame of the family. The representations of particular family forms, dynamics and relations operated as the marker between the 'good' and 'normal' and their opposites. And those who were cast outside the 'normal' were then subjected to a whole range of tutelary discourses and practices aimed at reconstituting them as subjects within governmentality. One way of achieving such a reconstitution of the 'abnormal' was through the rights of 'social betters' to enter and make judgement upon particular families.

By the twentieth century such rights of gaze, intervention and judgement become increasingly the rights of state agencies as philanthropy metamorphoses into social work and as this becomes increasingly controlled and legitimated through state regulation and rules of professional practice. In the 1908 Children Act, for example, it is possible to see the transference of philanthropic activities into social work. With the rise of statutory regulation social work became the main agency through which the older institutions of law and medicine were brought to bear on 'the family'. Social work therefore increasingly

became established as one of the dividing practices which served to demarcate the boundaries between the 'normal' family and those defined as 'abnormal' families. This half of the binary was then subject to another, internal differentiation which centred on the deprived/depraved split. As the institution whose main area of responsibility was children and families this dual process of differentiation was a replay of the moralisation/normalisation split outlined above.

Up to this point I have outlined the chain of connections between 'population' and the constitution of an internally differentiated 'national people' occupying new subject positions which articulate refigured social relations including those between the public and private. This general process Foucault has termed governmentality. The specifics of the rearticulation of the public/private has been conceptualised as occurring on the terrain of 'the social'.

Black population in late twentieth century Britain

How might these ways of thinking about governmentality and 'the social' be utilised in a discussion of late twentieth century professionalisation of black social workers? Here the crucial issue is that of the reconstitution of one form of racialised subject - 'the immigrant '- into another form - the 'ethnic minority'. To introduce these social categories requires rethinking 'population' as elaborated by Foucault and as appropriated by Donzelot and Riley. Their respective expositions of the rise of 'the social' may be full of subjects but in the main these subjects are not explicitly 'raced'. Their specificity as European or English subjects - of whatever class or gender - is unspoken, is implicit. As such they are inevitably cast as universal, their historicity only temporal and not spatial, racial or national. What I want to argue is that in the post second world war period, when the erstwhile 'objects' of taxonomic classification came 'home', it increasingly came to be seen as necessary to reconstitute 'them' progressively as 'coloured', then 'immigrant' and more recently 'ethnic' subjects. The issue of governmentality thus reposes itself in a sharply and

visibly 'raced' way and it is in this that we can begin to explicate the forces which were to open up the occupation of social work to black women (and men) in the 1980s.

In my view the idea of 'governmentality' can be appropriated to open up a way of thinking about and interpreting the entry of black women (and men) into qualified social work in particular localities. Rather than seeing this as only a function of the geographical concentration of black populations in any simple sense; or as only an outcome of the application of equal opportunities policies at local government level; or even as a result of the outcome of processes of 'integration' of 'immigrant' communities, I would suggest that we need to understand this entry in terms of wider processes of social regulation. The dynamics within and across these sites served to structure the experience of black people in Britain and provides part of the context in which access to employment in new occupations was gained. Moreover they served to demarcate the black family as a central site through which to bring 'outside' black populations within the field of social regulation and as sites through which to interpellate black people as racial subjects.

Such reconstitution of racial subjects has been referred to as 'racial formation' (Winant, 1994; Omi and Winant, 1994). 'Racial formation' theory holds together three indissoluble elements. Firstly, it insists that the meaning of 'race', as a concept signifying conflicts and interests in reference to human beings organised into distinct categories on the basis of phenotypic variation, pervades social life. Secondly, it argues that there has been an intensification and expansion of racial phenomena in the late twentieth century world. Thirdly, the theory embodies a conception of 'racial time' itself understood as consisting of two dimensions.

These are the genealogical time of 'race' which refers to the emergence of 'race' as an organiser of social relations within and across nations and peoples at the time of the European conquests, African enslavement, colonial subjugation, and capitalist domination. That is, the long march from the renaissance to modernity in which racial classifications

and hierarchies structured and legitimated economic, political and social relations and also discursively produced racially differentiated subjects. It is clear that this aspect of 'racial time' is coterminous with the time of the emergence of 'governmentality' as a dominant mode of regulation. Alongside this genealogical time, the concept of racial time also carries a notion of contingency in that:

> ... racial meanings and social structures are always context driven (Winant, 1994, p.272).

At one extreme such meanings are located in and derive from coercive and repressive social orders such as Atlantic slavery or South African Apartheid. However democracies

> ... are forced to develop more hegemonic forms of racial rule. That is they must incorporate their racial oppositions, make concessions to their demands, and engage in ever-widening debate about the meaning of race in society (Winant, 1994, p.272).

Events in Britain since the second world war would indicate the persistent relevance of the category 'race' and racial politics: a relevance which is continually rearticulated in specific conjunctures. It is then this aspect of racial formation theory in relation to sites of welfare on which I wish to focus. For as Winant states:

> Indeed, we can speak of racial formation as a *process* precisely because the inherently capricious erratic nature of racial categories forces their constant rearticulation and reformulation - their social construction - in respect to the changing historical contexts in which they are invoked (p.271, emphasis in original).

The historical contexts in which racial categories are invoked in contemporary SSDs are in part comprised of developments in other areas of public policy and practice. Primary among these are immigration policy, policing and education for each of these areas can be identified as making significant contributions to the discursive and social constitution of new black subjects, as migrants turned into settlers and their children began to stake out a

claim to national belonging. The struggle over national belonging in part took the form of conflicts over racialised inclusions and exclusions within the welfare regimes established by Beveridge and Thatcher. Among these struggles the contest of black people for recognition and valorisation of familial forms and relationships was prominent. This was posed particularly sharply in relation to fostering and adoption policy and practice as I discuss in chapter seven. Here however I shall briefly consider the ways in which developments in immigration, education and policing can be understood as constitutive sites of racial formation as black subjects became inscribed through the processes of governmentality.

Immigration

A dominant discourse about the role of immigration policy in securing what is referred to as good race relations has been a feature of official and popular opinion for at least thirty years. There is a wealth of sociological and other literature which shows how this discourse has had the effect of structuring the relation of diverse groups of black (and other racialised) people to welfare services and benefits. In addition to this, the practical effects of immigration law, and the rules which govern their implementation, have progressively acted to circumscribe the access of first generation migrants and their dependants to the facilities of the welfare state. Detailed discussion of the processes by which the claims of these groups to welfare have been delegitimated is beyond the scope of my concerns. What I am interested to point out is two things - one related to processes of juridical demarcation, the other to processes by which certain families are encompassed within the regime of welfare. Let me take each in turn.

In terms of a regime of governmentality what successive immigration and nationality law has established is a redrawing of the boundaries which act to define which black (and other racialised) people and their families are legitimate residents and which are not. Thus in changing the juridical status of vast numbers of those who were once British subjects, immigration and nationality policy has also acted to demarcate those populations who

might still have a claim to British subjecthood - this time in the form of an 'ethnic minority'. In the main immigration policy has been a practice and discourse of differentiation anchored to 'colour'. This is certainly so up until the ending of the 'cold war' which accompanied the fall of many of the communist states of Eastern Europe. It can also be seen when one considers that Irish people from the Republic, although heavily racialised, have never been subject to control under immigration legislation. The importance of immigration policy for my purposes is that in progressively redrawing the lines of demarcation between ex-colonial subjects who could and could not make a claim to full citizenship/subjecthood, in the British constitutional sense, it established the framework in which the move from 'immigrant' to 'ethnic minority' could be achieved. In that sense it is part of the process by which black people were to be encompassed within the field of governmentality as they underwent reconstitution as types of black subject.

What kind of subject is the 'ethnic minority'? Kobena Mercer (1994) has suggested

> The term /ethnic minority/ associated with social democracy in the 60s and 70s
> connotes the black subject as a minor, an abject, childlike figure necessary for the
> legitimation of paternalistic ideologies of assimilation and integration that
> underpinned the strategy of liberal multi-culturalism. A member of a "minority" is
> literally a minor, a social subject who is **in-fans**, without a voice, debarred from
> access to democratic rights to representation: a subject who does not have the right
> to speak and who is therefore spoken for by the state and its "representatives"
> (p.295, emphasis in original).

Clearly then the 'ethnic minority' can be included in the nation but as a junior citizen/subject. In terms of my argument two things flow from this. One is that as infantilised people those black populations who were now reconstituted as ethnic minorities could be included in the social relations of welfare as pathologised subjects. But since power is neither absolute nor uncontested, occupation of the subject position 'ethnic minority' was subject to contradictory processes. The counter discourse of 'blackness' which aimed at articulating a 'people' across numerous ethnic divides always offered a site

of refusal of the terms of 'ethnic minority' status. Simultaneously however, resistance to dominant notions of what it was to be 'black' was also sometimes carried out by adopting notions of essential cultural characteristics which only 'insiders' could know, understand and value. This of course resonates with the discourse of 'ethnic minority' and it is from this position that the second point emerges. For groups whose 'difference' was demarcated around notions of essential cultural 'otherness', the time would come when 'representatives' of these populations would be required to ensure the delivery of 'ethnically sensitive' welfare services. The tendencies toward pathologisation on the one hand, and cultural specificity on the other, most keenly intersect on the terrain of 'the family' and in the two apparently discrete fields of education and policing this can be clearly seen.

Education

What education carries is both a version of the metamorphosis of the 'immigrant' into the 'ethnic minority' and the attempts to subject the occupants of this new category to a regime of governmentality. The problematic of 'race relations' was voiced by the Economist as early as 1958 when the 'immigrant' was the iconical figure of racial threat and difference:

> The parents will probably still mostly be living in Harlemised districts in big towns and new arrivals will continue to import the *types of behaviour and attitudes* that disgust and annoy whites (whilst in the) not so distant future coloured teenagers problems could then loom and it might be alarming (27 November, p.8, my emphasis).

Such expressions of alarm at the black presence in Britain were to become an increasing feature of both official and popular discourse and were to give rise to the cross party consensus that the anticipated disruption which such black presence would cause could only be contained within a framework of 'strict but fair immigration control = good race relations'. This mantra was to attain such a status of 'truth' that it has acted as a structuring principle in the organisation of state services and benefits to black people since the introduction of the 1962 Immigration Act. Within this 'race relations' paradigm

education was designated a special role - i.e. the task of producing new black subjects who would not display 'disgusting' behaviours and attitudes but rather exhibit the forms of behaviour appropriate to their newly acquired national status.

> ... A national system of education must aim at producing citizens who can take their place in society properly equipped to exercise their rights and perform duties which are the same as other citizens. If their parents were brought up in another culture or another tradition, children should be encouraged to respect it, but a national system cannot be expected to perpetuate the different values of different immigrant groups (DES, 1964).

In an analysis of the education of children of Caribbean origin or descent, Bonnick[5] (1993) has pointed out that the processes attached to the production of such citizens had to be depoliticised and that they concealed

> the underlying ideological process of reconstitution in which nuances of distinction and differentiation serve to particularise cultural and racial characteristics and construct them in such a way that they become major problems in themselves and a source of explanation of educational and social processes (p.145).

In education the racialisation which was necessary for the production of these new subjects was achieved through two convergent routes. On the one hand there was the inscription of Caribbean descent children into an historical discourse of slavery. Bonnick argues that this had the effect of denying such children any legacies in which they could take pride and establish a sense of communal and individual dignity. In this discourse Afro-Caribbean children are said to be imbued with an ambivalent identity and to be embedded in familial and other socio-cultural networks which prohibit educational commitment and achievement. The term which carried this legacy was 'cultural deprivation'. In the 1960s this was of course a term already saturated with educational

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[5] Much of what follows in this section on education has been developed from the general argument advanced by Bonnick in her thesis. I use her material to elicit the links to governmentality, although it is clear that our general organising frameworks differ.

meaning but in this case in relation to the education of white working class children rather than their Afro-Caribbean counterparts. However the process of racialisation which was integral to the formation of new black subjects necessitated that the association between these two groups which the use of the same term conveyed be disconnected.

One way in which this disconnection was achieved was on the terrain of the family. 'The family' was accorded hegemonic status in official documents about the educability of the 'West Indian' child in British schools. See for example the DES report of 1971 which identified the West Indian community as possessing the least cultural resources to deal positively with their new encounter. As Bonnick comments there was

> a body of ideas about the Afro-Caribbean family contained in the early DES reports of the 1970s. These reports reproduced the view that the Caribbean family culture was weak and, as such, inadequate in generating the correct cultural predisposition for educational success (p.179).

Having positioned Afro-Caribbean children as without a positive sense of their own histories and as outside of British class relations they could now be interpellated as exclusively racial subjects who come from pathologised families and communities. In introducing the black family as an always potentially 'dysfunctional' institution the discursive scene was set for the intervention of social workers in that family and the assimilation of social work to the production of 'ethnic minorities'.

Policing

From about the mid 1970s relations between the black communities and many of Britain's inner city police forces became increasingly antagonistic. Moreover these relations also became emblematic of the organic crisis of British capitalism as a result of which their symbolic position extended far wider than the concrete relation between police and sections of the black communities. Analysis of this policy, practice and symbolic moment has been well rehearsed and has occupied much of the literature on 'race' in Britain in the mid/late 1970s and early 1980s (see for example Hall et al, 1978; Gutzmore, 1983; Gilroy,

1984; Sim, 1984). What each of these in their varying ways points to is that developments in policing illustrated the ways in which 'race' was seen as being pivotal in the re-establishment of hegemonic social relations which had become disrupted and of which the crisis was both a manifestation and a partial resolution. What was missing from these analyses was the way in which the family was also emerging as a pivotal symbolic institution in both the identification of the causes and the solutions to the crisis. Elements within the police, however, understood this only too clearly and as such black family forms and putative relations were highlighted as central to the project of developing a 'new' policing style and practice.

It was in debates about community policing that discourses about black family forms were brought centre stage:[6] As one police spokeman put it:

> community policing requires the police to take the *initial* action within a community and become a pivotal institution within that society not only for matters which have been within the traditional area of police interests, but also in other areas which have hitherto been considered the exclusive province of other agencies (Osborn, 1980, p.34, his emphasis).

This reference to the police force becoming pivotal among a host of "other agencies" all dedicated to the issue of crime, law and order, and all bound up in the project of regaining legitimacy and consent was expressed in the development of multi-agency approaches. Formulations such as this embodied the utilisation of a broader concept of 'police', more proximate to that older form sometimes referred to as 'social police' For example, another major proponent of community policing suggested that

> There is a sense in which the concept of police can be used to mean a whole range of governmental departments ... if to this battery of government resources one adds the idea that the common law explicitly commits the entire adult population to some

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[6] John Alderson explicitly refers to the link between the development of community policing and the need to reassert legitimacy in the eyes of the populace at large. Alderson in Cowell, Jones and. Young (1982).

policing responsibilities we are beginning to think in terms of policing by the body

politic ... The implications for the police are profound (John Alderson, when Chief

Constable of Devon and Cornwall, quoted in Osborn, 1980, p.35).

There is a close correspondence here to the idea of 'police' embodied in 'governmentality'.

In this context 'police' suggests a cluster of apparatuses of security in which subjects have

fostered among them co-operation, industriousness, loyalty, honesty, charity - all of which

are central to the techniques of government (McNay, 1994, p.119). In this regard the

Alderson quotation might be read as being concerned with the constitution of a nation of

subjects who interiorise the responsibilities required of 'citizens'. In this situation the

'dividing practices' through which the 'normal' are marked off from the 'abnormal' (or 'other')

can flourish as part of an ensemble of institutions and practices through which legitimacy,

consent and hegemony are achieved. This reinforces the point made earlier that too hard a

distinction between repressive and caring state agencies is problematic. Both types of

agency may be involved in the production of citizen/subjects. Having said this the fact that

a multiplicity of agencies is involved in this constitutive process also suggests the

instability of the subjects produced and the limited effectivity of the means of

governmentality.

One way in which the instability of these subjects is managed is by the production of

demarcations through which multiple series of 'us/them' are defined. Given this the police

demarcate boundaries between those with greater or lesser 'propensities' to 'criminality';

greater or lesser degrees of pathology; greater or lesser degrees of potential acceptance of

an expanded or redefined remit for policing policy and practice. In this context a reminder

of the position argued by Brown which I quoted in the introduction is timely. It will be

remembered that he was concerned to establish the role of 'culture' in constituting groups

who might be more easily assimilated to a reformulated project of policing. In so doing

discourses about black family forms are introduced and subjected to differential

racialisations since "Asian groups" were seen as exhibiting a greater capacity for inclusion in the project of "crime control" than "Caribbean groups".

Brown's approach can be characterised as a discursive strategy which explicitly mobilises notions of family and culture, and implicitly notions of gender. These notions were subject to differential ethnicisation but the overall frame acted to link putative ethnicised practices to the development of policing strategy. People of Caribbean origin and descent are constructed as culturally less susceptible to the techniques and aims of community policing, which is perhaps why "it is the rough, difficult, potentially violent aspects of multi-ethnic areas that oblige police units having a more robust capacity" (Newman, 1983, p.35) in these areas.

In contrast people of Asian origin and descent are constructed as culturally more susceptible to community policing because of their assumed traditions of strong patriarchal control of family and community. All of this links to the construction of an essentialised cultural difference through which policing practice can be deployed and legitimated. This can be seen in relation to violence against women within Asian (and other black) households. For example, in their work on domestic violence, Southall Black Sisters have found an appalling lack of interest on the part of Southall police in the application of the law concerned with domestic violence and thereby the protection of women facing such violence. The multi-agency Domestic Violence Panel assimilated the dominant discourse which defines domestic violence as a 'family problem' to a 'race relations' logic. As such they made it clear that their concern with domestic violence within Asian households was less about the provision of protection for women and more about the articulation of diverse agencies and populations to a policing agenda. This was achieved through the prism of 'cultural sensitivity' since

> Factors such as arranged marriages and different culture were cited as reasons for
> lack of intervention ... They also argued that older Asian women are supposed to

have a higher tolerance level and therefore be in less need of help (*SBS*, *1989*, p.43,).

So far I have argued that two, interconnected elements were central to the incorporation of black people into a regime of regulation known as 'governmentality'. These were the *constitution of groups of people defined as 'ethnic minorities'*, and the differential incorporation of 'the families' associated with these 'minorities' into the social and cultural relations of welfare. I have attempted to give some indication of these twin processes in relation to immigration, education and policing policy and discourse. I have focused on these three areas for distinct but connected reasons. Immigration because it had a particularly significant role to play in the juridical reconstitution of 'immigrants' from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan into 'ethnic minorities'. Education because it was an early site in which the black family was marked out as pathological and unable to produce children fitted for the national culture. As such education was charged with the task of producing new racial subjects. Policing was significant because it was in this field that black families were specifically highlighted as the struggle for a restoration of hegemonic relations took place.

Centreing the black family across these diverse but parallel sites opened the way for another set of agencies and professions to be brought into the project of assimilating reconstituted black subjects to a redefined political agenda. This was the profession of social work with which the rest of this thesis is concerned.

CHAPTER FIVE

Now you see it now you don't: 'Race', Social Policy, and 'the Blind Eye' of Central Government

"I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood - movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids - and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus side-shows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination - indeed, everything and anything except me." (Ellison, 1953, p.7).

"... in matters of race, silence and evasion have historically ruled literary discourse. Evasion has fostered another, substitute language in which the issues are encoded, foreclosing open debate. The situation is aggravated by the tremor that breaks into discourse on race. It is further complicated by the fact that the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture. To notice is to recognise an already discredited difference. To enforce its visibility through silence is to allow the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body. According to this logic, every well-bred instinct argues against noticing and forecloses adult discourse." (Toni Morrison, 1992, p.9-10, emphasis in original).

"The Urban Programme was designed as a black programme in the aftermath of the 'rivers of blood' speech" (Alex Lyons MP, 1977).

"I do not think we would all agree that the Urban Programme has in the past been a black programme... My purpose is to deal, regardless of whether there are black or white populations, with aggregated problems of poverty and deprivation in our major urban centres" (Peter Shore, 1977).

Introduction

Williams (1989), in the first work of its kind in Britain, has written cogently about the ways in which 'race', class, gender and nation are embedded, as intersecting articulations of power, in the emergence and development of British social policy. By and large however there is an absence of such all-encompassing approaches to the links between different axes of power and social policy. Similarly studies which focus on the links between 'race', racism and social policy have tended to treat politics as a static field and 'race' as a reified category which refers to the stable biological endowment of naturally differentiated groups. These absences are matched only by the minimal amount of welfare legislation dealing with 'race' and/or the service needs which may emerge as a result of systematic

discrimination. Where there has been an examination of the links between 'race' and social policy the tendency has been to concentrate on the genesis and implementation of immigration law, rules and practices and the related anti-discrimination legislation contained in the various Race Relations Acts. Solomos (1989, p.72) has pointed out that the persistent association made between firm immigration control and good race relations has been duplicated in the emergence of two basic forms to deal with discrimination and conflict around the signifier 'race'. Thus in the context of restricted black immigration[7], the establishment of welfare agencies to deal with the 'problems' which black migrants were expected to face was matched with the increasing conviction that the state should act to ban discrimination and promote equality of opportunity on grounds of 'race'. For example, one such welfare agency which embodied this twin idea of 'natural' problems and state intervention to deal with them was the little known International Social Services of Great Britain. This advised both social workers and immigrants and also ran a Foreign Marriage Advisory Service for British (read white) people who were considering marriage to a person of another 'race' or culture (Wright, 1976, p.221).

Despite the paucity of legislation and analytical investigations into the ways in which racialised Othering has been embedded in social policy a dominant discourse has developed which acts to structure the ways in which 'race' and ethnicity are constituted and represented in discussion about welfare policy. Thus the terrain of 'race' and social policy is mapped on two sets of dualisms. One is the widely held idea that immigration control equals good race relations. It is premised on the assumption that the numbers or density of black people present in the population is the key variable determining, on the one hand, the ease with which black migrants

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[7] It is important to note that it is only certain immigration which became restricted. However because of the equation between black or 'coloured' and immigration other groups of people entering the country were not discursively constituted as immigrants. This had the effect that Britain began to be seen as a country of no immigration (with the exception of some groups speaking from the far right) hence masking the continued entry of large numbers of migrants into Britain. This is particularly true of Irish migration.

and their descendents will be 'accepted' by the 'host' community, and on the other, the ease with which these migrants will eventually assimilate into the British population. This is perhaps the dominant frame through which policy is produced. There is however a second, accompanying idea which suggests that the attitudes of the 'host' community and the experiences of the migrant community are produced by an essential trait in human nature. In this sense it is suggested that black migrants will 'naturally' face problems in settling in the 'mother country' because of their essential 'otherness' - a feature which results from their racial and ethnic difference. The opposite side of this is that the indigenous community will 'naturally' hold prejudiced views about them and so will inevitably be somewhat discriminatory. This view has at its root the idea that prejudice and discrimination are the product of innate features of what it means to be a person. It therefore has an ontological status which often places it outside of critical debate. That is arguments about immigration and 'race relations' often proceed as if prejudice is an unchanging and unchangeable given of human nature and not as a result of current and historical social arrangements.

In practice these dualisms often overlay one another leading to slippages and elisions. Analytically however it is important to maintain a distinction between them because to do so helps make more visible the moves made between registers as chains of meaning and association are produced in discourses about immigration and 'race'. What is important is that these dualisms and the discourses in which they are constituted are the structuring ideas which frame the development of social policies aimed at dealing with 'race'.

The tough immigration control/good race relations discourse has had effects on all areas of social policy. Just as restraint and opportunity are linked within this dualism so it is replicated in other areas of social policy. A second and equally important point is that the coded language with which 'race' is inscribed in

legislation and policy does not negate or lessen its 'racially' skewed effects. Walker and Ahmad (1994) make this point well in a recent article on black care providers' perspectives on community care. They establish that the racist effects of social policies and practices are often simultaneously overt and sub-textual and that these dual processes occur on the terrain mapped out by British immigration policy and discourses about restricted entry and 'good race relations'.

> The racism which usually goes with minimalist welfare rhetoric is not just a matter of guilt by association or the plasticity of coded language. It is manifest in direct linkage of social security regulations to blatantly racist nationality and immigration laws (p.49).

What they refer to is that apart from restrictions on the right to enter Britain and claim British nationality, progressive statutes have also restrained the right of many black migrants to claim access to social security and other public services. As early as the 1962 Immigration Act the linkage between rights of black people to enter Britain and limitation of access to welfare services and benefits was introduced. As well as introducing the voucher system based on categories of skill, the 1962 act also provided for the refusal of entry to those who were considered as potentially making demands on state services and immigration officers were instructed to refuse entry to persons who were deemed to fall into this category (Gordon and Newham, 1985; Gordon, 1986).[8]

The 1971 Immigration Act further entrenched this link between eligibility and 'recourse to public funds' and it has remained a key component of subsequent immigration and nationality legislation and rules. However developments in the 1980s were to both make the link more explicit and more tightly controlled. The 1988 Immigration Act fine tuned the situation by ruling that married sponsors (in this case husbands) who wished their spouses (wives) and children to join them in Britain would be required to demonstrate an ability to support their families

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[8] The restriction of entry to Britain on these grounds became known as a 'Resource to public funds' and had been in the 1905 Aliens Act.

without 'recourse to public funds'. Mary John Baptiste (1988) makes the point that nowhere in the Immigration Bill is 'public funds' defined but this had already been done in the 1985 changes to the immigration rules (Gordon, 1986, p.26).

> These said that the phrase 'public funds' meant supplementary benefit, housing benefit, family income supplement and housing under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977. Supplementary benefit has always been regarded as 'public funds' and, in any case, the supplementary benefit regulations exclude a number of people defined as 'persons from abroad'. These include, not only those who are allowed entry under the immigration rules on condition that they do not have recourse to public funds, but also people who have overstayed their leave to remain, people subject to a deportation order or people alleged to be illegal entrants (p.26).

A more detailed discussion of these clauses is beyond the scope of my concerns. However it is important to note that these restraining or limiting clauses are to be read alongside those which apparently promote racial harmony and equality of opportunity. For in both there is replication of the discursive and material relations which structure the everyday of black people's lives and through which 'race' is articulated, more or less visibly, within social policy.

In this chapter I want to focus on the ways in which 'race' is inscribed in particular measures at central government level. I will consider the ways in which the central presence of 'race' and racism in the origin and implementation of certain policies is hidden from view by the use of a coded language in which certain terms come to stand for 'race'. By this I mean that the ways in which 'race' is present is often only discernible by reading the sub-texts of parliamentary discussion; by considering the moment at which policy was legislated or adopted; and/or by considering the elisions which occur and the metaphors through which 'race' is commonly spoken in Britain. What I want to establish is that whenever an issue

concerning the 'inner cities' has emerged, policies, at central level, have been developed with regard to black populations. However, the link between the policy and 'race' tends to move in and out of visibility - such that it has a kind of 'now you see it, now you don't' quality. I want to suggest that from this perspective it is possible to see that for discourses of 'race', and the related construction of 'others', to be at play there does not have to be an unambiguous visibility. Often discernment of their presence requires a view from the discursive shadows of the debate, focusing less on the detail and more on the language through which the detail is presented and explained. This leads me to suggest, that in addition to an approach which focuses on the links between social policies and black people's access to centrally and locally provided welfare services, it is also necessary to look to see how and where 'race' as a discursive category has influenced the formulation of such policy.

The chapter is organised into three main parts. I begin with an overview of some of the National policy framework and introduce my argument that there is a general tendency to deny that 'race' is a deeply embedded feature of British society. I then move on to consider the mechanisms by which such a denial takes place and advance the notion of the 'blind eye'. Finally, I apply this analytical framework to a reading of selected parliamentary debates which accompanied the passage of some of the legislation outlined in part one. I will highlight how 'race' is both seen and not seen and how an understanding of the fluidity between visibility and invisibility deepens understanding of the relationship between 'race' and social policy. The argument developed here will then be used in the following chapter to consider the shifts in the explicit use of 'race' in the development of social services policy in Hackney and Birmingham.

The National Policy Framework

1962 saw the introduction of the first immigration act explicitly aimed at restricting the immigration of black people from the (ex)colonies. There was a clear link between the passage of this act and growing concerns about the relative condition of the economy as is evidenced by the attempts to control the categories of labourer entering the country (Sivanandan, 1985). However the act was also rushed in as a response to the growing concerns about the anticipated effects on the social and cultural character of certain locales which were said to result from the presence of relatively large numbers of black people. As such the act was also the first statutory articulation of the discourse which equated restricted black entry with the promotion of 'good race relations'. In this way it represented a defining point in the statutory representation of Britain's black populations. Since that time a dominant discourse has developed which has constructed this dualistic equation as a commonsense. For example Reginald Maudling, speaking in defence of the introduction of the 1971 Immigration Act, said:

> The main purpose of immigration policy ... is a contribution to ... peace and harmony ... If we are to get progress in community relations, we must give assurance to the people, who were already here before immigration, that this will be the end and that there will be no further large-scale immigration. Unless we can give that assurance we cannot effectively set about ... improving community relations" (quoted in MacDonald, 1983, pp16-17).

The message encoded here is that the "good will" of 'the people' (who must, in this language, be white and 'British') will not be abused. Similarly Maudling's language has embedded within it another message - the idea that prior to the post second world war migrations of black people there were no earlier periods of large scale immigration to Britain. That the people here 'before' were homogenous, a seamless entity only now subject to the potential threat of an 'alien' and, if unrestricted, 'intolerable' presence. This play of the myth of timeless roots and

essential continuities is a common component in the construction of the nation (Anderson, 1983). Its danger lies in its 'Othering' and exclusionary effects for black migrants and their descendents who, in this narrative, must always lie outside the line of descent and nationhood. Neither 'race' nor nation is explicitly named in this talk and yet they come together on common connotative terrain to 'people' those amongst whom harmony must be promoted under the rubric of 'community relations'.

As a subtext of this idea it is possible to discern three distinct but overlapping ways in which black presence is associated with problems in both official and popular discourse. One is that (what is considered) a significant black presence in an area is seen as a metaphor for social problems. The second is that black populations are concentrated in areas of high disadvantage so that colour and class become conflated. Material deprivation and disadvantage is not determined by the colour of the residents in an area but rather by their class position. The third way in which the presence of black populations is associated with social problems is as producers of problems. Here black people are represented as the cause of problems because of the cultural and social disorganisation they are purported to induce as a result of their 'otherness'. The point is that the association between 'problems' and black people is pervasive across many sections of the British population but the nature of the association varies. The slippages and moves between these will become clearer in the discussion of the parliamentary debates on section 11 and the urban programme.

The association made between a black presence and social problems has often been the rationale offered for the production of data on 'ethnic minorities', especially from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan (NCWP.) However despite the increasing incidence and call for such data production and despite the idea that it is only on the basis of such data that appropriate policies and resources can be

developed, most data are not used as direct indices for assessing the levels of financial and other resources to be allocated to help address these problems (Booth, 1988, p.253). As a result there are relatively few specific policies which have been developed for this purpose which is indicative of the tension between a need to recognise and deal with the issue of racism and an official resistance to just such a recognition. Here I outline those which do exist, all but the last being passed by Labour administrations although it is fair to say that in broad terms the dominant discourse embedded within them has been cross party. The pieces of legislation are:

Local Government Act 1966, section 11

Local Government Grants (Social Need) Act 1969 and

Inner Urban Areas Act 1978

Race Relations Act 1976

The Children Act 1989.

These are considered for two reasons. Firstly, they provide the main statutory framework within which local policies aimed at combatting racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity were formulated. Secondly, the parliamentary debates which accompanied the introduction of these statutes in part mapped the discursive terrain on which the need for black social workers was enunciated and within which these workers, and indeed the black client groups, were then inscribed.

The Local Government Act 1966

The key section of this act in terms of 'race' and the black populations is Section 11. This is the oldest of the central government policies designed to increase financial resources available to local authorities which had "substantial numbers" of black people settled in their catchment area. It is also notable that it is still the only piece of legislation which provides for supplementary finance to be paid to local areas for the exclusive provision of services to black populations. Such resources

were to be used for the purposes of education and social welfare and some have characterised the section as a form of compensation from central to local government in recognition of the anticipated 'problems' which were associated with the presence of black people (Young and Connelly, 1981).

In its original form this section allowed qualifying local authorities to apply for additional funds so as to employ staff so long as at least 50% of the tasks associated with the post were to be devoted to work with residents in the borough who are defined as originating from the (New) Commonwealth.

> Subject to the provisions of this section the Secretary of State may pay to local authorities who in his opinion are required to make special provision in the exercise of any of their functions in consequence of the presence within their areas of substantial numbers of immigrants from the Commonwealth whose language and customs differ from those of the community, grants of such amounts as he may with the consent of the Treasury determine on account of expenditure of such descriptions (being expenditure in respect of the employment of staff) as he may so determine (s.11 Local Government Act 1966).

Local authorities qualified for such grant if they had more than 2% of their school age population with parents who were born in the NCWP *and* who had arrived in the United Kingdom within the previous ten years. As with much other financial support from central to local government the ratio for s.11 funded posts was 75%:25% central/local government respectively.

The two percent:ten year rule was abolished in 1982 and replaced in 1983 with a more ambiguous criterion of what constituted "substantial numbers", but the references to differing "language and customs" alongside "immigrant" made it very clear that it was immigrants from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan rather than the 'old commonwealth' who were being referred to. The change from the 2:10

rule was a mixed blessing. On the one hand it ensured that numerous local authorities escaped the disqualification which would have resulted from the impact of the immigration laws which had substantially reduced the numbers of people who had settled in Britain in the previous ten years. On the other hand, the vague and nebulous criterion of "substantial numbers" opened the potential for arbitrary implementation of the Act. (Bhat, Carr-Hill and Ohri (eds) 1988).

A second change to the rules governing the allocation of s.11 monies was the stipulation that all new section 11 post holders be identified individually, and more detail furnished about the specific tasks associated with the posts. New bids were to indicate this information and there was a duty to regularly review all existing s.11 posts.

Section 11 was potentially relevant to social services departments because it could legitimately (i.e. within the letter and spirit of the law) be argued that these were departments having to provide "work attributable to differences in language and customs". Thus in Circular 15/1967 issued by the Home Office, the list of staff explicitly mentioned included social workers alongside interpreters and liaison officers. The majority on this list however related to education - for example, head teachers, deputy heads, peripatetic teachers, teachers appointed to carry out language classes for NCWP born children etc. As one would expect from this, the majority of s.11 monies has gone to education - about 80% in 1982/83 for example, with the remaining 20% being distributed across other service areas. Nevertheless local authority social services departments were able to make use of this clause and Johnson, Cox and Cross (1989) make the point that the vast majority of the remaining 20-25% which did not go to education went to social services. Within social services the majority goes to fund social workers and staff in day nurseries and residential establishments (Johnson, Cox and Cross,p.371).

As we shall see, both of the Social Services Departments considered here used s.11 in the attempt to develop 'ethnically sensitive and appropriate' services.

In 1993 it was announced that further changes would be made to Section 11 following the introduction of the Single Regeneration Budget in April 1994. For authorities which had previously been accorded status as an urban priority area such monies would now be incorporated into the single regeneration budget administered by the Department of the Environment. This was in keeping with the phasing out of the Urban programme. Bids for Section 11 monies from authorities in the remainder of the country would however remain in the control of the Home Office. There is no published rationale for this split but it is in keeping with the general thrust of recent Conservative governments. Thus the Single Regeneration Budget

> brought together some twenty existing funding programmes from five central government departments under the control of the Government Offices for the Regions. The overall purpose of the creation of the SRB is to achieve greater focus and value for money in public expenditure on economic development and urban regeneration in England. The practices and principles of the SRB build on the experience of the City Challenge initiative which fundamentally changed the way in which resources for regeneration were allocated ...(letter to the author from Government Office for London, April 1995).

In this sense then the split reflects the switch in the basis of central government intervention in area policy from a concern with social questions to one in which economic issues are to the fore, a switch of emphasis which has precedents as I point out in the next section. This recent change in emphasis is equally true in relation to funds specifically aimed at 'ethnic minorities'. Thus the 'Ethnic Minority Grant' is

a grant to support employment, training, and enterprise projects within

voluntary organisations for black and ethnic minority adults with the objective

of gaining access to mainstream opportunities;

the 'Ethnic Minority Business Initiative' is

a range of initiatives to encourage the development of ethnic minority run

businesses;

whilst Section 11 grants remain

a range of grants to purchase additional services for ethnic minority adults

and young people requiring additional assistance in order to gain access to

mainstream opportunity (all above quotes from NCVO, 1995, pp.33-34).

The Urban Programme: The Local Government Grants (Social Needs) Act 1969 and The Inner Urban Areas Act 1978.

Notwithstanding these very recent changes to section 11 and the Urban

Programme, when it was first introduced section 11 explicitly made a link between

'race' and social policy in a way rather different from that usually found when

introducing a legislative framework for provision of services to 'ethnic minorities'.

This explicit link was in contrast to the legislation which ushered in the Urban

Programme, sometimes described as a 'sister' piece of legislation to Section 11.

Whilst s.11 is the

major vehicle of ... government support for local authority programmes

designed to combat racial disadvantage, the Urban Programme is the major

source of funding for voluntary sector schemes designed to combat racial

discrimination...(HMSO (1981), paras. 52 and 67 HC 424-10).

Despite this explicit reference to racial discrimination, the terminology in the

original Act (of 1969) is vague about the link to issues of 'race' and racism.

An Act to authorise the payment to local authorities in Great Britain of grants towards expenditure incurred by reason of special social need in Urban Areas...

1.(1) The Secretary of State may out of monies provided by Parliament pay grants, of such amounts as he may with the consent of the Treasury determine, to local authorities who in his opinion are required in the exercise of their functions to incur expenditure by reason of the existence in any urban area of special social need.

2.   Grants under this section may be paid at such times, subject to such conditions and on account of such expenditure ... as the Secretary of State may determine...

By the mid-1970s discussion was underway about changes to the original form of the Urban Programme which was designed to be a flexible instrument with the aim of directing extra resources to inner city areas. These debates culminated in the 1977 White Paper on the Inner Cities which proposed an expansion of the scheme and a reorganisation into partnership and programme areas. The White Paper was to become the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act. The new scheme would be administered under the Department of the Environment rather than the Home Office - a switch consistent with the shift in emphasis from social projects to more economic ones. Ball (1988) argues that it was generally intended that whilst the changed emphasis was to direct central government help to the inner cities which were by now beginning to visibly bear the effects of Britain's relative economic decline, "funding to ethnic minorities should take precedence"(p.8). For example the 1985 guidelines show a close correlation between areas defined as partnership or programme areas and those with the worst 10% of unemployment and highest ethnic minority populations (Ball, p.9). Despite this reference in the Guidelines, and as with the earlier Act, direct reference to 'race' or race relations was omitted

from the White Paper. Indeed there was explicit delegation of this arena of concern to the then newly established Commission for Racial Equality. Yet equally

there (was) widespread belief that inner-city policy is race relations policy, and the Minister of the Environment has gone on record as suggesting that the White Paper is an important contribution to the fight against racism (Rex, 1978, p.9).

The effect of the reformulation of the Urban programme which the White Paper heralded and which were instituted in the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act were as follows. Seven Partnership areas were announced, including Birmingham and Hackney and Islington, and fifteen Programme authorities in which Bradford was included. The difference between being a Partnership area as opposed to a Programme authority was that the former had the major share of the finance allocated to the scheme. There was also a special link to central government via the Partnership Committee and these areas had a number of additional powers delegated to them under the Act. Although already begun in the Shore announcements, the election of the first Thatcher government saw an increased emphasis on economic aims as opposed to social ones - such as that of redistribution. This switch is further evidenced in that it sat alongside the announcement of the introduction of Enterprise Zones, four of which were in, or became, new Partnership areas (Hambleton, 1981). Programme authorities had only some of the powers of the Inner Urban Areas Act and a much smaller share of the total budget. For example, Birmingham had £11.9m allocated to it for Partnership projects for the year 1979/80 compared to Bradford's £2.3m for the same year allocated from Programme funds. There was also a third category of authority - Designated Districts - these had no advance (or ringfenced) allocation of funds under the Urban Programme, but such authorities did have the ability to bid for funds in the yearly round.

Despite the fact that 'race' and race relations are not explicitly spoken in the legislation governing the Urban Programme, from the beginning these issues were deeply embedded in it and indeed continue to be so. Compare, for example, these two quotes on the Urban Programme - one from the Labour government of 1974 - 1979, the other from the first Thatcher government of 1979 - 1983.

> Where members of the ethnic minorities in inner areas suffer the kinds of disadvantage experienced by all who live there, they should benefit directly through the measures taken to improve conditions, for example, in housing, education and jobs. In addition, the government intend to ensure that their particular needs are fully taken into account in the planning and implementation of policies for the inner areas and in the allocation of resources under the enlarged Urban Programme (Policy for the Inner Cities - White Paper 1977, Cmnd 6845).

> The Government's Urban Programme is of particular benefit to ethnic minorities, not only as a result of the projects designed to help them specifically, but also because nearly 40 per cent of the ethnic minorities live in partnership or programme areas (1981 Ministerial Guidelines, Department of the Environment).

'Race' then is clearly embedded in this programme despite changes in its size and emphasis. That this is so, has, at times, been denied, and it is noticeable that the language through which 'race' is spoken facilitates such denial. I return to both of these points later when I come to consider Parliamentary debates about the Urban Programme. Such denials are interesting because of the light they can shed on the ambivalences buried deep in the British national psyche about its historical and contemporary implication in matters of 'race' and racism. Moreover this is a feature which crosses the political spectrum. As Hall (1978) puts it:

It seems to me that the tendency to pull race out from the internal dynamic of British society, and to repress its history, is not, as might be supposed, confined to the political 'Right' of the spectrum. It is also ... to be found on the liberal 'Left'. For the 'Right', immigration and race has become a problem of the control of an external flow, or as the popular press is fond of saying, 'a tidal wave': cut off the flow and racism will subside. The liberal 'Left', on the other hand, have long treated race and immigration as a problem in the exercise of 'good conscience': Be kind to 'our friends from overseas': then racism will disappear. Neither side can nowadays bring themselves to refer to Britain's imperial and colonial past, even as a contributory factor to the present situation. The slate has been wiped clean. Racism is not endemic to the British social formation. It has nothing intrinsically to do with the dynamic of British politics ... It is not part of the English culture, which now has to be indeed protected against pollution - it does not belong to the 'English ideology'. It's an external virus somehow injected into the body politic and it's a matter of **policy** whether we can deal with it or not - it's not a matter of **politics** (p.24, emphasis in original).

But if there was a wide ranging tendency to depoliticise the issue of 'race', even in the policy arena there is a clear discomfort in explicitly talking of 'race'. As Morrison reminds us, to notice 'race' is to display ill-breeding and so what is interesting is to think about the times and ways in which 'race' and racism is acknowledged. What the foregoing discussion shows is that in the British policy context such niceties demand that at best 'race' can only be explicitly mentioned in relation to two points. Firstly, when policies are being developed and implemented which have the stated aim of facilitating integration. Secondly, when the point being established is that no disadvantage will accrue to 'ethnic minorities' as a result of the adoption and implementation of specific policies. Processes of racial exclusion and 'othering' cannot be explicitly recognised, and therefore confronted,

because as Hall points out to do so would entail a recasting of the English (or British) culture on different representational terms. This in its turn would require adopting a very different national self-image and historiography, which may then necessitate a shift in policy emphasis and content.

Race Relations Act 1976

After long and intense discussion with the TUC and CBI, and following the 1971 Immigration Act which came into effect in January 1973, the third (and last) Race Relations Act was passed in 1976. This act sought to rectify some of the omissions of the 1968 Act, particularly in the field of employment, and as such is the Act with the widest applicability. The general ethos guiding the Act can be gleaned from the White Paper which preceded it. The first point is that apart from outlawing discrimination (the definition of which closely followed that contained in the Sex Discrimination Act passed one year earlier) the Act only **enabled** employers to adopt positive action policies and programmes and did not require them to do so. A second feature was a commitment to flexibility in the interpretation of the meaning of discrimination. It was thought that too literal an interpretation might preclude the elimination of discrimination in fields such as training. (CRE, 1980). Closely linked to this is the third feature: that in the ideal scenario the Act was envisaged as a **temporary** measure, which would only be on the statute books for as long as it took to eliminate the effects of past discrimination and to educate away any prejudice found in the population at large. Such an approach is another indication of the refusal to see racism as endemic to the British social formation. From this perspective, time will ensure the erosion of any discrimination facing black populations as their numbers are restricted to levels 'acceptable' to the 'host community' and the 'immigrants' and their descendents become 'acculturated' into the 'British way of life'. In this sense the Act is another example of the inscription of dominant discourses about 'race' and

race relations which is discernible across the whole ensemble of social policy (and indeed the whole social and cultural spectrum).

What the Act sought to do was establish a legal framework to outlaw discrimination and provide for the possibility of action aimed at overcoming the effects of accumulated prior discrimination. To this end the White Paper promised:

provisions allowing (but not requiring) employers and training organisations to provide special training facilities to members of such groups and to encourage them to take advantage of opportunities for doing particular work. There will be similar exemptions allowing ... the provision of facilities and services to meet the special needs of particular ethnic or national groups (for example in relation to education, instruction, training and health and social services (quoted in CRE, 1980).

These aims became encoded in Sections 5 (2)(d); 35; 37 and 38 of the Act. These read as follows.

S.5 - (1) In relation to racial discrimination -

(a) Section 4 (1)(a) or (c) does not apply to any employment where being of a particular racial group is a genuine occupational qualification for the job; and

(b) Section 4 (2)(b) does not apply to opportunities for promotion or transfer to, or training for, such employment.

(2) Being of a particular racial group is a genuine occupational qualification for a job only where - ...

(d) the holder of the job provides persons of that racial group with personal services promoting their welfare, and those services can most effectively be provided by a person of that racial group.

S.35.Nothing in Parts II to IV shall render unlawful any act done in affording persons of a particular racial group access to facilities or services to meet the

special needs of persons of that group in regard to their education, training or welfare, or any ancillary benefits.

S.37-(1)Nothing in Parts II to IV shall render unlawful any act done in relation to particular work by a training body in or in connection with -

(a) affording only persons of a particular racial group access to facilities for training which would help to fit them for that work; or

(b) encouraging only persons of a particular racial group to take advantage of opportunities for doing that work, where it appears to the training body that at any time within the twelve months immediately preceding the doing of the act -

(i) there were no persons of that group among those doing that work in Great Britain; or

(ii) the proportion of persons of that group among those doing that work in Great Britain was small in comparison with the proportion of persons of that group among the population of Great Britain.

(2) Where in relation to particular work it appears to a training body that although the condition for the operation of subsection (1) is not met for the whole of Great Britain it is met for an area within Great Britain, nothing in Parts II to IV shall render unlawful any act done by the training body in or in connection with -

(a) affording persons who are of the racial group in question, and who appear likely to take up that work in that area, access to facilities for training which would help to fit them for that work; or

(b) encouraging persons of that group to take advantage of opportunities in the area for doing that work.

Section.38 - subsections 1 and 2 provide the same as above for employers - rather than training bodies as such; and subsections 3, 4 and 5 provide the same for trade

unions, employers associations and similar organisations. The wording is essentially the same with a substitution of the type of organisation only. Otherwise the specifications relating to the previous twelve months; the relative proportions of persons etc; and the issue of accessing training are all provided for by this clause also.

These provisions have all been used by local authorities in pursuit of the promotion of equal opportunities and 'good race relations'. There is however another section of the act which has arguably had greater implication for local authority employment and service delivery policies - that is Section 71 (cf. Nanton and Fitzgerald, 1990, p.159). This Section establishes a general statutory duty on local authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations and to ensure that their employment, and service delivery and administrative arrangements pay "due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination" (Ouseley, 1990, p.134). The Section reads as follows:

> S.71 Without prejudice to their obligation to comply with any other provision of this Act, it shall be the duty of every local authority to make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that their various functions are carried out with due regard to the need -
>
> (a) *to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and*
>
> (b) to promote equality of opportunity, and good race relations, between persons of different racial groups.

Importantly it was the enduring relevance of this clause which resulted in an amendment to the 1988 Local Government Act on the politically loaded issue of contract compliance clauses in contracts between local authority departments and their suppliers. As a result the clause in this act which prohibits cognizance of 'non-commercial' matters influencing the contracting process in local authorities

was amended so that the duties imposed under S.71 of the RRA remained intact (Solomos and Ball, 1990, p.217).

Taken together the clauses in the RRA have been important in providing a legal framework which some local authorities have used in an attempt to address racial inequality. Broadly three inter-related types of initiative have been developed:

a) **training** - both in terms of awareness and skills development

b) **contractual** - attempting to impose conditions on supplier organisations to the local authority which extend the pursuit of equal opportunity along the lines mentioned above. Notwithstanding the amendment to the 1988 LGA, further research is required to establish how much is possible and how much has been tried. Given the purchaser/provider split which has accompanied recent legislative change to the delivery of many welfare services this is an important question. Moreover the general workings of the Race Relations legislation is not really known although some writers at least have suggested that its impact has been limited (see McCrudden, Smith and Brown, 1991; CRE, 1995); and

c) **positive action generally** - overhauls of arrangements across and within departments of the local authority to remove barriers to equal opportunities.

These clauses form a backdrop for many of the strategies adopted by Hackney and Birmingham Social Services Departments which are discussed in the next chapter.

The Children Act 1989

This act was a major piece of legislation which codified all existing laws governing the care and control of children; parental rights and duties; the rights and duties of local authorities in relation to children; and governed the relations between parents, children and local authorities. In relation to 'race' it has been greeted as a step forward because of the oft quoted clause relating to religious, racial, cultural and linguistic background. The clause comes in Part III of the act which is

concerned with the duties and responsibilities of Local Authorities support for children and families. Thus in the part dealing specifically with the duties imposed on local authorities in relation to children looked after by them, section 22 reads:

(4) Before making any decision with respect to a child whom they are looking after, or proposing to look after, a local authority shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, ascertain the wishes and feelings of -

(a) the child;

(b) his parents;

(c) any person who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him; and

(d) any other person whose wishes and feelings the authority consider to be relevant,

regarding the matter to be decided.

(5) In making any such decision a local authority shall give due consideration -

(a) having regard to his age and understanding, to such wishes and feelings of the child as they have been able to ascertain;

(b) to such wishes and feelings of any person mentioned in subsection

(4) (b) to (d) as they have been able to ascertain; and

(c) to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background (my emphasis).

There are a number of points that are interesting about this clause. One is the relative weakness of the clause. It only imposes a general duty to have "due consideration" where "reasonably practical". Studies of other legislation have shown that terminology such as this provides plenty of leeway for authorities to avoid this duty without in any way breaking the law (for example Health and Safety at Work legislation). Secondly where it is situated within the Act raises interesting questions. It occurs within that part of the Act dealing with the

imposition of general statutory duties on local authorities. Prior to this notions of 'race', ethnic or national origins do not figure. This is so even in those sections which deal with the rights accorded to parents and children; to the assignment of guardians ad litem or indeed to any other part which deals with the rights (and duties) of individual families or children. This is suggestive of a 'blindness' to issues of 'race' where benefits and/or legal protections are enshrined. Moreover it is reminiscent of the ways in which in other pieces of legislation, it is only at times when black populations are problematised (and pathologised) that explicit reference is made to them. In this sense 'looked after' children are automatically problematised because they are seen as the effect of inadequate family structures and/or parenting skills. This in turn links to both the attempts by central government to control local government which has been a feature of successive Conservative governments in recent years, and more contradictorally to the wish by the centre to push matters of 'race' to the local level.

Part Two

Turning a Blind Eye'[9]

Before going on to discuss how and when 'race' enters parliamentary debates which have accompanied the pieces of social policy legislation outlined above, I want to suggest a framework for reading these debates. I shall emphasise the ways in which 'race' has a kind of visible/invisible character. At times explicit connection is made between 'race' and both the reasons for, and the anticipated outcomes of the policies. At other times such visible connections to 'race' are elided by referring instead to conditions of social malaise and deprivation. In other words sometimes 'race' will be seen to stand as a biological metaphor for a system of social, historical and political significations, at other times structural factors are invoked as the metaphor for 'race' and race relations. Recourse to the notion of structure is a means by which to avoid the embeddedness of 'race' and racism in the British social formation. At one level it is possible to understand this as a function of the lack of commitment on the part of successive central governments to do anything other than restrict immigration and pass the appropriate legislative framework to ban discrimination and promote 'good race relations' and equality of opportunity. Indeed, as I have already argued, this dualism structures dominant discourse and practice in the field of 'race relations'. Only at moments when it seems politically unavoidable is more than this done and even then never without an awareness of the potential political minefield that can be opened up when dealing with 'race' and the black populations, particularly if a redistribution of resources is involved. Some interesting and important analyses of the links between 'race' and social policy at the level of local politics have been made and these have gone a long way in helping understanding of the dynamics and contradictions of this inter-relation (see for example, Saggar, 1993; Ben-Tovim et al, 1986; Solomos and Back 1995). Here however I want to suggest an

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[9]I have developed this line of thinking in conversation with Catherine Hall.

additional reading or interpretation of the forms of articulation between 'race' and social policy. This is the notion of 'the blind eye'.

In an interesting application of a reading by Vellacott of the Oedipus myth, Steiner (1985) has attempted to think about the ways in which people will often construct a set of meanings or interpretations about a situation which go against all the fully available facts before them. They 'turn a blind eye'. Steiner argues that the idea of 'the blind eye' is a complex one which conveys the ambiguity between whether the knowledge being denied is conscious or unconscious. What I am interested in appropriating for the analysis of how and where 'race' is spoken or unspoken in social policy debates and texts, is the twofold reading that can be made of the process of 'turning a blind eye'. Steiner tells us that Vellacott offers two readings of the Oedipus myth.

At one level there is the traditional interpretation in which the central characters are seen as being caught up in the play of fate or forces outside of their control. For social policy analysis 'structural forces' can be substituted for 'fate' such that when thinking about 'ethnic minorities' words such as 'inner cities', 'disadvantage' (with its connotation of class) and 'deprivation' (which is associated either with class or cultural pathology) can be substituted for discrimination and/or racism. In this view the conditions in which many members of 'ethnic minority' populations live their lives in Britain are a product of one or two factors. It can be an effect of urban deprivation and decay, factors which they share with their white working class co-habitants of the areas in which they live. Matters of 'race' or colour do not enter the equation. On the other hand the conditions of life of black populations can be explained as the product of their internal cultural and social attitudes and habits - the result of cultural pathologies. Either way 'race', as an axis of differentiation and power and as a principle internal to social relations in Britain, is elided.

120

A second interpretation of the Oedipus myth is that it shows that in many complicated and difficult situations the main characters are aware of the relation between factors and their effects but for a complex set of individual, and possibly overlapping reasons, that they deny this knowledge. I would maintain that this process of denial in terms of the relation between 'race', racism and particular policies is evident in much of the debate and texts which I shall go on to discuss.

I want to consider the ways in which these interpretations of a Greek myth may be applied to readings of British social policy in the mid to late twentieth century. Let me begin by unpacking the substitution of 'structure' for fate because the issue of structure is itself a complex one. In the dominant reading of the Oedipus play the central characters - Oedipus, Laius, Jocasta, Creon etc - were locked into a tragic set of relationships and actions because the play of fate was outside their control. 'Fate' would have it that Oedipus is cast out to die by his parents because Apollo's oracle foretold that he would kill his father and marry his mother. Fate would have it that the shepherd saves Oedipus' life by giving him to a shepherd from another city; that Oedipus would then be adopted by Polybus and Merop and that it would be these that he later flees from to avoid carrying out the abominable prediction. Fate would have it that he would be on the road at the time that his real but unknown father is passing in the carriage, that he would kill him, arrive in Thebes, be crowned the king because of solving the riddle of the Sphynx and end up marrying his mother. As a result of these fateful occurrences a plague would befall the city because of the inner corruption at the very centre of the city. All of this was, as it were, 'written' by fate and all of it was beyond human control, even though a result of human actions. The characters were the objects of fate, their actions determined by an invisible hand. But whilst this is the moral of the tale there is within it another tale and that is the seemingly contradictory one of the power, indeed imperative, of human action (see for example the introduction by Knox to the 1984 Penguin Classics edition of the play). Thus Oedipus, the very

embodiment of the inner corruption, is also compelled to act to reveal the truth of the relationships and the cause of the city's troubles.

In the functionalist school of sociology, 'structure' is afforded the same kind of determining quality as fate in the Oedipus myth but without the additional imperative to act. Human actions are conceived as constrained within a set (or sets) of invisible presences which are external to these actions and ineluctable. The long accepted consequence of this formulation of social structures as sets of immovable girders is that the social divisions which characterise a society are seen as immutable and the social processes through which action is produced and expressed are lost. The problems with this conceptualisation of structure are what gets defined as a structure (i.e. the closures it leads to) and the way in which it suggests certain actions are inevitable whilst others are impossible.

I should make it clear that I do not wish to propose an abandonment of the concept of structure. Thought of as a framework produced by the repetitions of social processes and actions, which then in turn helps to fashion or pattern future actions and processes, the concept of structure is invaluable in social theory. However affording structure a methodological and causal privilege leads to analytical closures (methodological, ontological and epistemological) that are unacceptable and unhelpful. In this vein, I want to consider what it is possible to elide in the invocation of dominant conceptions of structure and in turn, how these elisions are related to social psychological as well as 'material' processes.

In this sense my interest in the Oedipus myth and Steiner's use of it lies less in Freudian concerns with the psychic effects of sexual drives and more with Steiner's notion that turning a blind eye involves a vague awareness that certain facts are being avoided whilst simultaneously not being conscious of what it is that is avoided. In this sense Steiner's appropriation of the Vellacott reading is useful

because I am interested in the links made in the myth between what is seen or denied and how these in turn are related to what it is deemed possible to do. Or to put it another way the link between on the one hand 'knowing' and 'not knowing' and on the other the issue of constraint or opportunity to act. The two link together because 'not knowing' is often couched within the idea of externally imposed constraints which are then used as the means by which to dismiss that which is being avoided without having to name what it is that is being evaded. In the fields of 'race' and politics such 'constraints' are mediated through the electoral process and systems of legitimation, which in turn are articulated on a discursive terrain which continuously severs the link between contemporary black settlement in Britain and this country's imperial past. The effect of this is both the erratic acknowledgement of Britain's imperial history and the denial of 'race' and racism as enduring internal factors in the social formation. It is this which accounts for the 'now you see it, now you don't' quality of 'race' in social policy.

How are we to understand the pervasive social amnesia in relation to 'race' which is manifest in British policy and politics, given that all of the pieces of legislation outlined here have been enacted in the heat of , or subsequent to, the moral panic about 'race' and the black presence which Powellism, (understood as the incorporation of racist discourse and policy into mainstream politics, Hall 1978) articulated? Cultural theorists have noted that periodically societies fall prey

> to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests... (after a flurry of policy and rhetorical activity)... ways of coping are evolved, or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears or submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at

other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society conceives itself (Cohen, 1972, p.9).

This suggests that the search for an analytical understanding of the simultaneous 'forgetting' and panic about 'race' needs to incorporate notions of social neurosis and phobia into more predominant ways of understanding the genesis of social policies. The insights provided by psychoanalysis show that panics, irrational fears and other forms of neurotic behaviour are related to processes by which repression of that which is too horrible to bear in consciousness occurs. However, that which is repressed has a habit of revealing itself in a whole array of symptoms - from slips of the tongue, through dreams, to neurotic and psychotic behaviours.

Application of psychoanalytic methods to the analysis of cultural forms requires an heuristic mechanism by which a move from the level of the individual to that of the collective can be achieved. Obeyesekere (1990), in developing a psychoanalytic anthropology, suggests that just such a mechanism is provided in the notion of "symbolic remove"(p.57). He means by this the levels of distancing between deep motivations and the representational forms which both express and reconfigure these motivations. Thus he suggests that by holding the notion of symbolic remove it is possible to develop a means for interpreting systems of representation and meaning as they are expressed in diverse cultural forms. These cultural forms may carry an array of condensed psychic concerns but in their progressive distancing from their motivational roots they can also link to collective anxieties and social neuroses whose sources are social and historical rather than psychic. Analysis of the unconscious motives which are contained but repressed in cultural symbols is what "the work of culture", as Obeyesekere calls it, is about and its value lies in the dissolution of the conventional divide between the 'material' and psychic, or the structural and representational.

Such a dissolution facilitates powerful and innovative analyses of specific social situations as Krikler (1995) has shown. He attempted to uncover the set of circumstances which "nourished a particular moment of acute anxiety amongst whites in a region of South Africa" (p.491) in the early part of this century. In developing his analysis he drew on the Freudian notion of social neurosis to understand the collective anxieties which arose as a result of a failure on the part of the white people concerned to consciously confront their implication in the history of South Africa's racially ordered society. Through a detailed analysis of one phobic moment Krikler shows "how seemingly irrational fears - about black revolt - arose from a process of repressing from conscious memory historical experience"(p.492). Such repression of historical experience and implication resulted in social neurosis, which can be defined as:

> a psychological malady arising from the repression of uncomfortable facts by
> an entire social grouping (Krikler, 1995, p.507)

and just as at the level of the individual, the repressed can be glimpsed in a variety of ways. Turning a blind eye, social amnesia and moral panics can then be understood as some of the forms in which the socially repressed returns to haunt the society attempting to 'forget'.

Part of the process of turning a blind eye to the embeddedness of 'race' in the British social formation is that structural forces are foregrounded and become the language through which 'race' is spoken and yet discrimination or racism denied. However racism is itself also a major structuring force within British society partially acting to determine the material conditions of many sections of the black populations. Turning a blind eye then also involves the denial of a central structure, such that structure can only be equated to class relations and not other axes of power which organise social relations in contemporary Britain. I think

there are a number of ways in which the reformulation of structure outlined above is helpful.

Firstly, functionalism's 'structure' gives political legitimacy to the failure to see and act on racism because it suggests that nothing could be done anyway. The 'play of fate', as it were, dictates the possibilities. In the field of social policies, this is to reduce racism to disadvantage, which is to privilege class (in both its Weberian sense as socio-economic position and status, and its Marxist sense as social *relations of production) as the determinant of all. By adopting a conceptualisation* that neither equates structure to class, nor sees structure as all determinant, a wider field of action is potentially opened up.

Secondly if this reconceptualisation makes it conceivable that action is possible then the next step required is to delineate the structural and discursive factors involved in producing the conditions of life of black people. It is here that the issue of 'knowing' and 'not knowing' enters. Steiner makes it clear that for the process of 'turning a blind eye' to be understood the insights afforded by both readings have to be taken simultaneously.

> We are meant to accept the idea that *both* can be simultaneously true, that
> he knew and at the same time did not know. It is this which I mean to convey
> when I suggest that he turned a blind eye to the facts (p.165, his emphasis).

If turning a blind eye involves two simultaneous processes what is of even more importance for my purposes is the consequences it has. To elicit these in the arena of social policy I want first to quote Steiner at some length in relation to the psychic effects because I think these can be reworked to shed some light on the situation in the field with which I am concerned.

> If the Oedipal crime is not acknowledged to have taken place, but is
> misrepresented, distorted or covered up, then there is nothing to mourn, and

the reparative processes ... cannot operate. There is nothing to fear because no crime is acknowledged, except, of course, the fear that the cover-up will be exposed. The result is that the external couple is not attacked as it would be if psychic reality was acknowledged but instead the attack is mounted against an internal representation of a good intercourse, namely one in which truth is respected. The external status quo is apparently preserved but there *is an inner corruption which is represented by the plague in the play and* specifically confirmed by the oracle. The personality is then felt to be based on an insecure foundation and the need to cover up leads to further evasions and distortions (p.168).[10]

I want to suggest that we can use this insight in looking at the blind eye of 'race' and social policy. No full scale and systematic reparative process is necessary if the internal or organic racism of British society and institutions is denied or 'not seen', and the problem is displaced on to those constituted as outsiders. Once so constituted these 'outsiders' can be represented as the "inner corruption" which threatens the "personality" or character of the body politic/nation. This threat or insecurity results either if too much attention is paid to the 'outsiders', or if 'they' are not limited in numbers nor subjected to processes of social regulation. The "good intercourse" which could just possibly arise if the processes by which racialisation occurs was acknowledged with the aim of undermining them, is prevented because the 'truth' of 'race' and racism is denied or turned a blind eye to.

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[10]The psychoanalytic approaches which inform the phraseology used in this quote are complex and beyond the scope of my enquiry. However some elucidation may be helpful. It is clear that Steiner is drawing on the work of Melanie Klein as well as Freud here as evidenced by his use of the words 'mourn', and 'reparative process'. Klein saw the processes of 'mourning' for the psychic loss which emerged as a result of the oedipul complex as an important part of psychic health. 'Reparation' for feelings of hatred, ill-will etc towards the 'rival' parent was also a key part of coming to terms with the illicit inner feelings attached to the complex. However to reach the stage where such 'reparation' could be made - through what Klein called the 'depressive position' - first they had to be acknowledged (seen). Such acknowledgement facilitates acceptance of the co-existence of 'good' and 'bad' - internally, externally and symbolic. In similar vein the idea of 'the external couple' is a reference to both the real and the symbolic. In Steiner, the real couple referred to is related to work with a client which he uses to demonstrate his argument about the blind eye mechanism. But the 'external couple' is also symbolic in that it represents the objects of hate and desire (illicit feelings) and that which must be come to terms with.

The fear that the 'cover up' will be outed is always present because of those moments of political, social or cultural 'plague' - such as sporadic urban rebellions, when racism is riotously resisted, or moral panics when racialisations are made explicit. These and other factors must be constantly misrepresented and evaded and I would argue this ideological and psychic imperative is revealed by the constant slippage to 'deprivation/disadvantage' alongside or simultaneous with the evocation of 'race' and/or ethnicity at certain moments in the evolution in social policy.

This approach can elucidate the points at which, and ways that, particular policies can be explicitly presented as aimed at black populations and those where such explicitness is not possible. What will become clear is that 'recognition' of the 'race' aspect of a policy is most likely to be explicit when the discourses inscribed in the policy problematise black populations. In this sense Ann Phoenix' (1986) formulation that there is a "normalised absence, pathologised presence" in relation to black people holds true in the arena of social policy as elsewhere. The effects of turning a blind eye to 'race' and racism are profound. As Ousley (1984) has pointed out in relation to the effects of the legislation detailed earlier:

> Over the past two decades pathetic attempts have been made by central government, and local government, to deal with the perceived threat posed by the black presence in Britain. There have been discriminatory immigration legislation to stop black people's entry, race relations legislation with restrained enforcement provisions and the excemption of the Crown from all charges of racism, 'Section 11' funding for local authority posts intended to deal with 'new commonwealth immigrants' in their areas; the Urban Programme; Educational Priority Areas; MSC schemes; and the Inner City Partnership. Because none have addressed the central issue of racism, these programmes have all had marginal benefits for black people and in many ways have been discriminatory(p.98).

The effect of such an approach is to appear to do something whilst simultaneously constituting and reconstituting black people as 'outsiders' and 'other'. Similarly this has the effect of constituting the British, and 'their' culture as internally 'good'. There are no internal complexities or contradictions which have to be acknowledged, no 'seeing' of processes which produce racist social relations.

I now want to go on to illustrate these points with reference to the parliamentary debates which preceded the introduction of some of the policies outlined above. In particular I shall concentrate on debates about s.11 and the Urban Programme.

Part Three

Parliamentary Debates

Section 11

At first sight it could be thought that because section 11 was explicitly introduced as a policy linked to the presence of black communities in urban centres up and down the country, there is little to be said about it with in the framework of the 'blind eye'. Contrary to this I would suggest that an exploration of Hansard reports on the debates about the section from the time of its second reading until now, will show many of the elements of 'the blind eye' at play. I will begin by considering the approach adopted by Roy Hattersley, MP for Sparkbrook, Birmingham, to the section.

In June 1966 the Bill which became the 1966 Local Government Act had its second reading, marking the occasion of its first full parliamentary debate. Hattersley begins by situating Clause 11 in the context of the then Labour Government's immigration policy and he also states that

> those of us who believed it essential to do something *to make integration and absorption possible* supported Part III of the White Paper then and support it now. (Hansard, vol. 729,column 1333, my emphasis).

In so doing he immediately establishes the link between control of entry and 'good race relations', one of the discursive dualisms identified earlier which structure debate on these issues.

Soon he also makes the second common link - that of black presence and deprivation - by saying

> I call Clause 11 the second part of the implementation of those policies (ie on immigration and integration) because the first example of special help being offered to **areas** with a high concentration of immigrants was the additional assistance announced in February for housing authorities with particularly pressing slum clearance problems. By and large, they are immigrant areas, and by and large they will benefit. Moreover, they are the **areas** which will have the most benefit and assistance from Clause 11 of this Bill (vol.
> 729,clmns 1333 - 1335, my emphases).

I have stressed his use of the word 'areas' because it exemplifies the point that the beneficiaries of the monies proposed in this Clause were not black people but local areas which had to be compensated for the presence of black people. This in turn is related to the issue of 'reparation' which the notion of the 'blind eye' raises, for once again 'reparation', in the form of attempting to undo processes of racialisation and racism, is not seen as the issue. Rather the matter at hand is deemed to be 'compensation' to those who have to 'suffer' the presence of black people. In so constructing the problem British complicity in the historical and contemporary reproduction of racist social relations is avoided. Despite this avoidance, 'race' is simultaneously reinscribed as a key axis of social relations because it remains a marker of differentiation, pathologisation and 'trouble', albeit spoken through the metaphor of urban deprivation or the 'inner city'.

But Hattersley has more on his agenda than to argue for monetary compensation to be paid to specific local areas. In the continuation of his speech he manages to raise the 'distinctiveness' of the 'problems' associated with immigration from the

(New) Commonwealth; to pathologise black family forms; and thereby, to argue that such families be subjected to instruction in 'British ways'. And he manages to do this all in a tone which establishes both his concern for 'his' immigrants and his foresightedness in matters of community relations - for which read 'race'. He warns that he will touch upon contentious issues but that he will establish the specificity of 'problems' which arise from Commonwealth immigration.

It is vital that money could be provided under the Clause for some services which the unenlightened would regard as essentially peripheral both in education and health... I know very well that to enumerate the problem of constituencies like mine, with 30 per cent. of its inhabitants immigrants from the Commonwealth, is to court the accusation that one is emphasising the problems for most unworthy reasons ...

(Nevertheless) there are in my constituency schools in which 30 per cent. of the children speak no English at all. There are schools in which 50 per cent. of the children speak English in a quite minimal way. Also - this is probably more important, and it is the central issue which I put before the House and the Government - there are schools in which 70 or 80 per cent. of the children have really no experience of English customs and English mores.

I hope that, when the money under Clause 11 is distributed, the Secretary of State will bear in mind that, as well as providing smaller classes in which English can be adequately taught, as well as providing extra visitors to remind parents of their new obligations in Great Britain, it is essential to make provision to teach these children basic British customs, basic British habits and, if one likes, basic British prejudices - all those things which they need to know if they are to live happily and successfully in an integrated way in this community...

I hope very much that the special grants under Clause 11 will be available for teaching in that sense as well as teaching in the more formal sense. The immigrant areas are usually areas where schools are too old and the classes too crowded. But as well as the great problem of providing formal education, there is the need for formal instruction of both the children themselves *and their parents* there is here a great work of education and encouragement to be carried out. I know from my own experience in Birmingham that those who carry on this work with immigrants, who are there to give informal advice and assistance, and to *persuade* as well as to teach are often regarded by the unenlightened as unnecessary and unimportant... (but)

I welcome the grant, because this is the first occasion when money has specifically been set aside for authorities which *suffer* this problem...(Hansard, vol.729, clmns 1335 - 1337, my emphases).

There are a number of moves discernible here. Firstly we can see recourse to and slippage among the discursive pairings which have acted to structure social policy formulations (and the lack of them) concerned, directly or indirectly, with 'race' in post second war Britain. Thus for example we can see 'race' as a metaphor for problems in the notion of 'immigrant areas'. The idea that a 'substantial' black presence in an area is productive of problems is also embedded in Hattersley's plea for education to be defined widely in the name of integration. But then just as he gets dangerously close to doing what he states he will not do - ie. blame black people themselves for the problems they and the areas they live in face - he veers off into issues of structure. Thus "immigrant areas" are those "where schools are too old and the classes too crowded". Recourse to structure, here where class and geography overlay one another, provides the route by which not to 'see' where he was discursively going. Simultaneously it provides the detour via which he can return to the racialisation of problems yet still avoid the issue of racism.

What is also striking about Hattersley's speech is the way in which he
simultaneously manages to problematise black **families.** He does this by
proceeding as if it is axiomatic that 'their' values, customs and traditions are
'alien' to those of the 'British way'. Here we have the introduction of a theme
which will get replayed on numerous occasions in official, academic, media and
professional discussions about, and representations of, the black presence in
Britain.

Indeed if we look at parliamentary debates of section 11 in recent years, at
least as they are recorded in Hansard, this last point is clear. For example in a
House of Commons debate held on the 5th July 1994, Max Madden speaking
on behalf of the MP for Keighley, near Bradford, read a statement about section
11 (now subsumed under the SRB) which included:

> Having visited schools in my constituency where up to 95 percent. of the roll
> are of ethnic minority origin, I know how important this issue is (ie discussing
> the changes to s.11)...

> An understanding of English and an ability to use language are vital
> prerequisites to the learning process. Any child who lacks those basic skills
> is bound to be at a serious disadvantage and to start losing time which can
> never be made up ...

> To that end more section 11 money should perhaps be devoted to the pre-
> school sector and to working with parents who, in most cases, are very
> anxious to give their children a good start in life but who may be poorly
> equipped to do so (Hansard, vol 246 clmn 291, my emphases).

So here again there is a slippage from the issue of educational need to that of the adequacy of the 'ethnic minority' family. The retention of this discursive register is all the more striking given the very changed economic fortunes of Britain in the mid-1990s compared to those in the mid-1960s, and especially compared to the dominant approach to state supported and promoted welfare which now centres on notions of 'self-reliance' and 'independence' from the 'nanny state'.[11]

But once again the recourse to the notion of invisible but determinant structures provides the means by which to both return us to the 'problem' of black presence and to elide the issue of racism. Thus Walker (another local Bradford MP) continues the debate:

> All too evidently, the problems are here and now. Money spent today, if wisely used, will certainly be repaid in the future by cutting the cost of *tomorrow's unemployment* and *tomorrow's social disadvantage*.

> I hope that Bradford will combine with Government to put together a bid within the context of the Single Regeneration Budget which, among other things, *clearly addresses the problems which section 11 was intended to resolve*, and which also provides good value for taxpayers' and Council Tax payers' money (vol. 246, clmn. 291, my emphases).

Exactly which problems section 11 was aimed at resolving - language provision for those who needed it, a means of gaining extra financial resources to a particular area, compensation to local areas for carrying a national burden of black settlement, a means of promoting integration - is not made at all clear.

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[11] In an article in The Guardian (26.6.95) Ros Coward pointed to the gendered and classed nature of the attack on the welfare state, (and the visions which it embodied), which is expressed in this formulation.

Moreover it sits alongside the new language of 'good financial management' and is part of a co-ordinated plea to get extra monies into Bradford.

What is plain is that whatever the prime motivation behind this contribution to the debate the whole issue is played out on the well established terrain of numbers and problems. This despite the fact that primary black migration into Britain has been reduced to a trickle. Max Madden, for example, foregrounds the issue of numbers when he takes up the debate in his own right:

> By the year 2000 one in every two pupils in schools in Bradford will be of ethnic minority origin. At present, nearly 82,000 are on roll, 27 per cent. of *ethnic minority origin* (clmn. 291)

Really his "origin" refers to descent, a distinction of which he is aware since he uses this to make recourse to the ubiquitous 'problem' of black families, for he goes on to say:

> Although most of our children are *second generation few have parents who were educated in Britain*. There is still a propensity for a spouse in an arranged marriage to come from overseas, often speaking little or no English. It is not surprising that *those* parents cannot teach their children at home. Because of the number of parents who cannot speak English, there is a significant need for more adult literacy provision" (vol. 246, clmn. 292, my emphasis).

So the language needs of 'ethnic minority' children slip to the problems of "a spouse" from overseas which slips to the inadequacies of "those parents". The needs of individual children suddenly gets constructed as familial lack and inadequacy. And here, at the level of the psychoanalytic, one is reminded that the process of 'othering' (and thereby the constitution of the subject) always involves an ascription of 'lack'.

What is also presented here is that limited language proficiency (real or presumed) is presented as if it were the sole reason for the underachievement of many black pupils in schools. Madden cites the figures but here he has no recourse to a language of structural disadvantage. In this way racism, as a complex but powerful structuring factor in underachievement, is once again unrecognized.

Continuous monitoring of 20,000 ethnic minority pupils in Bradford suggests that on leaving first schools aged nine, 27 per cent. of those pupils have still not achieved national curriculum level two. That has an impact on subsequent achievement because assessment records show that 59 per cent. of ethnic minority pupils entering upper schools, aged 13, have not yet achieved national curriculum level four. The proportion of Bradford students who do not achieve GCSE grade C or above is the highest in the country.

Bradford still has a number of pupils and students who arrive at school with no English. Of the September 1993 intake, there were 177 such children in first schools, 114 in our middle schools and 48 in our upper schools (clmns 291 - 292).

Of course the importance of substantial proficiency in received English for educational achievement cannot be denied. As such I would argue that all those pupils who need specialist classes in English language (however small or large that number may be) should have access to them. However here my concern is not with the issue of rights to and distribution of educational resources. Rather it is to analyse the moves by which the issue of racism is 'not seen'; the ways in and moments at which discourses of 'race' are foregrounded in the parliamentary debates; and the moments when racial discourses are supplanted by or overlaid with those of class.

Earlier I commented that section 11 had been analysed as a means of compensation from central government to those local areas which were seen as having to bear the 'burden' of black settlement. As such it is a policy at the heart of centre-local relations. This remains so in the 1990s when these relations have undergone radical restructuring in the wake of the reforms of the Thatcher governments. The debate on section 11 quoted above took place in this changed context and the contributions of the Bradford MPs were in many senses appeals to central government to recognise the special circumstances of the city and therefore the need for continued access to section 11 monies. This is because of the 1993 incorporation of section 11 monies into the single regeneration budget which I outlined in Part one . As a result of these changes Bradford would no longer receive section 11 funding. Black 'problems' and black needs were therefore used as the basis of an appeal for the maintenance of financial resources to the city, arguing that without it the pursuit of equal opportunity would be seriously undermined.

The issue of equality of opportunity is already present in some of the debate previously quoted. For example, the need to support English language teaching as a prerequisite to educational attainment. In the contribution from Gerry Sutcliffe (Bradford, South) the issue is stated directly and related to other sources of area based financial support, i.e.,city challenge and the urban programme.

> Initiatives such as city challenge and the urban programme were the result of problems in inner-city areas. We do not want to return to the days of a lack of funding to provide equality of opportunity (clmn. 294).

Whose equality of opportunity is not specified at this stage but his use of one of the key code words by which 'race' is spoken - ie 'inner-city' - gives a very strong hint. And anyway the term 'equality of opportunity' has moved from its post

Plowden (1960s) association with (white) working class schoolchildren, to its post 1970s association with women, 'ethnic minorities' and to a lesser extent, the disabled. So one is not surprised that he continues with reference to the need to recognise that

> In areas such as Bradford and most other Metropolitan Authorities, there
> must be greater concentration on section 11-type schemes to support people
> in dramatic need (clmn. 294).

So 'race' again works as an implied shadow, or what Althusser referred to as 'an absent presence'. It has something to do with the production of need but how and of what order is elusive. For here we have a statement about "dramatic need" without any specification as to how this either arises as is quantified. The earlier contributions had given some idea. Out of a total of 82,000 pupils in Bradford schools we had been told that in one year's intake a total of 339 entered schools with no English. Is this what is meant by 'dramatic need'? Or is it the issue of overall disadvantage and lack of resources found in Bradford educational facilities? But if it is this general issue then section 11 monies should not be available to help alleviate such need. The details of the issue then are not spelled out. What is clear, is that the discursive terrain on which the debate took place was that of only 'seeing' 'race' when black people were constituted as metaphor for wider social and economic problems; as being located in 'problem areas'; or when they were seen as producing problems because of their 'otherness'.

This last point is most clearly put in the contribution from Terry Rooney (Bradford North).

> One problem is that Bradford has *never had a race riot.* If it had been
> otherwise, large sums of money might have followed, as happened with
> Bristol, Toxteth and Brixton. Fortunately, we have never had such

happenings, and part of the reason for that is the extensive and profitable use of section 11 funds in the Youth Service and in further education (clmn. 294).

There is a wealth of discursive moves discernible here. Firstly there is the clear identification of black people - especially 'black youth' - as productive of major social disruption in the extreme form of riotous behaviour. Secondly there is the paradoxical suggestion that such behaviour brings with it local reward in the form of injections of finance from the centre. Thirdly there is the idea that the social control of problems caused by 'black youth' is achievable by the use of section 11 monies.

What is quite remarkable about this discursive journey is the act of 'forgetting', or social amnesia, on which it is premised. For no mention is made of the 1981 case when 12 local youth of Asian descent where charged with conspiracy. They became known as the 'Bradford Twelve'. The event occured after police were reportedly informed that preparation was being made for a major riot in the city and that a huge quantity of petrol bombs were being stored in a disused site in the city. The twelve charged were said to be the 'ring leaders' of the said conspiracy. This was one of the key 'law and order' trials of the decade and figured quite significantly in the recasting of second and third generation young men of Asian descent as (at least potentially) a new source of trouble and concern for inner-city police forces. Moreover it served to locate Bradford firmly on the map of areas of tension between black young people and the police in the wake of the riotous rebellions which began in Bristol in 1980 and were to sweep up and down the country for the next ten years.

The Urban Programme

It has already been shown that the link between the Urban Programme and 'race' was not explicit in the language of the statutes which introduced and

extended the programme, but the fact that it was first introduced in the immediate aftermath of Powell's infamous 'rivers of blood' speech of April 1968, meant that to officials, politicians, 'race relations' personnel and the black communities the link was crystal clear. It was also clear in the debates which accompanied the announcement of changes to the Programme in 1977. This juxtapositioning makes it possible to discern the blind eye mechanism at work - a process of avoidance being played out on the terrain of moral panic.

To reiterate: the main changes introduced at this time were all aimed at trying to regenerate the life of inner cities, which the inner area studies had shown as rapidly collapsing. The six main proposals were:

a) to give a new priority in the main policies and programmes of government to help improve inner city life,

b) to develop a more unified approach to such policies and programmes, part of which would be accomplished by the transfer of the Urban Programme from the Home Office to the Department of the Environment,

c) to strengthen the economies of inner city areas,

d) to review and change policies aimed at directing and encouraging population movement within and across regions,

e) to recast the Urban programme so that it covered economic and environmental projects as well as social ones,

f) to establish special partnership areas, with additional programme areas also (Hansard, vol. 929, 6 April 1977).

In introducing these proposals Peter Shore, then Secretary of State for the Environment, made explicit reference to black populations using the old formulation of 'substantial numbers' and in such a way as to constitute them as problems.

> Over the past decade inner cities have suffered a massive and
> disproportionate loss of jobs and exodus of population. *Substantial ethnic*

minorities in some cities have added an extra dimension of *difficulty* (Ibid., clmns. 1226 -1227, my emphasis).

Yet still Cabinet ministers were maintaining a distinction between policies which were explicitly deemed to be about managing the purported problems of a black presence and those which were supposed to be only tangentially cast in the shadow of 'race'. This distinction also reflected departmental rivalries between the Home Office and the Department of the Environment; the division of labour between them also giving some hint at how matters of 'race' were perceived. Thus in the same volume of Hansard we find a written answer from the Prime Minister to a question about the effects of the transfer of the Urban Programme to the Department of the Environment:

> The Urban Programme has proved its worth as a valuable source of support for projects benefitting those living in urban areas of special social need. So long as the programme was innovatory, responsibility appropriately rested with the Home Office. It is now to be greatly expanded and there will be room for measures going beyond specifically social projects.

> I have, therefore, decided to transfer responsibility for the Urban Programme ... to my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for the Environment... The Home Secretary will retain the central responsibility for the Government's race relations policies and for Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966, ... The Voluntary Services Unit will also remain in the Home Office. The interests of the ethnic minorities and the voluntary sector will be fully taken into account in the allocation of resources under the enlarged Urban Programme. (Hansard,vol.929, p.510w)

Here again the factors at work are the two simultaneous processes by which a blind eye is turned. On the one hand the 'knowledge' that 'race' has something to do with the Urban Programme is evident because both Shore and Callaghan

link the need to do something about inner city regeneration to the presence of 'large' black populations. Structure, in the form of economic decline and urban decay is there, and so the government must intervene into the forces which produce these in an attempt to halt and alter their course. Structure in the form of racism is however known and not known. "Ethnic minorities add an extra dimension of difficulty" and will have their "interests" "taken into account", but the policies for dealing with "race relations" are outside of the orbit of the Urban Programme and the Department of the Environment. Black people are recognised as part of the problem but racism is not recognised as part of the structural arrangements which result in the need for the policy in the first place. 'Race' is a factor in the "inner corruption" which needs to be addressed, but there is no resulting reparatory process for the racism which structures the lives of inner city residents. For the simple reason that this is denied, it is seen and not seen, known and not known.

Further reference to the 1977 debate as recorded in Hansard illustrates this still more clearly and also shows that some politicians were less reticent in openly speaking the link between the Urban Programme and the presence of black populations. Alex Lyon, MP for Bradford, said,

> I congratulate my right honourable friend on what may turn out to be the most important decision that the government have made. However, it is not with unalloyed joy that I look on the transfer of the Urban Programme to a *completely non-black programme. The Urban Programme was designed as a black programme in the aftermath of the "rivers of blood speech, and has never been fully used for that purpose.* If my right honourable friend is taking over the Urban Programme, why is he not taking over Section 11? In the choice of cities to be helped by the planned improvements, why is Bradford omitted when it is third in the list of census deprivation indicators and third in the number of New Commonwealth immigrants who live there?

To which Peter Shore replied,

> The Section 11 programme under the 1966 Act remains unaffected by what I
> have said and will continue to be used by the Home Office, which has its
> particular responsibilities in this field, linked with its responsibility for
> immigration policy. *I do not think that we would all agree that the Urban*
> *Programme has in the past been a black programme. If it has been, it has*
> *been extremely ill-directed, because an extremely small part has gone to*
> *areas where black communities are strongly established.*

> My purpose is to deal, *regardless of whether there are black or white*
> *populations*, with aggregated problems of poverty and deprivation in our
> major urban centres. That is my purpose and policy. In some of the inner
> cities black communities are very small and in others they are very large. I
> believe that is the best way to proceed (Hansard, vol. 929, 6 April 1977,
> clmns. 1235-1236, my emphases)

What factors is it possible to see at play in this sequence of talk? Again there
is the explicit denial of any knowledge of 'race' in Shore's rejoinder to Lyon's
declaration that the Urban programme was a "black programme". Such a denial
also enables Shore, as spokesman for the Government, to deny that any
reparation has been or indeed should be paid to black communities for racism
which they may face. Such a denial has been a consistent necessity in British
politics since the 1950s when black settlement was viewed with increasing
alarm and there were an ever growing number of calls to ensure that no special
favours were accorded to 'them' at the expense of the 'indigenous' population.
Moreover this debate took place in the same year that various tabloid papers
had headlines which screamed about 'Malawi Asians' staying in six hundred
pounds a week hotels at the expense of the Department of Social Security. So
an expanded Urban Programme - from just under £30 million a year to £125

million - could not be presented as a black programme. Such sensitivity might have been heightened in the context of the 1976 IMF imposed retrenchment and a general election looming in the following eighteen months to two years. A recourse to 'colour blindness' was then a third expedient which can be read in this debate. The Urban Programme not only does not make any reparation for the particular conditions which black people may face, it is also 'racially' neutral, aimed at achieving the tasks of economic and environmental regeneration regardless of whether the populations are "black or white". In so declaring its colour blindness, British parliamentary practice and Government aims are devoid of racial bias and once again knowledge of racial discrimination is denied.

However knowledge of 'race' can be spoken when to do so reproduces the discursive constitution of black people as the problem. Shore achieves this by reiterating the purpose of section 11 funding and more importantly its position alongside immigration policy. The sub-text is that such special funding, which is after all **compensatory** spending to local authorities for having to put up with the presence of 'immigrants', is only ever possible within the context of control of the entry of black people to Britain. Moreover the same discursive terrain is occupied by Lyons, who defines the Urban Programme as a black programme, within a speech designed to make a claim for Bradford as worthy of partnership status. It is the links between the high numbers of black people in Bradford and the incidence of deprivation indicators that, in his view, make Bradford a suitable case for treatment.

In this section I have analysed some of the main parliamentary debates on section 11 and the Urban Programme between the years 1966 and 1995. Despite refering to other pieces of legislation in part one of this chapter, with the exception of the 1976 Race Relations Act, elaborated discussion about issues of 'race' and racism have been missing from the passage of these other

statutes through parliament. In addition it is in relation to section 11 and the Urban Programme that links between 'race' and social policy is discernible. Even the debates accompanying the second and third readings of the Children Act 1989, with its clause relating to the ethnic, racial and cultural origins of looked after children contained no detailed discussion of these links. Such omissions are further evidence of the ways in which 'race' is both seen and not seen in British social policy. Moreover as I have shown, even where 'race' is evident it is often present in an elusive or implicit way.

This links to the overall argument of this chapter. I am suggesting that an examination of the discourses through which racialisation occurs can also reveal the points at which a blind eye to 'race' and more importantly racism is evident. What is revealed therefore is that the denial of 'race' as a structuring principle is a psychic as well as political process. The knowing and not knowing of 'race' is part of the ebb and flow through which British national implication in the production and reproduction of racism is denied. It is also part of the process through which central and local politics are negotiated. I turn now to a consideration of some of these matters at the local level.

CHAPTER 6

'Race', Central Policy Initiatives and the Local Level

In the last chapter I showed how 'race' was discursively produced in central policy debates and how it was mapped onto the terrain of inner city policy. I suggested that in the evolution of key pieces of legislation it is possible to discern the development of a framework through which 'race' is articulated and racism elided. The notion of the 'blindeye' was developed to show the ways in which these issues were both 'seen' and 'not seen'.

I want now to consider the ways in which the issues discussed above were played out at the local level. In particular I want to show how, in the 1980s, the two authorities in the sample used central policy initiatives to make social services more 'culturally appropriate' or 'ethnically sensitive'; how these were linked to wider local events in which 'race' and racism were key factors; and how, as the discursive and organisational context of Social Services changed, policy aimed at promoting racial equality became reformulated. This reformulation was to have an especially marked effect on employment policy for black social workers. In the early to mid-1980s recruitment of black social workers into the two SSDs under consideration here was given high priority as racial tensions became especially sharp in many inner city areas.

This relates to the training schemes introduced by the two SSDs which provided a possibility of qualification for black women. Most of the women in the sample were qualified social workers, the qualification often having been gained as a result of some form of secondment system operated by the authority which employed them. In Hackney there were still some women who had no formal social work qualification but who had formal social work responsibilities, although only one such woman was represented in the sample. This was as a result of a policy which sought to

encourage black people and others defined as 'ethnic minority', and who could satisfy the authority that they had appropriate skills and knowledge to deal with social work tasks, to apply for posts in the Department. A similar scheme was developed in Birmingham although there all those who carried a social work case load have to be qualified. Throughout this chapter I draw on readings of numerous Committee Reports considered by the Social Services Committees in the two authorities, to gain a picture of policy development and change with respect to 'ethnic minority' employees and service users.

That many of those interviewed indicated that they had been recruited as a result of, and benefited from such policies, is one reason why consideration of policy development in this field is necessary. However there are other, less obvious, but no less important reasons. The first is that such policies need to be situated within a wider reading which foregrounds the complexities, contradictions and contestations which give rise to policy shifts in the first place. As such, in presenting information on the development of policy at the local level, I shall attempt to delineate some of the wider elements which were at play at the time, including financial, organisational and political changes which resulted in shifts in emphasis in policies dealing with 'race'. This is linked to my concern to analyse social services **employment** policy, as opposed to service delivery. In much of the literature on 'race', racism and social policy issues of service delivery are the prime concern. As a result an examination of the conditions which led to the temporally and spatially concentrated entry of qualified black social workers into local authority SSDs has not been undertaken. Yet such an analysis can greatly deepen understanding of the complexities of the politics of 'race' and racism in late twentieth century Britain. Having already developed an analysis of this in terms of the concept of 'governmentality', here I consider the specific policies of recruitment at the local level and the continuities and discontinuities with central government policy and discourse.

The chapter is organised into two parts. Part one focuses on Hackney and part two on Birmingham. In each I outline the development of policy aimed at recruiting black social workers to the respective Departments. On occasion I also include some of the women's accounts about employment policies. I deal with the authorities in the order in which they introduced specific recruitment and training policies which had the aim of enabling black women (and men) to gain professional social work qualifications.

Central Policy at Local Level - Hackney

As an instrument of central government policy concerning 'race', Section 11 can be said to embody all of the pitfalls and ambiguities of other, albeit sparse, government policies on 'race'.

> In so far as race has become an issue centrally, it has been confined to a
> number of special policies which have served to reinforce overtly negative
> perceptions of the race problem for example policies on immigration and
> policing. Secondly it has also provided an extremely loose, permissive and
> ambiguous framework within which positive policies need or need not be
> developed locally... Finally the 'special' nature of these initiatives has left a
> whole range of policy fields untouched in terms of providing directives,
> regulations and terms of enforcement for the development of positive initiatives
> at a local level (Ben-Tovim, Gabriel, Law and Stredder, 1986, p.112).

These authors are able to demonstrate this for Liverpool and Wolverhampton. However it is also the case that local authorities have used these sparse and ambiguous central initiatives in their attempts to develop what are often termed strategic 'race' relations policies.

During the mid-1980s the London Borough of Hackney Social Services Department did just this. This was the result of a combination of simultaneous factors which centred on the senior personnel recruited to the Department and the pressures

imposed by local black groups and others similarly defined as 'ethnic minority'. These

came together within a wider context of sporadic street rebellions, or 'riots' in the

dominant discourse; widespread pressure within the profession and other relevant

arena for a radical change in the practices of adoption and fostering; and of course the

intense struggle between radical Labour controlled boroughs (of which Hackney was

one) and the Thatcher governments.

During 1983 and 1984 Hackney recruited a new Director of Social Services and three

new Assistant Directors. Some, if not all of these had already gained a reputation as

key figures in raising the issues of, and campaigning for, a radical review of social

services practices in relation to the multi-ethnic populations found in particular local

communities up and down the country. That the senior staff of the Department

should all be newly recruited in such close proximity to each other suggests some

major changes in the overall political direction of the Borough. The particular form

this took in the SSD was not traceable as the Committee Papers which might have

given a hint of it were not open to public scrutiny, nor was I able to find people in the

Department who could offer personal accounts.

However it is evident from the work of Solomos and Singh (1990) that major

challenges to Hackney's approach to 'race' and racism - in both service delivery and

employment - were occurring at this time. Although the focus of these authors' work

is on housing, it is clear from this that the combination of formal policy statements;

an investigation by the CRE into the housing department, and the subsequent issuing

of a non-discrimination notice; and local political pressure from black and anti-racist

activists led to a dynamic process of change in relation to the approach to race

equality across the Council. As they state:

> The final stage of policy formulation which has culminated in the present
>
> policies resulted from critiques of existing policies, the linking of these critiques
>
> with wider notions of race equality and iterative modifications arising from

implementation. By formally committing themselves to race equality soon after the Race Relations Act (1976) and taking limited measures to effect it, both Hackney and Haringey created a policy gap. The discrepancy between formal commitments and reality, between radical rhetoric and the space between the words, was seized upon by ... policy entrepreneurs and by political activists of the urban left, and voluntary groups with an interest in housing in their attempts to define and redefine policies (p.106).

This description of the combination of forces which effected change at departmental level can be said to characterise the process of change in other departments. Indeed a key Social Services Committee document directly referred to the CRE investigation as indicative of the need for all service departments to review and alter their policies and practices (London Borough of Hackney, 20 September 1984). Certainly the SSD had been subjected to sustained critique about its service delivery from local black organisations. For example, as early as March 1982, the Social Services Committee received a report from Hackney Black People's Association which identified what it saw as the major gap between Council-wide and Departmental rhetoric on the one hand and practice on the other.

> Hackney Borough Council is committed to the idea of a race-relations policy and to the enforcement of an equal opportunities policy, yet it is our experience that what are entrenched, traditional Council services and provision can have a deleterious effect on, and are sometimes inimical to the interests of the black community. Consequently we find ourselves forced to question, to what extent have the ubiquitous ideals of race-relations policies and equal opportunities managed to survive endless rounds of Council theorising and exist as concrete practice (*Report to Social Services Committee, 15.3.82, item G*).

Some months later Social Services and other relevant committees (e.g., the Community Development Committee) received several reports concerned with future

working relations between the SSD and two inter-connected organisations, offering services to people of Caribbean origin and descent. Both of these organisations had been subjected to a major review. Whilst it was recommended that the two organisations implement changes to their administrative and recording systems, it was agreed that the working links between the Department and these organisations should continue in the interests of race equality and equal opportunity in service delivery. One of the reports received was from an independent consultant who was later to become one of the three new assistant directors. These examples - i.e. Hackney Black People's Association critique of current practice and the review of the two organisations - suggest that a process similar to that identified for the Housing Department was proving a successful way to apply pressure to service departments in the interests of 'race' equality. These events were precursors to the recruitment of senior personnel to the SSD, and in its turn this recruitment was indicative of the development of a political atmosphere in which 'race' equality measures were foregrounded.

An examination of Social Services Committee papers for the 1980s gives some insight into the impact that this had on the policies guiding service delivery and links with black community organisations. In early June of 1984 the Social Services Committee received a joint paper from the Director of Social Services and the Principal Race Relations Adviser entitled - *'Bid For Section 11 LGA 66 Resources Progress Report: A Strategy For Race Relations In Social Services'* - which makes it clear that they were going to utilise revised central government policy in an attempt to develop more appropriate services for black and other 'ethnic minority' communities. The Report outlined the problems of the existing practice in relation to Section 11, arguing that it had

> very serious implications ... for the Black community and good race relations
> generally ... (and that it would) reinforce class division, perpetuate racial
> disadvantage and lay the foundation for conflict.

Furthermore, the authors of the report argued that existing practice and interpretation of Section 11 by the Council, with its tendency to centralisation, conflicted with the Council's stated commitment to decentralisation. The implication of this pattern for black communities was that

> official ways of thinking and seeing have given rise to an interpretation and use of Section 11 which places undue emphasis on services for the black community who are seen primarily as consumers of services and not providers of services (para.3.1, my emphasis)

and as such these communities have not benefited as they might have.

However the report noted the abolition of the 10 year rule, and suggested that the impact of this made claiming resources from central government under Section 11 worthwhile. The need to act was clear, not only in order to realise a potential source of central government money but also to ensure that the established contradictions within the system were not intensified and institutional racism reinforced.

> The potential for Section 11 to be used as a vehicle for positive action is enormous, if it can be systematically developed within the service area and made more accountable to the black people of Hackney through Council structures (para.4.2).

The Committee then resolved to adopt a number of recommendations which included an assurance that funds intended to benefit black communities be used for that purpose; that new financial and administrative arrangements be established for the management of Section 11 monies; that a special Section 11 vote be established within the Committee to ensure that successful bids to central government not be forfeited because of a failure to secure the 25% required from the local authority; that proposals which accorded with the Council's decentralisation strategy be prioritised especially if they also established and/or strengthened links with black community organisations; and that a detailed package of proposals consistent with a race relations strategy be developed and brought to the Committee as a matter of urgency.

This report was followed by another of equal importance at a September Committee meeting - *'Towards the Development of a Transracial/Cultural Model of Service Provision. A Strategy for Race Relations in Social Services'.* It lays out what it sees as the problems in existing patterns and procedures of service delivery; establishes the philosophy underlying a new model of service provision; lays out a long term programme for achieving change; and details a shorter term programme to be accomplished in the following twelve months which would begin the process.

This programme for immediate action had six main features, including the refocused use of Section 11; the development and implementation of a record keeping system, including one relating to employment; and a goal of achieving 35% black and ethnic minority staff. This report can be read as very clearly setting the tone for future developments in Social Services policy on 'race'.

I wish to focus on its perspective on the link between 'race' and class as axes of differentiation and domination which affect user experience of social services. Secondly I examine the philosophical approach to anti-racism guiding the proposal for change. I do this to contrast the local approach to that discernible in the debates about central policy discussed in the previous chapter.

In identifying the need for change it is clear that the authors of the report begin from what might be loosely called a 'political economy of the welfare state' perspective. The wider economic and social context in which Council departments operate is conceptualised as one of "class struggle and class domination"; whilst the knowledge base of social services provision is seen as located in middle class norms and values. The result of this is that as a service provider the Department and its personnel is ill-equipped to deliver appropriate services to the diverse population it serves (the focus of Section 4 of the Committee paper - 'the need for change').

Social Services provision is historically a differential response to economic and
social crises, has evolved a structure and a body of knowledge which is
dominated by and sustains the middle classes. Its norms, values and practices
are shaped and carried out by the middle class. It is an apparatus throughout
history which results from the crystallisation of the hegemony of the dominant
classes. This apparatus effects a series of functions essential to the
reproduction of the existing social order (para. 4.2).

Added to this class bias and domination is a

second major feature of Social Services provision today ... its racist nature.
The perceptions and insights and the way that officers go about their business
are largely dominated by racist tendencies (para.4.3).

Class and 'race' as axes of differentiation sit alongside one another as the twin pillars
guiding the delivery of Social Services. Gender, despite women being the vast
majority of recipients and deliverers of social services, is absent from this analytical
frame. This is an interesting reformulation of the slippages and elisions between
class and 'race' which one could see in approaches at the centre. More radical in
orientation, this local level formulation wants to hold onto the two axes as separate
but running parallel to each other, suggesting that both aspects need to be tackled if
service delivery is to become more appropriate to the needs of its populace.

However as the report goes on to delineate the philosophy underlying its approach to
change, it is clear that a reverse form of conflation occurs - i.e. class gets collapsed
into 'race', rather than the other way round.

In offering assistance to people of a different race and social class, it is
essential to understand their care patterns and viewpoints, especially their
culture, their values and goals about family/child care.

Most Social Services personnel are not knowledgeable about differences in class and cultural values, beliefs and practices of black and ethnic minority people (paras. 4.7 and 4.8).

Inappropriateness and conflict arise from the interface between the white, middle-class social worker and the black/ethnic minority, working-class client. To understand the issue in this way allows 'culture' to become the privileged modality in policy development aimed at change. Moreover, this approach occupies the same discursive formation as positions articulated at the centre for it constructs social worlds, values and cultures as mutually exclusive elements of the binary 'white, middle-class'/'black, working-class'. Despite this, the approach is presented with a tone of moral certitude and superiority in a similar vein to that of Hattersley which I discussed in the previous chapter, when it asserts:

This section of the report sets out *the* basic philosophy of *race relations in Social Services* (para. 5.1, my emphasis).

It rejects all notions of integration and proposes what it calls a multi-cultural and multi-racial approach to service provision. This is

one which actively addresses, promotes and caters for the aspirations and needs of a multi-racial and multi-cultural community. It would therefore be working towards change rather than acting as a reservoir for the casualties of social injustices. The primary focus revolves around those functions provided under the heading of Care and Community services. Care and Community services by their very nature involve a high level of interpersonal contact between the Directorate's personnel and individuals and families in the community. It is the interpersonal contact which is informed exclusively from a European care perspective that has to be transcended and supplanted...

This means that Social Services have to meet different needs in different ways, or meet similar needs in different ways according to cultural group. Moreover, cultural

differences are most striking in family life - the very basis of the services offered."
(paras 5.2 and 5.4.)

This is interesting for in addition to 'class' becoming conflated to 'race', 'race' itself now becomes synonymous with 'culture' and the point of conflict is reformulated as that between a homogenous European culture and various minority cultures, which presumably are also internally homogenous. This slip between registers is all achieved by retaining the terrain on which social work makes its claim to professionalism - i.e. the family. To this the authors are then able to add the second key component of social works' claim to professional status - psychology.

> The application of psychological frames of reference appropriate to black people
> is an essential feature of transracial/cultural care (para. 5.12).[12]

Following the moves amongst the various discursive registers inscribed within this report, it is possible to delineate more clearly the shifts in what is being identified as in need of change. At first one would think that the very nature of social work itself would be the focus of change because it is deeply implicated in the maintenance of a social formation based on the inequities of class and 'race'. But the move to 'culture' as the key modality elides this and in fact social work, although in need of reform, is identified as a field of professionalism requiring only minor change. The necessary reforms will be achieved by a rethinking of patterns of service delivery through the frame of what is now called "trans-culturalism" and "black psychology (which) enables accurate analysis and comprehensive explanations of black life" (para. 5.12). The result is that Social Services will be radically changed and social work made more appropriate to multi-racial/multi-cultural Britain.

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[12]With this in mind, approval was won for the establishment of a clinical psychologists service in February 1986. Some three and half years later when the service was under threat of closure, a report in defence of the service argued that it "offer(s) a unique transcultural approach which addresses and caters for the aspirations and needs of the multi-racial and multi-cultural community". (*Report to the Social Services Committee and Finance Sub-Committee - Indicative Cash Limits - Proposal to Abolish Clinical Psychologist Service*, October/November 1990)

Transracial/cultural care is a necessary new development in the field of social work, which (in turn) owes its theoretical origins to the advances made in the disciplines of medicine, medical anthropology, psychology and psychiatry. Transracial/cultural care offers new insights for relationships, and advances the ability of social workers to care for others who are of a different race and culture (paras 5.13 and 5.14).

If this Report established the discursive framework for the delivery of services to a multi-racial/multi-ethnic population, its implementation required a mechanism to ensure the staff mix of the Department was adequate to the task. I have already mentioned that this Report was mapped onto another outlining proposals for the use of section 11 monies. The projects identified in this latter paper would together increase the staff complement by 121 posts. This in its turn had followed on from an earlier commitment to an equal opportunities recruitment programme, and a special black secondees scheme for social workers.

Recruitment

The black secondment scheme was supplementary to a general secondment scheme, and was an early demonstration of the Department's attempt to increase the numbers of social workers from "black and ethnic minority groups". Proposed in October 1982, the black scheme was initially aimed at recruiting ten secondment places to a two year CQSW course. Upon completion of the course, candidates would be obliged to return to work for the Department. At first recruitment was skewed toward internal staff. However external applicants were not excluded and the minute of the meeting records that "an advertisement will shortly appear in the press opening this opportunity for secondment to black people not in the Council's service" (London Borough of Hackney, 30 November 1982). There was fierce competition in the first round with more than 100 internal staff indicating an interest in accessing the scheme. The black secondee scheme ran until approximately 1987 when the last cohort was recruited. Although there was no detailed programme of induction to the

Department and its work, all secondees were assigned a training officer who had a special brief to help them through any issues that arose. Also each cohort met as a group in which current issues and future plans were discussed. By the time this group came back to Hackney as qualified social workers the SSD was entering a new phase.

Development of the scheme and other more general comments about the Council's role as a local employer make clear the concern to promote equal opportunities in employment in its own right, that is alongside measures to ensure equality of services, but of equal importance. Moreover this scheme demonstrated the desire to promote equality of access to professional grades and not just those occupations which were traditional sources of employment for black women, for example, home helps, unqualified residential workers, cooks, and cleaners.

> Although the Directorate has a well-established secondment programme it is
> felt that a special recognition of the needs of black staff for training
> opportunities should now be made. It is important that the proportion of the
> population from black and ethnic minority groups should be reflected by the
> staff serving the whole community. In the first instance an increase in those
> directly serving the public by social work is sought (para. 3.1, London Borough
> of Hackney, 7 September 1982).

Because the proposal was to offer black staff substantial support for professional training, it was recognised that it would need to be handled sensitively (para. 7.1) as a certain amount of disquiet might be expressed by white staff. As it was to turn out, this note of caution was to prove rather prescient.

The Departmental concern to develop professional training opportunities for black staff in and for itself was an important moment in facilitating entry of black women (and men) into qualified positions. Three of those interviewed in Hackney had used

this route, one having support only for the second year of her CQSW course. She was one of the external recruits, prompted to apply as a result of an advertisement about the scheme. One other of the sample had gained her professional qualification (CQSW) via the general secondment scheme. It was factors such as this that led to Hackney gaining a reputation as a progressive or radical borough for black social workers. As one participant, who gained her qualification through an access route in another London Borough, said:

> I had always wanted to come to Hackney. From College, I don't know why. I had this kind of image about Hackney being kind of right-on and that kind of thing.

The wry, mildly self mocking tone of the end of this quote suggests that once in the authority her image was called into question and in chapter nine I shall show that this scepticism about the Department's approach to 'race' and its black workers is widespread.

One factor contributing to this scepticism is that the moment of offering full support for professional training was relatively short-lived. It was suggested to me that the demise of the black scheme followed from a legal challenge by a white man, not employed by the Council (interview, 1995). The argument against the scheme was that it was unlawful for the Department to offer such schemes to black candidates only. The success of the challenge highlights the limits of the Race Relations legislation and also suggests that the note of caution contained in the initial report was highly prophetic.

It would, however, be wrong to suggest that the challenge to the scheme's legality was the only factor leading to its demise. One participant refers to the very changed situation of the late 1980s/early 1990s when "... the culture was quite different". This change in culture was brought about by a mix of factors which were played out over a number of years. Included among these were the major antagonisms which were

being expressed between central government and certain Labour controlled authorities, Hackney among them; rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC and other Metropolitan Counties; the introduction of the Poll Tax and the opposition this gave rise to; and finally the shift in the social relations of welfare which accompanied the changed arrangements for financing local government services and the successful ideological onslaught on 'loony left' Councils and their commitment to equal opportunities.

However, if the withdrawal of support for such training was commensurate with the new climate, the cessation of the secondment scheme had a demoralising effect on the part of many black women in the Department. One woman put it this way:

> because people were brought into the organisation with the understanding that if they weren't qualified there would be opportunities to qualify and they would be seconded, and shortly after I was seconded ... they stopped all secondments, without any discussion or anything. So people that had just come in without being qualified and who were waiting because people had to apply and they only took a certain number every year, they weren't in a position to, you know, to finance themselves so those people are experiencing difficulties now, in terms of movement and also people that had already worked for the organisation or came in with the hope that, because it was in the air, and I mean, I don't know where it came from but there was talk of them introducing it at some point, in the organisation, particularly in the residential, who as a matter of course have had lower status. When they closed a lot of residential establishments in Hackney they moved into field work, into area work or fostering and adoption or whatever, and again they had this idea that they would be qualified, because generally interviews, when you are asked questions about, you know, what would you like from the organisation ... further training etc. They always say there is support there, em you know, so I think that has hit hard really.

The impression of speed in the delivery and the obvious dismay which is in this account, conveys some sense of the long lasting effects of cuts in support for professional training. However I have quoted this at length because of the number of other issues it raises. One significant issue is that of raised expectations. This account suggests that the previous existence of secondment schemes resulted in an enduring expectancy regarding such support. But it also seems to suggest that management in the Department have not made it clear that no such support now exists. This is not to suggest that any formal statements about secondment, or any other forms of support, are regularly forthcoming from members of the senior management team. But there is an ambiguity about the situation which is fostered by experience at interview panels.

Secondly the account raises issues about the general effect on career mobility. It is difficult to gauge whether these effects were greater for black women, although the demise of the black secondment scheme must at least have had some disadvantaging effect. In addition there is the specific mention of the residential sector which has been known as a sector in which black women have been concentrated as unqualified workers. At least two of the informants stated that it was their position in and experience of residential work that pushed them to seek qualification - one through the black secondment scheme, and another through self-financing in another borough. Moreover with the closure of more and more residential institutions which has accompanied the introduction of community care, one can expect the effects of the demise of support for professional training on black women wishing to become social workers to persist.

Finally, the account raises issues about the process (or lack of it) of consultation. This is indicative of the very changed organisational environment . It will be remembered that the Reports of the early to mid-1980s put a high premium on procedures for communication and consultation with both 'ethnic minority' staff and

service users. The words of this participant would suggest that this is no longer of such importance to senior management.

The black secondment programme came out of a short-lived and specific moment when the perspective on equal opportunities within the Department was such that its commitment to promoting access to _employment_ was seen as important in its own right. The original initiative predated the major strategy papers of 1984 indicating that employment was on the agenda early. It was successful in getting qualified black women (and some men) social workers into the Department, and this did not go without notice:

> (The)... political climate in Hackney changed and they were actually trying to get more black workers employed in Hackney

was how one woman saw it, whilst another said,

> ... about that time (December 1983) there was just like an influx, if I can use that term, but you know of black workers, and all of a sudden there were all these black workers.

'This Bridge Called My Back': the Distillation of Racialised Bodies

This recruitment process had begun within the Social Services Department's "transcultural" perspective. However, while employment had formed part of the strategy for promoting racial equality and good race relations, service delivery had always been a major concern and it was soon to occupy a central position with consequences for black professional training.

We can see this if we look again at the proposed use of Section 11. I have already outlined the approach adopted toward the use of Section 11 in developing a transracial/transcultural approach within Social Services. This earlier paper was followed up in September of 1984 by a composite report summarising the various projects/posts to be bid for.

> All the proposals ... are concerned primarily with the development of a wider
>
> range of services to meet the needs of a multi-racial community

particularly to promote an

> ... increase in resources to alleviate social stress and their use specifically to
>
> assist members of the black and ethnic minorities community (paras. 1.2 and
>
> 2.3, London Borough of Hackney, 20 September 1984).

Of the total 121 posts, only 20 were for qualified social workers. Other categories of professionally trained staff included three clinical psychologists , which is consistent with the emphasis placed on psychology in the transcultural perspective. There were also to be eight family workers, though whether these would be expected to have a social work qualification was not specified.

The conclusion this points toward is that where service provision occupies the primary focus of changes in SSD policy and practice, the form and quality of policy aimed at promoting equal opportunity in employment, is greatly altered. This is because in the context of SSDs which have a concentration of black women staff at the lower and unqualified ends of the employment spectrum, commitment to equal opportunity in *employment* carries with it a need to address such occupational concentration. Thus where it is entry into professional jobs which is the issue a focus on employment in its own right will have to address issues of training and career progression. However once the predominant emphasis is on delivering 'ethnically sensitive' services such concerns can be side-stepped. I would maintain that this is related to the tendency to constitute black workers as racialised bodies whose qualification to deliver 'ethnically sensitive' services resides in what is seen as their *natural* ability to act as cultural translators for the Department. There is evidence to support this reading from both Hackney and Birmingham but before going on to consider this a little, a brief reminder of the notion of the 'racialised body' is useful. The notion of the 'racialised body' refers to the ways in which phenotypic traits are used to divest certain categories of people of individuality and to accord them only a

group belonging understood in terms of 'race'. Bodies become the sites of condensation of the plethora of signs through which 'race' is delineated, most obviously skin colour but also factors like hair texture, nose shape, or accent. The racialised bodies of liaison workers or development workers are simultaneously at one with and differentiated from the racialised populations they represent. They are at one with these populations because of the phenotypic or linguistic traits which they are said to have in common with those they represent. They are differentiated from them because they stand in the position of a Social Services Department worker who has the power which comes with statutory duties. But for the actual social worker - i.e. the qualified worker with the potential to use the coercive powers assigned them by the state - this differentiation is starker still and though their bodies can still mediate the welfare relation between the SSD and populations defined as ethnic minority, there is a greater distance because of the qualifications. From this perspective the posts of liaison or development worker constitute an intensification of processes of racialisation because they focus almost exclusively on embodiment. In this framework then the need for qualification in social work is much less necessary.

One area where this is clearly to be seen is in those jobs entitled 'liaison worker'. A number of such posts - ten - were identified in Hackney's composite report on Section 11 bids. That such workers are viewed as physically embodying the skills of racial or cultural translation is apparent from the ways in which the tasks of the post are defined.

> The postholder will concentrate on the dual function of helping members of the black and ethnic minority community in understanding and using existing statutory health and personal social services and in assisting statutory agencies in being more responsive to the needs of a multi-racial community (para.4.6 ibid.).

Attached to area teams, their skills of 'translation' would be fed into the Department at this level.

What level of experience of social services or professional qualification those appointed were expected to demonstrate is not clear. But this only serves to confirm the point, because in taking the proposal forward for agreement by elected members, what is highlighted is 'ethnic' or 'community' belongingness. In other words the proposal is presented through a highly racialised discourse for although aimed at communities whose "mother tongue is not English", it is not presented as a **language** translation scheme. That this was the case is particularly interesting because in practice the "liaison workers were used as interpreters and community ambassadors" (interview, July 1995) suggesting that at least in the first instance, the language needs of the Department were the focus. However the discursive constitution of the posts which was contained in the Committee Paper provided a greater flexibility in the definition of tasks attached to the jobs and we can see evidence of the de-emphasis on the need for qualified social workers in the fact that "at least two of them became unqualified social workers"(interview, July 1995).

To say this is not to ignore the complexity of the issue nor to deny the need to increase equality of access and provision to marginalised and under-represented sections of the population. Moreover it is clear that at this time the views, needs, and levels of voluntary provision within populations defined as 'ethnic minority' were an unknown quantity. As a result, alongside the liaison worker posts, there were also to be community social workers. The proposal for such workers was justified on the grounds of its consistency with the move to a patch work structure and the Departmental commitment to undermining racism in its approach and inequality in its provision.

But its central rationale and associated tasks were:

In order to ensure that the new developments really meet the needs of the black and ethnic minority community a great deal of developmental work will be necessary. It is therefore proposed that each team in the area offices (16) has appointed to it one social worker whose specific tasks will be:-

a) To unearth in each team's patch what are the helping social networks.

b) Who are the key carers in the patch.

c) What ad hoc helping groupings already exist that could with appropriate facilities be more effective.

d) How do members of the black and ethnic minority community view Social Services.

e) How do they want the patch teams to respond.

f) To respond to the views of pressure groups.

g) To establish pilot projects to show the area office how they can become more flexible and responsive to the needs of the black and ethnic minority community.

h) Assisting and supporting their colleagues in developing new styles and methods of responding to the needs of black and ethnic minority people (para.3.1, London Borough of Hackney, 20 September 1984b).

It is notable that no reference is made to the required or desirable ethnicity or 'race' of the would be community social workers. But one must remember that this proposal was advanced within the overarching philosophy on racial/cultural difference and equality which was laid out in the earlier 'transcultural' paper. Thus it is from these that one gains an insight into the discursive and ideological terrain on which this proposal is written. In these, physical embodiment was the guarantor of an ability to discern 'community' needs and responses. Therefore one would be justified in anticipating that the community social workers would ethnically 'match' those populations identified as in need of development work. Moreover the construction of

those populations as homogenous and univocal is evident in the use of the singular "community" in the preamble to the delineation of tasks. This is also evident in the language used to list the tasks: for example, d, e and g seem to imply that there will be one view and one voice.

Black workers were constituted as racialised bodies because the much needed work to amend SSD practice was often understood and developed within a discursive framework which also acted to 'fix' black social workers and populations in rigid and essentialised racial and cultural categories. Instead of examining ways in which such frameworks and categories could themselves be undermined in the process of changing the SSD, the reports suggest that anti-racism consisted of applying additional perspectives, values and methods to social services practice and 'knowledge'. As such they simply reproduced the binary categories of racialised discourse and in so doing re-inscribed the 'minority' status of the populations whose interests they wanted to protect.

Such an approach has become the dominant one within institutions that adopt a 'progressive' approach to racial disadvantage and discrimination. For example, a recent advert for an African/Caribbean social worker read:

> For the African/Caribbean social worker a knowledge of the culture of
> children/young people from the African and African/Caribbean communities and
> how their social care needs can be met (*The Guardian*, 2 August 1995).

Yet it is unclear what similarities exist between the cultural and social care needs of young people who share the same skin colour but who inhabit widely differing social, geographical and cultural worlds. For example, how similar are the care needs of the recently arrived refugee child/young person from war torn Somalia and the second or third generation British born child/young person of Montserratan or Jamaican descent? Moreover it is difficult to imagine how one social worker is expected to be able to "demonstrate" such "knowledge". However by constructing them solely through the

essentialised categories embedded in discourses of racialisation these points are occluded.

The 1990s

Reference has already been made to the change in approach and organisational culture that is discernible from the late 1980s. In particular, I have suggested that one of the key features of these changes in terms of the employment and career development of black women social workers, is the concentration on service delivery and the simultaneous de-prioritisation accorded equality of access to employment at all levels in the Department.

Of course the apparent de-emphasis of employment is not stated as a formal policy but a reading of the Committee Reports from that time onwards indicates that service delivery became the primary focus. With this in mind, I want to explore the trends of the 1990s around three main themes: the disappearance from general Committee Reports of the language of transculturalism and equal opportunity in training and employment; the switch to the language of "equalities" rather than specifically named areas of inequality, such as 'race', gender etc.; and the overall emphasis on "service" in the context of 'managers', 'markets' and 'missions'.

i) the case of the disappeared: 'Race' and the general Departmental direction
In anticipation of the introduction of new legislation which had the effect of radically reorganising local authority Social Services Departments, the Hackney Department underwent two major restructurings in 1990/91 and 1992. The final details of these reorganisations are not important for the issues being discussed here, but a reading of the Reports outlining the proposals for change are revealing in their absence of 'race' (and indeed any mention of other axes of inequality) except in the most general, indeed rhetorical, of terms.

Take for example a Joint Report of the Directors of Social Services and Corporate and Information Services - *Social Services Restructure 2nd Phase* - which went to Committee in July 1990. The general tenor is evident in the last page of this report where equalities considerations are dealt with. In the 1980s it had become customary in Authorities controlled by (at least left) Labour that all Committee Reports give consideration to their implications for those sections of the population who suffered some form of discrimination and disadvantage. Often the content of these paragraphs became no more than an endless repetition of a form of words templated on the computer. Nevertheless, at their best, they made it incumbent on officers to give some thought to these issues, and moreover each area of discrimination was considered separately. By the 1990s, in Hackney, this convention had (at least partially) stopped. Thus para. 12.2 of the Report referred to above reads:

> Implications for Black People and People from Ethnic Minorities, People with
> Disabilities, Gays and Lesbians, and Woman (sic).
>
> The Directorate of Social Services aims to provide the above groups with an
> improved level of service by restructuring the second and third tiers of
> management in order to make managers more accountable and responsive to
> these community groups.

Any specificity of service needs which might exist among these disparate 'groups', is completely occluded in this amalgamation which, in its homogenising effects, re-inscribes their marginalisation as those who are at once 'different' yet non-specific. Given this, how the restructuring of management organisation will result in more accountability is unclear, but it does not have to made clear. Non-specific needs do not demand specific remedies. Moreover any employment needs which might emerge in connection with these groups, whose 'group' status is the product of the intersections between identities and social positions, is completely ignored. Yet one would expect that the restructuring of a whole directorate would have at least some

implications for employment levels and prospects, and therefore on the possibility of pursuing equal opportunity in employment. Indeed the Report itself recommends the abolition of at least 33 posts and the establishment of the same number of redefined posts in their place.

It is not that the issue of equal opportunity is entirely absent from elsewhere in the Report, but rather that it is couched within descriptions of the management arrangements and lines of command which reflects the recent shift in emphasis such that matters of organisational form and presentation are foregrounded. Even here the relative marginalisation is expressed in the lack of precision about the complexities of the issues. The attached diagram illustrates the point well. Thus we see that the Deputy Director will be responsible for equal opportunities but no more detail about the accompanying terms of reference is given anywhere, unlike the situation for compulsory competitive tendering, transport, meals on wheels etc. This point is covered in the following way:

> The Deputy Director is to be responsible for Resources, Training, and Strategic Services within the Directorate ... , and also Equal Opportunities and Liaison Officers. It is proposed that a manager will be responsible for each of the following:-
>
> 1. Resources
> 2. Training
> 3. Strategic Services
> 4. Liaison Officers (para. 6.1 ibid.).

Equal Opportunities then is mentioned and accorded a senior officer with overall responsibility but any more detailed discussion is reserved for the other points. Those areas which are given more detailed attention is illustrative in itself. For it is precisely those areas which, as a result of central government legislative and policy change, had become much more subject to market pressure and business forms of

organisation. In this context equal opportunities matters which cannot be dealt with in the discourses and practices of managerialism are unspecified and marginalised.

The final reference to equal opportunities in any form appears at paragraph 6.9 where it is stated:

> After consultation with relevant officers however it was agreed to create a manager responsible for Planning, Grants, Research of Freedom of Information, Quality of Service and **Black and Ethnic Minority** issues, as well as New Technology and Stats. This sub-division will provide a cross Directorate resource for the above functions to all service providers and managers in Social Services.

We can see this relation at the bottom right hand of the diagram. Here the previously undifferentiated field of equal opportunities has become reformulated as, and reduced to, "Black and Ethnic Minority issues", again suggestive of the homogenisation and marginalisation of equalities issues.

We find yet another example of this as the Report goes on to outline the structure of the main Departmental Divisions. Here we find that within Adult Services, there will be a manager responsible for:-

> Disability Residential Unit
>
> HIV/AIDS
>
> Sickle Cell
>
> Visual and Hearing Impairment. (para.7.4.i, ibid.)

which seems to take care of "people with disabilities", including those of Caribbean, African and south east Mediterranean origin or descent who might suffer from sickle cell anaemia and related blood conditions.

Examination of this Report provides ample illustration of the ways in which managerialist discourses provide an opportunity for the marginalisation of equalities issues. To approach equal opportunities issues within such a framework suggests two distinct but perhaps overlapping effects. Either the adoption of a technicist approach which assumes that achievement of the 'right' organisational arrangements will ensure that the content and process of dealing with inequality will automatically result. Or, perhaps more perniciously, adoption of an approach which avoids any serious consideration of processes and structures which produce inequality can be read as a conscious attempt to marginalise equalities issues in these times of 'realism'.

Yet another Report illustrates this process still further (London Borough of Hackney, 11 July 1990). This was the first such service contract statement and its aim was to outline the activity programme, resource availability and constraints, and detail achievable targets within the Directorates "... overall twin objectives of *customer or user care* and *sharing power*" (para. 8, emphasis in original).

The detail of the Report is beyond the scope of my concerns except in so far as it illustrates the closures which arise as a result of the discourse and practice of managerialism. Five areas of major change are identified in the report as providing the context in which the service contract was drawn up. These included legislative change; restructuring; the establishment of an adequate information strategy; and

> the *Training, re-Training* and *creating* of an effective and efficient professional, managerial, administrative, technical and basic care *staff mix* so that both flexible and accountable employment patterns ensue (para. 2.5, emphasis in original).

But no mention at all is made of any equalities issues which may arise in relation to these employment issues. As a result we see another illustration of the shift from the situation in the early 1980s. A further section identifies "other significant changes"

and refers to the imminent introduction of a form of internal market and suggests that inter-Directorate Service Level Agreements will have to be established. It is in this context that some reference to equalities issues is made.

> A more adequate and widespread transcultural approach to all services has to be implemented, with fully fledged ethnic monitoring of services as part of Quality Service Review. Anti-discrimination and anti-poverty measures will be adopted wherever they can within activity programmes (para. 3, ibid.).

But these issues are themselves to be tackled within a situation where:

> *Service Budgets* and staffing resources have been disaggregated substantially and key activity monitoring is being put in place. Budget scrutinies, quality monitoring and service contract reporting will be progressively brought together. Non-priority activities will be increasingly defined, and given the need to maintain a budget without deficit, critical choices on service level changes and reductions where resources do not match expectations will have to be put before Members (para. 4, emphasis in original).

Given this scenario, and given the relative marginalisation of 'race' and other equalities issues which we have detected in other Reports from this time, it is not surprising that no high-profile and detailed discussion of these issues is present here. 'Race', gender and other categories of social signification can disappear from the general scenario because the discursive frame of managerialism, value for money and balanced budgets acts to subsume a highly differentiated population under the rubrics of 'customers' and 'service users'. The 'market' is the equalising force embedded in this discourse and the efficient management of that market is the way to ensure its equalising effects are realised. Ironically the then Director[13] seems to be aware of

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[13]At this time it is still the Director who was appointed in 1983 and was, at that time, associated with the foregrounding of issues of racial equality in both employment and service provision. That

just such subsuming and closure effects which result from the imperatives of the new orientations. For as the minute to the meeting records:

> Members expressed concern that there did not appear to be an equal opportunities emphasis running through the report ...
>
> The Director of Social Services responded that he had deviated from using transcultural and equal opportunities statements in the report and had *looked instead at resources, targets and measures* as well as equality and quality.
>
> (Minute of Social Services Committee held on 11 July 1990, no.28, my emphasis).

Clearly these are not commensurate terms and the "deviation" represents a discursive and **political** shift in which economic forms and indicators replace others located within questions about the distribution of power within welfare relations. However it is precisely these changes in welfare relations which become hidden under the language of markets, resources and targets. For whilst these latter terms are devoid of 'people' they nevertheless partially act to define the relationship between constituencies of clients and sets of resources held and allocated by the SSD.

ii) the language of 'equalities'.

As part of the restructuring exercise, functions concerned with the promotion of equal opportunities were decentralised to the relevant Directorates. First proposed in late 1991 by the Assistant Chief Executive [Equal Opportunities and Community Affairs], the idea was that Social Services (among other Directorates) would have four equalities officers

> ... with each post having lead responsibility for one or two of the Council's four priority Equal Opportunities categories. (Their functions) ... will be centred on

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near to the end of his employment as Director he could now be associated with the marked shift in emphasis which I have been outlining is indicative of the ways in which it is the combination of institutional framework and personnel which makes the promotion of equalities work more or less possible.

service delivery, with their day to day management the responsibility of (individual) directorates (para. 2 Social Services Committee, 9 October 1991).

Such arrangements were made in the SSD by establishing one of these posts as a Senior Equalities Officer, who would have line management responsibilities for the other three. The senior post would hold a generic equalities brief, and once appointed, the remaining three would have responsibility for the areas not especially covered by the senior office holder. (Social Services Committee, 14 April 1992). At one level this structure was devised as the pragmatic solution to the overload of control functions which would accrue to the Strategic Services Manager if the posts were established as originally conceived. It was also partly the result of

... the Council's response to the loss of substantial amounts of Section 11 funding previously used to employ Race advisors (para. 3.1).

Changes in the organisation of financial relations between central and local government, departmental restructuring, and an atmosphere in which equalities specialisms were seen as increasingly unrealistic led to a merger of functions and blurring of conceptual distinction and complexity. The overall result was the policy *marginalisation of the diverse and complex world of equalities, especially in relation to* the promotion of employment opportunities in the higher grades of the Department, and a decline in the resources, including personnel, committed specifically for such work. We have some sense of this by jumping some years and looking at a 1995 Report on equalities issues (Social Services Committee, 5 July). This shows that in the intervening years:

Budget cuts and restructuring have decreased the number of posts to one Equality Development Officer, managed directly by the Strategic Services Manager. This post (i.e. EDO) is presently vacant ...(para. 3.1)

It is self-evident that major reductions in resources will lead to the need to find 'efficiencies'. Moreover, experience tells us that such efficiencies are frequently made in employment via a whole panoply of measures - from redundancies and severances, early retirements, non-filling of vacancies, etc. Other ways include a redefinition of tasks and job descriptions and a general restructuring of work organisation and labour process. In terms of equal opportunities issues, this often means an incorporation of equalities tasks into a wider range of posts. In keeping with this the 1995 paper states:

> All members of staff will continue to hold responsibility for equalities issues
> and therefore the range of other (i.e. apart from women's since there is a
> seconded women's development officer) equalities functions across the
> Directorate will be maintained. These include:-
> a) All staff continuing to be responsible for assessing the needs of individuals
> in relation to their personal requirements including ethnic and cultural
> background, religion, gender, disabilities and sexual orientation.
>
> b) All service managers continuing to hold responsibility for developing
> equalities policy initiatives within their areas. Equalities Developments will
> be detailed as key objectives within Local Service Plans.
>
> c) All service managers continuing to be responsible for user/public
> consultation mechanisms, which take into consideration equalities issues,
> within their service.(para 6.5).

Such devolution of responsibility across the range of Departmental staff is an important part of establishing "a sense of ownership (empowerment) of equalities initiatives"(para. 5.1). However, in such an organisational culture, the issue is how to valorise equal opportunities commitments alongside all the other 'objectives' that managers and staff are supposed to 'own', otherwise it is just a nominal commitment. Moreover such devolution and the existence of specialist personnel with responsibility

across the range of axes of inequality are not mutually exclusive, although this view does not seem to be held by senior management in Hackney's SSD. Therefore they were to re-designate the Equality Development Officer post to that of Equalities Inspector who would assess the equalities work across the Department. Moreover it is apparent that the focus of attention for equalities was in terms of service delivery and that this was spoken of in the language of 'customers'. Policy development and implementation for employment was less firmed up. For example, in terms of training it was stated that the possibility of "... prioritising applicants from minority groups when allocating places on the new employment based Diploma in Social Worker courses"(para. 6.6) was under consideration.

There is some echo here of the situation in 1982 where support for professional training was provided to enable people from 'ethnic minority' populations to become basic grade social workers. Given the lack of representation of some such populations who form a sizeable proportion of Hackney (e.g. Turkish) this is still important. But in the 1995 formulation the possibility of such training is not at all guaranteed, nor does it necessarily address the career progression needs of black women social workers already employed by the Department. It is as if the Department has been unable to recognise the changes which have occurred in the staff profile and to respond accordingly. One area where such action is needed is that of the Area Manager barrier. In this context even those actions which have been implemented since the restructurings in the early 1990s are of limited use, for example:

> The creation of Senior Practitioner posts providing a promotion route to management for basic grade social workers.

> The provision of specific training/work experience opportunities for staff displaced by restructuring to enable them to acquire the skills necessary to be re-deployed into vacant posts...

The introduction of NVQ's in Social Care for residential and day care manual staff, many of whom are from black and minority ethnic groups (para. 4.5 a, b and d.

These fail to address this problem because they do nothing to break the clustering of black women at the lower end of the professional scale. Similarly another measure identified in the report - i.e. that to support "women middle managers on high level managerial courses", by-passes many black women because only two of them match this level. In this sense it is an example of the problems which can arise when structural and discursive inequalities organised around various axes are conceptualised as both distinct and internally homogenous.

This returns me to my argument that the way in which particular posts and areas of work are conceived has an effect on the ease with which they are cut, redefined or assimilated. To redefine the separate but intersecting axes of domination into one field, to homogenise, lays the foundation upon which the need for distinct and specific measures can be denied. Superimpose this notion upon that of 'customers', 'value for money', 'resource constraint' and 'missions'- i.e. the significations of the new organisation of welfare relations - and Departmental requirements can easily become redefined as the ability to respond to diversity by getting the organisational arrangements right. This is in contrast to understandings of the ways in which dominant discourses about 'race', 'sex', 'sexuality' or 'disability' give rise to institutional practices which reproduce the logics and effects of inequality. Add to this the idea that all that is required to demonstrate growing equality is representation among the staff of populations defined as 'ethnic minority' and the need for resources to respond to a constantly evolving situation is denied.

iii) the imperative of 'service'

The discourse of 'service' mediates the relation between black social workers and black 'consumers' or 'customers' because they are both positioned as racialised or ethnicised subjects. As such the presence of the former within the Department is necessary if the 'service provision' to the latter is to be "appropriate". This formulation raises many concerns but the discourse of service also elides the need for a rolling programme of substantial support for initial qualification and career development because 'their' presence has already been secured. In this context reference to issues of recruitment and/or training of black people into qualified positions is subordinated to the imperative of service. This process can be clearly discerned in recent Committee papers.

The inability to maintain the distinction between issues of service delivery and those of employment stems from two overlapping processes. One is the conceptualisation of black employment issues as always and only about policies designed to facilitate entry into areas of employment where black women (and men) have traditionally been absent or under-represented. Occupations with some claim to professional status are an example. Equal opportunities in employment policies were designed to address this problem and the black secondee programme offered a particularly focused example of what can be achieved given resources and political and organisational will. However, if the focus of equalities strategies is *employment*, initial entry into non-traditional sectors is only the starting point. For a more systematic approach aimed at widening the employment profiles of excluded groups an additional emphasis on career progression, further training, and transformations in the organisational characteristics which preclude entry is needed. In the absence of developments such as these, entry into the occupations may well be secured but at the lower grades. In short, change and the promotion of equality in employment must be understood as an ongoing and dynamic process.

A second equally important process is the conceptual conflation of analytically distinct, but intersecting, axes of social inequality into one homogenous mass captured under the rubric 'equalities'. Without such distinctions it will be impossible to delineate the structural or organisational processes which prevent particular groups from advancing further within the occupational field. These two points would suggest that it is necessary to avoid a situation where employment equality becomes subsumed under other organisational imperatives which emerge in the process of welfare reorganisation within a discourse of 'service' and the 'customer'. I would argue that just such a process of subsumption has occurred in Hackney and Birmingham and this carries implications for black women's employment within the SSD. Moreover I would suggest that this process is itself related to the dominant idea that a mere presence of black staff on social work teams is enough since the main objective is to deliver 'ethnically sensitive' services. I therefore want to give some brief consideration to the issue of service.

As I have already established by the early 1990s issues of 'race' were being thought of within a new framework in which resources, targets and performance were the key indicators through which 'success' was measured. Having said this it would be inaccurate to suggest that the existence of a new framework meant there were no tensions between this and those organisational discourses and objectives which the new ones were to replace. An example of the inter/intra-departmental tensions between issues of 'race' equality in employment and an imperative of service can be seen by reading the *Progress Report of the 1990/91 Race Relations Work Programme within Social Services Directorate* which was presented to the SSC on the 9 October 1991. Fundamentally this report was a critical analysis of the work programme and interestingly issues of both service delivery and 'race' equality in employment were contained within it. Thus of the four main recommendations two concerned service delivery and two concerned employment issues.

2.B. That a reference be sent to Social Services Committee requesting that the Director of Social Services be asked:-

i) to identify the progress on the package of care developed for the black and ethnic minority elderly people and what future plans of action have been envisaged as agreed by this Social Services Committee in June/July 1989;

ii) to provide the progress achieved in setting up the ethnic record keeping and monitoring systems throughout the Social Services Directorate for service delivery as agreed by this and Social Services Committees in June/July 1989; and

iii) to outline the steps being taken to improve the representation of severely under-represented racial/ethnic categories, i.e. the Asian (Chinese, Bangladesh, Pakistan), Orthodox Jewish, and Greek/Turkish Cypriots in the workforce.

iv) To outline the steps being taken to improve the representation of black and ethnic minorities in the Principal Officer cadre.

In addition to the points concerning black and 'ethnic minority' employment this report also linked the need for accurate statistics on the ethnic composition of the Directorates' workforce to the pursuit of equality in employment at *all* levels in the occupational grade structure.

3.3   Ethnic Composition of the Workforce

The reservation about the adequacy or otherwise of the representation of the black and ethnic minorities especially in 3rd and 4th tier Officers cadre can only be dissipated when the requisite ethnic split is provided by the Directorate for each division. Meaningful appraisal should be made once the figures are made available.

The issue of attracting a more diverse staff mix, and ensuring this is reflected at higher professional levels were placed high on the agenda by a unit with a specialist focus on

Race Relations. Having said this it is clear that the issues of employment were embedded in a wider frame where service delivery was by far the main focus. Thus in the original work programme to which the Report of the Principal Race Relations Advisor was responding there was only one reference to employment issues and even this single reference was in relation to the functions of the Race Relations team where 'employment' was identified as one of five areas to which they were to have regard. No special mechanisms for facilitating access to Departmental professional occupations was mentioned and all the other points concerning the team's terms of reference were about service delivery.

This emphasis on service was further exemplified in the departmental Race Relations Work Programme for 1991-92 but in this the imperative of service is even starker. In referring to the imperative of service I am suggesting more than just a focus on getting services out to the 'service user'. Instead I am suggesting that 'service' now carries the idea of 'business' and thus the 'business of serving customers' implies a different rationale behind the organisational arrangements and priorities. In part this is reflected in the concern for 'operational objectives', 'targets' and 'performance indicators', all of which suggest an evaluation on the basis of accounting techniques rather than socially produced needs being met. For example the report outlining the *Social Services Service Contract 1990-91* has as one of its targets for children and young people:

> 3. <u>Targets</u>
>
> ... 2. To facilitate transcultural provision.

Which was to be achieved by the following:

> 4. <u>Measures</u> ...
>
> 1. Ensure precise ethnic/cultural monitoring
>
> 2. End of year report in liaison with Race Relations. (p.8).

Moreover the whole of the Race Relations Work programme for 1991-92 was written in these terms as is reflected in the view that

> ... areas targeted by the Race Relations (sub- committee) correspond with the key areas chosen by the SSD in accord with the Corporate Specifications for Service Contract for 1991/92 as set out by the Policy and Resources Committee in its Report Service Planning 1991/92

The rest of the report is then all set out under headings dealing with operational objectives. cum performance indicators.

A shift to the language of business reflects a shift in the understanding of the relationship between sections of the population and state organised welfare delivery. It also reflects a shift in the role accorded to state agencies for the delivery of welfare and as agencies offering a wide range of employment opportunities. In this move to a new welfare regime, inequalities are either unacknowledged or conceptualised as outside of the scope of local authority concern. Diversity is a part of the new welfare regime but it is a diversity divorced from socially produced power inequalities and instead harnessed to a notion of consumer choice. Thus a diverse range of 'customer' needs become articulated through and satisfied by the equalising force of the market. This refocuses attention on reorganising institutional structures and arrangements as if state welfare agencies were businesses.

It is in this context that a high profiled employment strategy becomes lost. The language and imperative of service creates the potential for the demise of the pursuit of equality of opportunity in employment, especially at higher levels in the occupational hierarchy. This tendency is mapped onto a formulation which sees the mere presence of racialised staff in social work teams as sufficient to facilitate a 'transcultural' service. Any further developments must therefore focus on getting the mechanisms for *service* delivery right rather than providing opportunities for access to occupations defined as professional and ensuring opportunities for career development within that. These intersecting processes were reproduced in the second local authority and I will now turn my attention there.

Central Policy at Local Level - Birmingham

This black criminal minority was constructed not only into the leading force behind the riots, but sometimes as the only force. Indeed through September and October 1985, and during the following months, the imagery of race continued to dominate debate both about the causes and the policy outcomes of the riots (Solomos, 1989, p.164).

It didn't have anything to do with equal opportunities. It didn't have anything to do with the good will of the Department. It was the uprising ... It wasn't as if there were no black women there (i.e. in SSD) who they could have developed had they had the initiative and the forethought ... If we didn't have the uprisings things wouldn't have changed (interview with ex-social services employee).

In 1980 the then Director of Social Services visited India and Pakistan "with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of Asian culture and the needs of Asian people in Birmingham" (Birmingham City Council, 6 June 1984). The visit had been funded by the Commission for Racial Equality as part of its programme for providing such trips for public officials whose remit included work with sections of Britain's black populations. Such visits were premised on the idea that they would provide relatively quick and easy access to the cultural characteristics, values and social patterns of the predominant 'ethnic minority' populations found in British cities. Knowledge and understanding such as this was itself deemed necessary if equality of service delivery was to be achieved and "good race relations" promoted. Having become so acculturated, the Director "... as part of his continuing awareness of the special needs of minority communities ... (had) encouraged a variety of initiatives" for the delivery of culturally appropriate services (ibid.).

The centrality given to this visit in the early development of services for Birmingham's black and 'ethnic minority' populations raises many points about the overall approach to black presence adopted at this time. All the more so since the visit itself, and the ensuing initiatives, had been prompted by the publication of 'Multi-Racial Britain: The Social Services Response' in 1978 by the Association of Directors of Social Services and the Commission for Racial Equality. This report had identified "newness", "cultural differences" and "racial prejudice and discrimination" as the reasons why SSDs needed to give special thought to the appropriateness of their provision. 'Culture' and 'difference' had been placed centrally on the agenda. I want to return to some of these questions later. First, however, I will map the approach and initiatives as they developed in Birmingham between 1984 and 1995 and attempt to identify the discursive terrain on which this evolution took place.

The immediate response to the 1980 visit focused on awareness training for elected representatives and Departmental officers, and on developing consultation with the Community Relations Council (CRC) and those identified as local community leaders. For example, training was organised to give both Members of the Social Services Committee and departmental staff greater (cultural) awareness of Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities and their needs. Some staff attended racism awareness (as opposed to cultural awareness) courses, and there was also the possibility to attend more specifically service focused courses such as services for 'ethnic minority elderly'. (Appendix 1, paras. 3.1 -3.4, June 1984, ibid.). Similarly quarterly meetings were established between a sub-group of the Committee and the Community Relations Council (CRC). In addition at least one Departmental centre met regularly with leaders at the local mosque.

It appears that between 1980 and 1984 this was the extent of developments aimed at improving services for the City's black residents. Notably there were no initiatives at

all aimed at recruiting black social workers, one of the central recommendations of the ADSS/CRE report, although the 1984 report puts this down to an embargo on recruitment which was in operation at the time.

1984 marked a shift in this impasse. This was itself the result of an instruction from the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee that all departments produce details of a race relations policy. The RR and EO Committee had itself only been established in that same year as part of the changes introduced by the in-coming Labour administration. Prior to this the Council had formally adopted an Authority wide, Equal Opportunities in Employment statement in July 1983 - a statement introduced by the soon to be ousted Conservative administration.

Although the 1984 strategy paper aimed to pick up where the 1980 initiatives had ended, what is different about the former is the introduction for the first time of a Departmental **policy** statement, which was to act as the guiding framework for all work in the Directorate. The paper also introduced a **strategy,** the main elements of which centred on training, recruitment, monitoring and review (of both clients and staff), and liaison. The limits to the liaison and consultation process were soon to become apparent, as I will show later. Meanwhile, and in contrast to Hackney, there was no detailed analysis of the class and 'race' basis of current social services philosophy and social work practice. As with Hackney, gender was entirely absent as a clearly identified category of social signification. The policy statement attempts to follow what had become accepted as the first step in equal opportunities 'good practice', but rather than displaying elements of a 'political economy of welfare' approach it is heavily grounded in a cultural pluralist perspective. This perspective expands the idea of cultural diversity and draws on obvious or assumed cultural differences between groups, but there is a commitment to positive valuation of these differences and to the preservation of group culture and tradition. The thread which binds these diverse cultural groups is that of the overarching and secular political

authority. However as Mullard (1982) has pointed out this is an idealistic formulation and completely ignores the inequalities of power between groups differentiated around axes of 'culture' or 'race'.

The policy statement reads:

> 2.1 The Social Services Committee recognises that Birmingham is a multi-racial, multi-cultural society whose different communities have their own values, strengths and validity.
>
> 2.2 The Committee welcomes the contribution of the different communities to the enrichment of society as a whole.
>
> 2.3 The Committee is opposed to all forms of racism and is determined to promote racial equality and justice.
>
> 2.4 The Committee accepts its obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976.
>
> 2.5 The Committee acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that its services are available to all residents who need them and that they are sensitively offered in a manner appropriate and relevant to the cultural experience of all recipients, within available resources.
>
> 2.6 The Committee as a major employer accepts its responsibility to carry out the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy in recruitment of staff.

The papers' cultural pluralist hallmark is evident in 2.1 and 2.2, and this opening acts to focus attention on the concern for "ethnic sensitivity" in the delivery of services (2.5) and deflects from the statement of opposition "to all forms of racism" in 2.3. Indeed the tension between, on the one hand, espousal of opposition to racism and, on the other, commitment to ethnic sensitivity was reflected in the discussion of the report by the elected Members. In fact the minute of the Committee meeting which approved the Report recorded that an amendment was proposed that the form of words in paragraph 2.3 be altered to remove any mention of racism and focused instead on the promotion of "racial equality and justice". The vote was lost - 7 to 12 -

but it is interesting to note that a not inconsiderable number of Members were opposed to any direct reference to racism (*Minute of Committee meeting*).

If the policy statement contrasts with the approach contained in the (September) 1984 Hackney report the proposed strategy compares more closely. Thus the Birmingham report makes reference to two of the key elements of the "transcultural" approach espoused by Hackney at this time. These are the espousal of a belief that "western concepts" are "alien" to the City's ethnic minorities and secondly, reference to the requisite mix of professionalism and "cross cultural" communication skills. Cultural diversity then implies hard, immutable boundaries and the binary opposition between "the West and the rest"(Hall and Gieben, 1994) is steadfastly re-inscribed, for example:

3. Proposed Strategy.

3.1 For a sizeable proportion of Birmingham's residents, *Western* concepts of social services are likely to be *alien*. With a variety of patterns of family and other relationships, different religious beliefs and customs and a large number of people who are not able to communicate easily in English, there is a clear obligation to determine the most practical, efficient and effective way of providing services. Provision of good services for all client groups depend on the *attitudes* and ability to *communicate* as well as on the professional skills of workers. In the development of services there will be a recognition that patterns of family and other relationships, the *boundaries of what is normal* behaviour, and criteria for assessing both *situation* and *need* are *culturally determined*. (June 1984, my emphases).

Issues of culture, language or diversity in familial forms and relations are important and should form part of a developing a strategy for service delivery. Critically however

this recognition of diversity takes place on a terrain in which 'culture' is the privileged site of differentiation and 'culture' as the determining axis in social relations is only 'seen' in connection with Birmingham's (and Britain's) black populations. The result is the re inscription of the latter as 'Other'. Moreover, cultural traits and boundaries are conceived as immutable across the generations.

As a result the appendices to the Report can show both that the SSD is supporting

> ... a play group for Asian children, an unemployed Asian mens group and a girls group which assists *with problems that Asian girls have in Western society* (Appendix 1, para. 5.7, my emphasis)[14]

and that the 1981 Census showed that 43% of what were deemed New Commonwealth or Pakistan heads of household were <u>born</u> in Britain and that most of the "non-white" children were <u>born</u> in the City. (June 1984, Appendix 2). Figures such as this beg questions of what it is that determines racial, ethnic or national group belonging; what, exactly, it is that 'Asian' girls are having problems with, and if they are, why.

In the model utilised by Birmingham social services the answer to these questions can only be found in terms of cultural alienation and cultural conflict. The task for Social Services then is to develop forms of support and communication which can cope with this. Moreover this becomes translated as the same thing as anti-racism which is conceptualised as equality of provision and cultural sensitivity. Anti-racism as practices and discourses which attempt to undo the bases and fabric of racial categorisation, subordination and 'Othering' is occluded in this approach. As a result an attempt to elicit the processes which may act to constitute as 'Asian' girls born in Britain to parents whose own places of birth are in South Asia (or the Caribbean, etc.) is similarly prevented. Social Services practice can then only be to treat such girls as

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[14]A sustained critique of this and similar positions had been advanced by Parmar, P. as early as 1981. See her, 'Young Asian Women: A Critique of the Pathological Approach', in <u>Multiracial Education</u>, vol.9, no.3 summer, for example.

'not-British' - even if the adjective second generation is added. Ethnic descent and ethnicity becomes conflated with 'race' and either way is envisaged as a fixed characteristic inherited across the generations.

Given this, the development of forms of support and communication depended in large part on the recruitment of black social workers to the Department's offices and divisions. However it is notable that the emphasis on recruitment at this time (1984) was still focused on training and monitoring of new recruits and internal transferees. Thus three new "ethnic minority posts" had been established - one inspector charged with evaluating current services in order to propose change; and two training officers "who will be improving the knowledge and skills of the Department particularly of Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities" (para. 2.3). The big push for a significant increase in the number of qualified black social workers employed in the Department's field, domicilary and residential services was to wait another eighteen months.

This notwithstanding, there were attempts to use Section 11 monies to fill posts with a specific 'ethnic minority brief'. The June 1984 report refers to 133 such posts being bid for, though it is not clear how many of these were for Social Services directly, nor how successful that bid was overall. Similarly the Department was attempting to recruit interpreters for one specific district by use of Inner City Partnership monies gained under the Urban Programme. Central government initiatives were being used in a way which permitted local government to privilege (and reify) 'culture', while central government remained 'blind' to 'race'.

If the 1984 policy statement and strategy outlined above provided the conceptual framework guiding Social Services department practice, further development and the process of implementation were slow in coming. The events in the Lozells Road area of the City on the 9 and 10 of September 1985 was to change all this. These events were to become known as the 'Handsworth riots', although as Solomos and Back

(1995, p.82) note, they did not take place in Handsworth at all but in the neighbouring

district of Lozells. Nevertheless 'Handsworth riots' was the name which was to mark

and racialise[15] the events and they ushered in a flurry of activity across the City

Council's Departments, and would even give rise to a 'Handsworth Riots Action Plan'

in 1986. Prior to this the Social Services Committee received a report on the 9

October 1985 which outlined a strategy for the extension and implementation of the

services for 'ethnic minorities' first begun in 1984.

The report stressed the urgency of the situation.

> There are a wide range of issues on which action needs to be taken
>
> immediately...
>
> Discussions have been proceeding within the Department, ... to produce an
>
> action programme to advance the strategy..
>
> The discussions to produce the action programme and involvement with
>
> various ethnic minority groups, have shown that there is a considerable
>
> amount of work which needs to be done to improve the level, type and quality
>
> of services available to ethnic minorities and appropriate to their needs
>
> (Strategy for Services to Ethnic Minorities, Report to Social Services
>
> Committee, 9 October 1985, introduction and paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2).

In terms of the recruitment of black social workers to the Department, the key aspect

of the report was the proposal to establish a Positive Action Unit. The Unit's main

functions were to revise the existing Committee strategy and progress its

implementation; to review and monitor service provision, encourage positive action

policies; and co-ordinate consultation processes (para. 3.1)

However at least

> ...for the first two or three years the prime function of the Unit would be in the
>
> area of equal opportunity and personnel practice, with the aim of increasing the

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[15]That this was possible is indicative of the way in which the spatial distribution and concentration of 'ethnic minority' populations can give rise to a geographical mapping of 'race', see for example Hall et al., 1978.

proportion of ethnic minority employees at all levels and in all parts of the Department (para. 3.2).

There was also some sense in which the urgency of the situation dictated that a greater commitment for mainstream funding of initiatives aimed at the black populations be forthcoming. Thus, although the 1985 Report recommended a review of existing Section 11 provision, the Positive Action Unit was to be funded from mainstream budgets and not via a re-allocation of reviewed Section 11 funds. Certainly the Director of Social Services sought to secure commitment to the 25% local authority share of such posts, but anything else was envisaged as additional to that which already existed. There was therefore an identifiable shift toward more mainstream funding of posts and projects aimed at 'ethnic minorities'. This was significant because of the widespread criticism levelled at local authorities up and down the country that the paucity of such mainstreaming was indicative of a lack of commitment to black communities. However one should not be tempted to over-read the shift. For example at a Committee meeting in July 1986, one Councillor expressed concern at the continued preponderance of black projects being funded by S.11. (Minute 4818-8 to 9 July Social Services Committee).

Having said this, it is evident from Committee activity that finances from mainstream funds was being sought in a more consistent way, suggesting that the 'Handsworth riots' so sharpened the issues that they acted to redirect resources somewhat, if only temporarily. For example, at the above mentioned July 1986 Committee, which considered progress of the 'Handsworth Riots Action Plan', extra funds of £212,000 per annum (and pro rata equivalent for that year) were sought for five projects aimed at delivering services to sections of the local black populations (Handsworth Riots Action Plan - Progress, Report by the Director of Social Services.) This was supplementary to those projects already identified in the 'Handsworth Action Plan - First Report' of April 1986. This latter document was an inter-departmental report

which laid out what each Directorate was doing in response to the Lozells Road events. In the part detailing the Social Services response, Seventeen projects are identified as being wholly or partially aimed at the 'ethnic minority' communities, eight of which were to be mainstream funded. The remainder are identified as being funded under the ICPP (Urban Programme). However, in terms of the argument about an increase in mainstream funding it is noticeable that only one of the main programme funded projects had not yet secured its money, compared with five of the Department of the Environment projects. Moreover a further four of the latter were still awaiting Department of the Environment approval for the project itself.

The Work of the Positive Action Unit

Against the background of the Lozells Road events and the political pressure which the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee represented, the work of the Positive Action Unit was to prove pivotal for the further development of employment and service provision initiatives. Consistent with received equal opportunity wisdom of the time, awareness training (racism and cultural) was given greater emphasis (Handsworth Riots Action Plan - First Report, p.22). Front-line workers were to have an expanded programme and staff involved in recruitment were compelled to attend racism awareness and equal opportunities selection courses. Similarly the 1984 emphasis on culturally appropriate dietary provision in Meals on Wheels, Day Centres etc. was reiterated, as was the commitment to recruiting prospective foster and adoptive parents from the City's racial and cultural minorities. In addition great emphasis was placed on the need to recruit black social workers to the Department and the creation of specialist posts for some aspects of the work was agreed.

The scheme which was to prove pivotal in providing entry routes for black social workers to the Department was the Social Worker Trainee Scheme for black and 'ethnic minority' people developed by staff in the Positive Action Unit. Agreed early in 1986

... the scheme was intended to be part of a 5 year programme which, allowing
for turnover, had as its target at least 15% of qualified social workers being of
black or minority ethnic origin (Social Worker Trainee Scheme, Committee
Paper, 12 November 1986).

By July 1986 the Council had agreed a target of 20% across the board employees
drawn from the ethnic minority population; a figure roughly in proportion with the
percentage of the total population of the City. For the Social Services Department,
reaching this target figure would require concerted effort as in 1983 the figure was only
8.2% (Solomos and Back, 1995, p.181) and there was no evidence to suggest that
there had been significant increase in the three intervening years. In order to bring the
trainee recruitment target up to the 20% figure, it was agreed that the scheme be
expanded by an extra 10 posts. This raised the total level to 30. The scheme
attracted an enormous amount of interest and a total of 900 applications were
received, belieing the previously held view that black people were not interested in
social work as an occupation. (*Report of Director of Social Services*, 12 November
1986, and interview material). There is no doubt that this scheme was tremendously
important in opening up the presence of qualified black women (and men) social
workers in the SSD.

In many ways the trainee scheme was a secondment programme but it had more of a
developmental aspect to it than its Hackney counterpart. Two or three of the
appointed trainees went directly to Birmingham Polytechnic to begin the two year
CQSW course. The majority spent their first year working in the SSD. These were
the people who did not have the necessary qualifications or experience for direct entry
to the CQSW course. They rotated between sections of the Department, staying in
each for about 10 - 12 weeks. In this way they gained the required experience for
entry to the social work course. What is interesting given the gender balance of social
work as a profession, is that amongst the trainees there was only a slight skew

toward women (interview with ex-member of the positive action unit). On completion of the social work course, trainees were under contract to return to the Department for a minimum of two years. The initial agreement was that they would return at level one but the cohort was a tight knit, politically vocal group, and they re-negotiated this and returned as level two social workers.

The scheme lasted until 1989 and really only had one cohort, after this a second, smaller and differently focused scheme was introduced. The changes came about as a result of cuts in Departmental budgets for training, but there were also some dissatisfactions being voiced by some other members of staff.

> There were a number of grumblings from people who worked internally and had been here for a long time and obviously saw these people as having privileges they weren't getting. They had served their time and they had been waiting for their opportunity to go on secondment internally. So having done that big external push, the Department was more inclined, in my opinion I have to say, to look internally for people to go on training courses (interview with ex-member of the PAU).

Against this background, the trainee scheme was redesigned into a smaller 'Development Worker' programme. Numbers were drastically cut ("approximately ten"), and those recruited were direct employees and placed in the children's and elderly teams. They received support from a training officer in the PAU and from a sectional supervisor who was on hand for the more day to day issues. After one or two years the development workers could seek secondment to a recognised social work course through the general secondment programme, but although still within the framework of the positive action initiative, there was no guarantee of success.

Along with a change in the structure and size of the scheme the general brief was altered so that it resembled Hackney's liaison worker project. The Development

Workers' remit was to initiate direct development work with groups in the local population who were seen as under-represented in terms of the take up of Departmental services. It was envisaged that the workers would act as a two-way conduit between the Department and the targeted communities themselves. On the one hand, they were to introduce the SSD to the communities by informing them of the range of services, eligibility criteria, front-line organisational structure etc. On the other hand, the Development Workers were to feed back to the Department information on services which had been developed voluntarily. The Department would then consider the ways in which it could support such voluntary sector provision or begin to meet the needs directly. In this way it was thought that there would be both an increase in the use of Departmental services amongst sections of Birmingham's ethnic minority populations and that the provision would be more 'culturally appropriate'.

> They were called development workers because there were specific areas that people were looking for. So, the Bangladeshi community was seen to be one area that was particularly under-represented. So they were called development workers because they would start specifically working with that group (ibid.).

It is interesting to note that this formulation reinforces the characterisation of the Departmental approach as cultural pluralist. But as I argued in relation to the Hackney scheme, the Development Workers are constituted as representative of 'their' communities and as such as 'translators' who can decode the internal logic of both the under-represented groups and the Department. Moreover they are able to do this prior to any formal professional qualification in social work because they physically embody the skills required by the Department and as such the departmental concern to address equality of opportunity in employment in its own right is undermined.

Furthermore as inhabitants of racialised bodies these workers were also inserted into a different form of work organisation. In the earlier, secondment scheme, a formal training scheme was envisaged with routes to professional qualification, personal development and work experience. In the latter scheme all that was guaranteed was a full time job with the opportunity to apply for secondment in the general scheme which was undergoing constant cuts. 'Race' then, was the axis around which a different organisation of work was instituted for the development of services to populations defined as 'ethnic minority'. This provided the context within which these racialised bodies were to labour.

In the absence of any further Departmental schemes aimed specifically at black recruitment into qualified positions, black workers' dependence on the general secondment scheme was total. However this scheme was itself cut in size between the late 1980s and 1995 when it was estimated that it offered opportunities for "no more than ten if that" (bid). In the view of this participant, the result of this change in the link between 'race'/ethnicity and employment and training opportunity, was

> that black people were back where they started. Well not back where they
> started because they got more support. (But they were) dependent on filling in
> their application form. Dependent on managers supporting their application.
> Dependent on an interviewing panel being made up of a variety of people so
> that you stood a chance of getting through the process of getting secondment,
> which was becoming more difficult.

What is striking about this account is that the language highlights the bureaucratic nature of the general secondment process and suggests that this may give rise to racial disadvantage. Similarly the tone implies that racial disadvantage can enter at any of several stages in the process. It implies a deep scepticism about the procedures for guaranteeing equality of opportunity in selection and recruitment. This in turn suggests that formal policy and procedure is regarded as a poor substitute for hard, targeted schemes which offer the possibility for black people to gain entry to

employment in the SSD, especially at professional levels. From this perspective the days of "back to where they started" are multilayered in that they refer not just to the time when entry to the Department was virtually non-existent, but to times when access to professional training routes was closed off.

The anticipation (or fear) of a 'return' to the pre-1986 situation resulted in individuals adopting creative ways of gaining access to routes to qualification. The above participant illustrated the creative response on the part of black women in the following way:

> In my experience, more and more black women were using the career break scheme to go to the Polytechnic...so they would actually take time out of work ... be unpaid. (The) career break scheme is an unpaid leave scheme that was used initially for women on maternity leave. You could have up to five years unpaid leave and return to work with the post held open. So a number of black *people* who did not get secondment used that route to get training. But of course they would have to apply for a grant. The Department didn't pay anything. (ibid., my emphasis).

Three interesting points are embedded in this quote. Firstly, in worker/management terms it is illustrative of the ways in which employees (labour) will attempt to subvert employer policies and practices for their own advantage. Secondly, it is interesting for what it reveals about the ways in which policies aimed at promoting gender equality are utilised by black women in the name of 'race' equality. As might be expected, the career break scheme was formally available to all women regardless of 'race' and/or ethnicity. But in the context of a situation where 'race' equality measures are perceived as being eroded or downplayed, it is possible to discern 'race' being spoken through gender. It is a form of subversion of one field of (in)equality in an ideological and discursive context which divides these axes into separate spheres.[16] The third

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[16] In the Hackney scheme for women middle managers this kind of manipulation is less possible because of the relatively few black women in Social Services at this level. This suggests that if policy designed to address one area of inequality fails to explore the heterogeneity within the category it is very likely to disadvantage black (and other) women.

point of note relates to the ways in which these fields are spoken. Thus despite the example being about the ways in which black women use a scheme which attempts to take into account the impact of motherhood on women's career opportunities, there is a slippage to "black people". In this part of the account then there is an inversion - i.e. gender disappears as an explicit term, and by extension any suggestion about gender inequalities and differentiation within black populations is hidden from view. Simultaneously the account suggests that attempts to gain access to training opportunities are created on the terrain of gender while being articulated in the meta-language of 'race' (Brooks-Higginbottom, 1994). The dual process of speaking 'race' through gender whilst making the latter invisible in terms of the internal relations of black populations is something that we shall see is often repeated in other accounts which I consider in chapter nine.

The 1990s

As with Hackney, by the late 1980s/early 1990s the situation was much changed. The number of black women and men in the SSD had risen to just over 28% but this general figure may well mask clustering at the lower end of the scale. For example at the time that I carried out the bulk of interviews in Birmingham (March - June 1994) the highest level to which any black social workers had risen was that of Area Office Manager, exactly the same as in Hackney. There were two of these, both black women. There were no other black people (women or men) at levels above this, a situation often mentioned to me. Moreover, a few months later, Departmental rumour had it that a further reorganisation of the Department would mean that even these women might well have to re-apply for their jobs. This was generally greeted with despondency and cynicism by black women I spoke to, each of whom pointed out that, as they saw it, all previous re-organisations left black staff in a worse position structurally within the organisational hierarchy.

The woman who had been centrally involved in the PAU characterised the situation in this way:

> I don't see any specific initiatives or advantages, or any huge drives to improving the position of black people through training in the Department. I don't necessarily now think that is the only thing they have to look at either. Because I know of a lot of people who were already able but who didn't get those positions. So we're in the glass ceiling thing. So you get qualified but you're not becoming an A.D. (Assistant Director) or you're not becoming an Area Manager, so that's the battle really. What I would like to see and what a number of people would like to see, is people having gained their qualifications, gaining rapid access to management in the same way that their white counterparts do. Because they don't have to wait ten years to become a senior manager, so why should black staff now that they are qualified. So what we realise is that the goalposts are kind of changing (op cit.).

A number of points arise from this. At the level of policy, there is confirmation of the conclusion reached in relation to Hackney. That is that black employment issues are understood as only being about initial entry into professional grades and that once this is achieved career progression is not a major departmental concern. At the more abstract level, this account is revealing because of what it tells us about what is 'seen'. We are given an account in which 'race' is the privileged site of what is seen, whilst gender at best is accorded a kind of sub-textual quality, at worst made completely invisible. Thus which white people are progressing (women or men) is left unspoken, whilst we are left to guess at whether it is black men as well as women who are caught in the "glass ceiling". However the use of this last term is notable for its association with gender inequality - a factor which the informant would have been well aware of given her current position in the organisation (within Corporate training and development). Yet it is clear that both 'race' and gender intersect to construct the terrain of identity on which struggles to maintain access to professional training and career progression are waged.

For example, in 1989 a group of black women got together as "black women" to form the *Black Women's Training and Development Group. This is a self-organised group* with the aims of redirecting the focus of SSD training away from an emphasis on assertiveness and awareness training etc., and toward a more specific focus on career development and progression. After gaining support from the then Director of Social Services and a budget from the Training Manager, they began to develop supervisory and management courses. The key point about this is two-fold. Firstly the development of a proactive strategy such as this began to establish the kind of training that black women themselves thought necessary to meet their individual and collective needs. The result was, and this is the second point, training which foregrounded career progression. It started from the premise that many black women were now qualified with the implication that training which began from a premise of some kind of deficit was unable to speak to the needs of a new situation. As a result this kind of self-organised, self-defined training programme attempts to increase the labour market power of black women by undermining some of the factors and assumptions which facilitate the emergence of 'glass ceilings', for example lack of relevant qualification or experience. Black women realise that the obstacles they face are multifaceted and constantly shifting, making the need for self-organisation more pressing.

> Now that we've got equal opportunities policy and we've introduced a black
> perspective into most of the policies of the Department and people realise that
> the culture has got to change, what happens is that they actually make it
> difficult for you to get to those levels (i.e. senior management etc.) so that you
> can initiate changes... (op cit.).

Having said this there is some evidence to suggest that perhaps as a result of this self-defined/self-organised programme the Department felt it necessary to provide some form of career development training for black staff. For example, in 1992 a training programme was established for black managers in conjunction with

Birmingham University. The aim of the programme was fairly straightforward seeking to encourage black managers, from Home Care Organisers and Team Managers upwards, to apply for senior posts across the Directorate, and to provide a management development programme. It was a modular course leading to a certificate in Social Services Management. There were three main modules - managing self; managing people; managing resources and finance. However the course only ran for approximately eighteen months, in part because participants were not very satisfied with the course content or with the workload. There was no time off to study and a lot of motivation and time was needed to get through the course requirements. This too then was a different kind of career development support in comparison with either the original CQSW secondment scheme or the Black Women's Training and Development programme.

This is in keeping with the shift in emphasis since 1985 toward service provision and away from 'race' equality in employment and is clearly discernible in an early 1995 Committee report on Race Equality in Service Delivery. As with Hackney Reports of the same period, one notes the apparent disconnection between achieving equality in service provision and the employment of black people in the SSD. Similarly, here as in Hackney the language and imperative of 'service' and managerialism is pre-eminent. Indeed in reading both these papers one is reminded of the point made in an early Hackney Committee Report which referred to the tendency not to see Black people as service providers and only as service users (Bid for Section 11 LGA 66 Resources - Progress Report, 1984).

Thus in the entire ten page main report (there are several appendices) there are only two explicit references to the issue of 'race' equality in employment. The first of these is in reference to the recruitment of staff to a non-professional/non-qualified occupation - i.e. Home Care workers. Moreover this is raised in connection with the

increasing ability to provide "equality of access" to a service by the City's multi-ethnic population.

> The Department provides Home Care Users with greater choice. Since April of this year (i.e. 1994), 196 additional home carers have been recruited to the service. Particularly encouraging is the breakdown of their ethnic origin: 60% white European, 22% African-Caribbean, 14% Asian and 5% Other (para. 3.1.4, Race Equality Service Delivery Strategy, Report to Social Services Committee, 11 January 1995).[17]

Some pages later there is a more general or rhetorical statement regarding Local Race Action Plans. These are annual plans which outline 'race' equality targets and the means by which they will be achieved and monitored. They are produced by all Area, Divisional, Team and Unit managers and are co-ordinated centrally by the Department's Race and Equalities section. The plans began to be produced in 1993/94. In this context the report states:

> The continual development of (local race action) plans on an annual basis, will ensure that they reflect those initiatives which are current to the achievement of race equality in service delivery and *employment* practice (para. 5.1.3 ibid., my emphasis).

Earlier a similarly vague and rhetorical statement is made in connection with the annual 'Policies for People' which profiles the Department's services and structure.

> Issues of race feature significantly in this and reaffirm the Department's commitment to ensuring equality for its black and minority ethnic employees and users (para. 4.4.1, ibid., my emphasis).

Other, more tangential, references are made elsewhere. For example, reference is made to the Black Workers Support Group, but in their capacity as members of the Policy and Services Monitoring Group, which concentrates on service delivery. Similarly, awareness training for staff "... to ensure that its employees are aware of the need to deliver services within a framework of equality" (para.4.4.3.) Even the

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[17] Whether black women social workers would be encouraged by this increase in recruitment to traditional sectors such as this is more doubtful.

reference in the report to S.11 is in terms of funding services, rather than the type of job it supports as part of the provision (para.4.5.2.).

It could be argued that since this is a strategy report on service delivery, there are no grounds for raising issues about its lack of reference to 'race' equality in employment. However there was no parallel report on employment. Moreover what needs to be remembered is that from as early as the 1978 ADSS/CRE report on the social services response to Britain's multi-ethnicity, increasing equality in service provision has been seen as premised on the employment of black staff in SSDs up and down the country. We can conclude therefore that such received wisdom, which had been temporarily scorched into Departmental policy in the wake of the Lozells Road events, was now eroded. With this in mind, the question which arises is not why should issues of employment be included in such a report, but rather, what factors are at play that result in their exclusion.

Perhaps the emphasis on employment, which began with the adoption of the Equal Opportunity employment policy statement in 1983, and had its apex in the work of the PAU, is now de-emphasised because the Department has exceeded the 20% across the board target pushed through in 1986. But even this needs to be understood in the context of the overall discourse of 'race' and racial equality. Consistently over the years black people had been recruited to the SSD as racialised subjects who were perceived as embodying (quite literally) the skills and knowledges which it was deemed the Department needed. This was the first and fundamental characteristic which facilitated their entry at a time when local political and 'community' relations forced the issue of racism onto the municipal agenda. Since racial and cultural 'translation' was the primary requirement for the SSD, recruitment and training of appropriate 'representatives' was a key focus. At one particular moment, opportunities for professional training were superimposed on what was seen as the more pressing issue of developing culturally sensitive services and being seen by

'ethnic minority' communities to be doing something. Once the numbers were reached (the critical mass being 20% across the board) such schemes were no longer necessary. This is particularly so in the very altered financial and organisational contexts of the 1990s, in which customer-centredness relies on getting managerial and organisational arrangements 'right' as a precursor to the delivery of equality. In this sense it is also possible to discern the shift to an imperative of service, with its language of targets, performance and consumers, in these later Committee papers.

Take for example the substantial report on race equality which was presented to the Committee in January 1995. Its very title 'Race Equality Service Delivery Strategy' is itself revealing. So, too, is its "current strategic approach" which reads:

> 3.1. The broad strategic approach taken by the Department has been as follows.
>
> 3.1.1 The Department has re-established the Race and Equalities section, which is now fully staffed. The section provides strategic direction on service delivery to people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities and also deals with equality issues around race and gender to ensure services are delivered within a framework of equality and equity. The unit has become closely integrated into the Department's Planning and Management processes. The benefits of a sharper definition of role are becoming clear in a number of areas...
>
> 3.1.2 To monitor service use and resource allocation. The Department is one of a very small minority of Social Services Departments which has a routine monitoring process for new users. Despite the difficulties of data collection and the need to monitor people who use services over a period of time, as well as new users, the information collected does enable the Department to consider whether its resource allocation is appropriate and to make adjustments. This has led to increases in the amount of money being made available to provide services specifically for minority ethnic groups.

3.1.3 To ensure that managers, through policies, performance review and training are always seeking to develop sensitive services. This may either result in improving the sensitivity of a general service, or identifying the need for a specific service targeted exclusively on particular community groups.

3.1.4 To establish specific services where necessary in order to achieve equality of access. *Specific services have been established in a wide range of the Department's activities, examples include:-*

*The Department provides Home Care Users with greater choice...

*Concerted effort to increase appropriate foster care for Black and Minority Ethnic children...

*Day Services for African-Caribbean and Asian Elderly people have been set up in conjunction with voluntary sector organisations...

3.2 This broad strategy has been supported by the work of the Department's Race and Equalities Section.

The remainder of the report goes on to outline the "Corporate Requirements" by which 'race' equality in service delivery is to be achieved. This provides a new context from which to view even the reference to the employment of the Home Care workers, since it is clear that they are recruited to meet service delivery targets and not because the Department as a major employer in the area sees itself as having a responsibility for providing employment in its own right.

In this chapter I have been concerned to map local policy development and change in relation to black women's entry to qualified social worker posts. I have argued that changes in access to professional training, in both the Departments, resulted from the combination of conceptualisations about the link between 'race' and employment and the reorganisation of public welfare around notions of the market and the customer, which were accompanied by an homogenisation of 'equalities issues'. Where relevant

I considered the slippages and elisions which occurred between 'race' and 'culture', and these and other axes of differentiation. As with the situation at central government level moves between these registers were deeply embedded in local policy documents. However there were some differences in the way in which 'race' was 'seen'. Thus it was not so much that at local level 'race' slipped in and out of visibility, but more that the ways in which it was 'seen' was a product of local social conditions, and the organisation of relations between central and local government.

Having said this, discourses of 'race' were produced at both central and local level and these act to position black women social workers employed by Social Services Departments. How such women occupy and resist these positionings forms the subject matter of part two. Before going on to this, some consideration of why social work was to open up as an important arena of employment is necessary.

CHAPTER 7

'THE CALL OF THE WILD': PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSES ON 'RACE' AND ETHNICITY

The preceding two chapters have identified the national and local policy formations that have shaped the employment of black women social workers in the two authorities in question. Nevertheless, these are not the only formations that are at play in these processes. As an arena of black employment social work is a distinctive occupation given its claim to (quasi)professional status. Since the late 1970s, issues of 'race' and ethnicity have become increasingly significant within the professional discourses of social work as well as in political and policy ones. In examining the specific organisational settings of social services departments, it is necessary to consider how the professional discourse has articulated these issues as part of social work theory and practice. This chapter explores the ways in which 'racial' and ethnic identities have been addressed within the professional discourse of social work.

The aim of the chapter is threefold. Firstly it is intended as a critique of some of the dominant conceptions of 'race' and ethnicity in much social work literature. I will argue that accompanying a recognition by SSDs and others involved in social work that issues of racism and ethnicity needed to be addressed, was a discourse of ethnic absolutism with regard to racialised or ethnicised groups. I use the terms racialised and ethnicised to refer the idea that all of an individual's or group's needs, patterns of behaviour and value systems are treated as if they can be reduced to or derived from their 'race' or ethnicity. I use the term ethnic absolutist to refer to the practices in social work which are premised on these ideas and which also have the effect of reproducing processes of racialisation and ethnicisation. Such ideas are very pervasive and more or less explicit traces of this form of thinking can be found across a wide spectrum of political thought and social policy. We can see it in social work texts; in Social Services Department policy and practice; and, perhaps paradoxically, in critiques of these. An example, of this latter form can be found in the highly vocal, and

indeed contentious, critique which the Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professional (ABSWAP) mounted against traditional social work practice with black clients, especially in the field of adoption and fostering. Indeed there is a high degree of correspondence between New Right conceptions of 'race' and those used by ABSWAP (Gilroy, 1987). Given this it is not surprising that traces of absolutism can be seen within much policy.

Following from this, my second concern will be to show a link between conceptualisations of 'race' and ethnicity and the practical effects of such conceptualisations. In order to explore this relationship I will focus briefly on the transracial adoption and fostering debate. In so doing the argument becomes a little more complex. This is because I attempt to make a distinction between on the one hand, the political agenda of those black professionals and activists who sought to intervene in and disrupt dominant social work policy and practice, and the discourses of 'race', ethnicity and identity which they utilised, on the other hand. I will argue that these discourses, although ostensibly posed as an alternative to the dominant ones circulating the profession are equally problematic and that they act to reposition black people (professionals and clients) in racialised social relations. In so doing it should become clear that both how 'race'/ethnicity are thought about and the policies which emerge from this thinking are terrains on which struggle has taken place.

Finally, utilising recent work by Brah (1992), I will attempt to offer a re-conceptualisation of 'race' and ethnicity which more adequately grasps the complexity of lived social relations as they are structured through and by 'race' and ethnicity. I will argue that 'race'/ethnicity needs to be understood and analysed as a major, but only one, axis of differentiation organising a set of contingent social relations, the exact configuration of which will alter with varying moments and contexts.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'DIFFERENCE'?

An implicit notion of difference has underwritten much of the literature and debate on local government employment and service provision. In social work this has largely been concerned with how to ensure that the needs of 'ethnic minority' clients are met, the emphasis being placed on service provision. Because the assumption has been that the 'black/white' divide equals the 'client/social worker' one, the key issue was initially seen to be how to ensure that in areas of high 'ethnic minority' populations social work staff would become equipped to deal with clients who had racially or ethnically defined needs and were therefore 'different' by definition from the 'normal' social services client. Already in this situation we enter the terrain in which certain *sections of the population have become racialised or ethnicised.* 'Racial' or *ethnic* belongingness is not seen as something applicable to all people – including those implicitly defined as the (de-ethnicised) **majority**. As such it is not a field of ethnic differences that is conceptualised, but a difference from the otherwise universal structuring of need.

Two key strategies evolved as the way to resolve this problem:

a) train white social workers to be 'ethnically sensitive';

b) go out and recruit people from these 'ethnic' communities to social work courses and social services departments.

The two strategies were not mutually exclusive for as Basil Manning wrote as early as 1979,

> ... *the role of the black social worker would then be important in providing an* ongoing in-service training for white workers helping them to understand more fully the cultural background of their black clients, their life-styles, their norms and values, their use of words, the 'do's and don'ts' of relating to other cultures (in Cheetham et al, 1981, p.32).

The remedy for white bias in social work was racially mixed staff teams and training courses for white staff organised by their departments. Here too we can see traces of absolutism. In this perspective ethnicity can only be 'decoded' by 'insiders' (i.e. black or 'ethnic minority' social workers) who will then 'translate' them for 'outsiders' (i.e. white social workers).

What was not spelt out so clearly was the notion of 'difference', as applied to ethnicity, which underlay these strategies. Each strategy was to have major policy/practice implications but the idea of 'difference' or how 'ethnicity' was defined and the meanings that accrued to it were taken for granted – treated almost as self-evident, unquestionable and certainly uncontested. This was especially so in the context of cultural misunderstanding which was assumed to be a major problem facing SSDs and their staff. For example as late as 1987 Ely and Denney wrote

> Most of the original 'immigrants' arrived here through the process of 'chain' migration whereby they took up employment and housing opportunities found for them by relatives already here. It was **natural** and **beneficial** for them to locate themselves in the midst of members of their own group, where a shared language, shared memories and cultural heritage provided a bridge between their past and present worlds (p. 13, my emphasis).

Embedded within this statement is the idea that cultural barriers are only generated by the 'immigrants' and that they will prevent any easy assimilation or integration with the 'host' society. Such cultural barriers are assumed to be 'natural'. Moreover 'natural' used here also suggests 'healthy' and perhaps it is from within this premise that we get the straightforward inversion of the more common complaint about 'immigrants' presumed proclivity to 'mass together', with its implication that this obstructs the development of 'good' race relations.

But upon closer examination it is possible to detect more at work here than a benign notion of 'ethnic solidarity' and adaptation. Both the 'ethnic sensitivity' model and the

'black social workers' model are premised on a notion that white and black are fundamentally and eternally different from one another. The root of this difference, it is suggested resides in cultural 'otherness'. But whilst this is a core in each model, there are some differences between them. Before going on to consider these two models in more detail I want to explore some of the discursive terrain on which 'race' and ethnicity were conceptualised as there was increasing recognition that social work policy and practice needed to adapt to the changing demands imposed on it by having to work with multi-ethnic client populations.

Freezing the frame : discursive hegemony and ethnic absolutism

Whilst much social work literature has embedded within it (more or less explicitly), a dominant notion of 'race'/ethnicity, this should not be taken to mean that there has been no struggle over the conceptualisations of and meanings attached to 'race' and ethnicity. It is important to note this area of struggle because much of the debate about social work with multi-ethnic populations proceeds as if it has been totally untouched by the important contributions made by post-structuralist, feminist, black and anti-racist movements to the understanding of 'race', ethnicity and identity. Moreover since policy itself is developed upon and has embedded within it historically specific, albeit sometimes contradictory and conflicting, notions of 'race', ethnicity, identity and nation, it is important to try and elicit what these might be in any given historical moment.

The struggle over conceptualisations will often result in one set of meanings becoming hegemonic, with other alternative conceptions being assigned to the margins. However it is also the case that oppositional discourses traverse the same terrain as dominant/hegemonic ones. The difference being that each is harnessed to a different project. The result of this is that it is often possible to trace a convergence of approach when a topic has been hotly debated over a number of years and in numerous fora.

In the context of such correspondences the concept of 'discursive formation' is useful. Foucault defines a discursive formation arising

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements... a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations) (1972, p. 38).

The statements which comprise the discursive formation are such as to imply a relation between any one and all the other statements. In a sense, and paradoxically, the statements in a discursive formation constitute a structure since "They refer to the same object, share the same style, and support a strategy ... a common institutional or political drift or pattern" (Cousins and Hussain, 1984, pp. 84–85).

Two points of relevance flow from this: Firstly, a discursive formation does not have to have a series of statements which are all the same. Rather "the relationships and differences between them must be regular and systematic" (Hall, 1993, p. 292). Secondly, despite the fact that different speakers may articulate the statements in a discursive formation, once so spoken they become positioned within the discursive formation. Thus statements which attempt to contest the underlying structure of relationships which are articulated by the discursive formation are deprived of their oppositional content and power. This is because the structure of meanings which they produce act to subordinate these oppositions.

The result of this is that there is no guaranteed trajectory which can be plotted from a specific discursive starting point. At the beginning of this chapter I referred to a number of authors who had argued that anti-racist social work strategies could only develop from a structural understanding of racism. Clients' needs were to be seen as emerging from their location in social structures as indeed were the potential benefits of employing black social workers.

However I want to argue that such benefits cannot be guaranteed, and I want to begin to illustrate this by an examination of the work of David Denney who began from a structuralist perspective but later adopted a more cultural pluralist perspective.

In an article plotting perspectives on 'race' and ethnicity in social work literature, he outlines four major approaches and offers a consideration of each (Denney, 1983). Adopting a version of the typology developed by writers such as Sivanandan (1985) and Mullard (1982) of the phases through which 'race relations' was apprehended in political circles and public policy through the 1960s, 70s and 80s, Denney examines the potential strengths and weaknesses of each model as it is presented in the social work literature. These models he calls the anthropological, the liberal pluralist, the cultural pluralist and the structuralist approaches. What is significant and notable is that in this piece he offers a rather thorough critique of the liberal pluralist model in which a focus is placed on the "...principal ethnic/cultural factors which should be borne in mind when considering the possibility of 'adapting' social work methods to the multi-ethnic context" (1983, p. 159). Similarly this perspective calls upon social workers to develop an appropriate interpretative framework from which to "...translate the 'rules' of interaction" (1983, p.157). As Denney argues, rightly in my view, "one wonders exactly how the social worker goes about this complex interpretative procedure, ... whose reality finally dominate(s) the situation", and what happens to "...the vital question relating to the distribution of power ... even at the micro level, i.e. in the social work interview" (1983, p.157).

Interestingly, and unfortunately, he goes on to conclude that a variant of this view, that of cultural pluralism, as exemplified by Ballard, does have a role to play (alongside the positive aspects in the other three) in the generation of a reformed, ethnically sensitive social work. This is because "...knowledge of specific cultures and the development of ethnically sensitive services are essential and important goals" (p.171). Certainly Denney argues that this must include a recognition of the structural determinants which position 'immigrants', or black populations in British society and

the racism which can permeate social workers' interactions with black clients. But such structural determinants are envisioned as running parallel to ethnic cultural systems. The consequence of this is that the structuralist approach with which he began becomes subordinate in the reformulation where 'immigrant' culture is understood as static and predetermined. This is rather different from a framework which sees 'culture' as 'the play of signifying practices' (Brah, 1996) and understands that these signifying practices will be produced within and across the structural determinants and constraints on black people's location in British society which intersect with and undermine their diverse and internally heterogeneous cultures so that the meanings attached to culture and ethnicity are reformulated in new and different circumstances.

This more complex and fluid understanding of 'culture' has far more potential as a basis for developing policy and practice which will be flexible enough to meet the differential needs which a more diverse society will throw up. Unlike the approach adopted by Denney, to think in this latter way pre-empts the emergence of forms of ethnic absolutism. However given Denney's conceptual frame it is not surprising to find that, in a later co-authored work, he can be found to have subscribed to a form of ethnic absolutism. We can see this in the context of a discussion of the 'ethnic sensitivity' model.

The Ethnic sensitivity model

Central to this approach is the idea that 'difference' resides in cultural understandings/misunderstandings and that it is up to SSDs to teach their social workers enough about the cultural traits, codes, and rules of 'minority cultures' to ensure that white staff can deliver services without giving offence to, or discriminating against ethnic minority clients. Social work itself does not need to change – its professional knowledges and powers, its understandings of 'ethnicity', etc. – but rather its range of interpretative repertoires by which cultural readings can be made needs to be augmented. To quote from Ely and Denney (1987):

> Ethnic minority institutions are adaptations of the original cultures.
> Social workers need to know of local ethnic organisations and services.
> They also need to be familiar with minority systems of cultural
> preferences" (p. 13) and "'rules' (should be) regarded as emphases,
> cultural preferences, and despite the problem of variation of
> interpretation from informant to informant, there seems to be no
> alternative to learning systems of cultural preferences (p.14).

That Denney should be co-author to a piece in which such an emphasis is placed on 'rules' and 'systems of cultural preferences', would seem to indicate a marked shift from his earlier doubt about the possibility and productiveness of such an interpretative process. In this it exemplifies the ways in which hegemonic conceptualisations become sedimented as a kind of professional common-sense. Such commonsenses will be part of the foundation on which policy and practice is built. Indeed the slippage from this imperative to learn to read and decode ethnic minority cultural codes, to that of a form of ethnic absolutism where desires and actions are seen as solely formulated with reference to an 'ethnic community' is demonstrated later in the Ely and Denney book.

Thus in cautioning against applying 'western' notions of ideological freedom and self determination, the authors quote Roger Ballard favourably.

> Whites often believe South Asian family life to be too constricting. If an
> Indian or Pakistani woman is in conflict with her parents or husband, an
> outsider may assume that the subordinate role which South Asian
> women are expected to play towards their fathers and husbands... is at
> the root of the problem, such an interpretation may be partially correct,
> *but the woman would be unlikely to be seeking to alter her situation*
> *fundamentally. To do so would be to reject a major part of the cultural*
> *values of he own ethnic group.* Her complaint is, in practice, much more
> likely to be about the particular behaviour of her own husband or father,

204

measured not in terms of her own standards, but of those of her own group (p. 86, my emphasis).

Here is a powerful example of the links made between racialized common senses about black populations and the construction and understanding of needs and the implementation of welfare policies and practices. Nasir (1996) has made this point well in a recent article on 'race', gender and social policy:

The attitude towards Asian females is often patronising. In terms of their relationships with their families they are seen as being without power, and are sometimes accused of not being able to influence or supervise their children adequately because of this (p. 28).

The quote from Ballard is an example of just such a discursive device in which racist and gendered power relations get reproduced. Firstly we have the re-inscription of white authority to define and describe cultural 'truths'. Secondly there is an example of the 'pacification' of the "South Asian woman" in the sense that she is denied not only any individual agency but even any claim to subjectivity, thus she becomes re-inscribed in a racialised version of gender relations amongst "South Asians" which is a dominant representation. Thirdly the quote provides an example and validation of the power of the professional to define the 'true' nature of a client's problem.

What is salient about this approach is that whilst its stated aim is to ensure equality of service delivery, it does so in a way which reproduces and strengthens the racial, cultural, gendered and professional hierarchies which are central organising principles in British welfare institutions. Moreover, even in its own more limited concerns to improve the quality of service delivery in a multi-racial society, a major problem arises because it restricts flexibility in organisational practice. This is because once the 'outsiders' have learned the internal 'codes', 'values' and 'standards', no other adaptation is necessary. This is the effect of seeing ethnicity, culture and identity are all seen as fixed rather than contingent or relational categories.

Because of the link between professional commonsenses and social work practice it should be clear that there is more at stake here than a 'mere' conceptual struggle over the meanings and status that is attributed to cultural variation. Indeed any examination of such practice will reveal instances of the damaging effects of cultural translations premised on ethnic absolutism and in the following chapter I will explore some examples of the ways in which practice is shaped by such racialising discourse.

The struggle over how to conceptualise 'race' and ethnicity had as one of its central concerns the delivery of services to racialised sections of the population, especially in the inner cities. As has already been stated, many working within the dominant paradigms saw the issue primarily in terms of how to ensure that local authority Social Services Departments had an adequate understanding of 'ethnic minority' or 'immigrant' communities to ensure unbiased and 'ethnically sensitive' service delivery. However I have argued that such service delivery was premised on 'fixed' absolutist conceptions of 'race' and ethnicity with the result that the policies which were developed re-inscribed black clients and social workers in racialised social relations.

Opposites attract: A meeting of minds in the conceptual pool

White policy makers, managers and practitioners were not alone in viewing 'race' and ethnicity as fixed, essential categories and it is possible to trace a convergence of ethnic absolutist ideas in much of the literature emerging from the radical black critique of social work. This has been most clearly and forcefully presented in the writings and statements of the Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professions (ABSWAP) and especially those of the organisation's founder and first president, John Small. ABSWAP was founded in 1980 and it is clear from reports of the founding conference that part of the motivation for the organisation and its members was to reveal, confront and undermine the explicit and implicit racism in much social work policy and practice. In this sense they were part of a much wider tide of black activism which was aimed at fighting racism and promoting black liberation, part of which had the effect of challenging the existing dominant notions of culture and identity (see for

example Bryan et al, 1985 and *Feminist Review* 17, 1984). This was also the moment when a wave of municipal socialism was adding a commitment to fighting all forms of discrimination and oppression both outside and, more importantly, inside the town hall and its departments, including social services departments. In this context ABSWAP did some important work in challenging the myth of the pathological black (Caribbean) family and, importantly for my purposes, in revealing the practice implications of the discursive underpinnings of policy. For example, Small (1989) writes:

> ... the dominant construct (of the individual in society which operates in
> social work) excludes the black experience... . Consequently, concepts,
> definitions of situations and descriptions of events are seen purely from
> a white perspective... . Operating within this framework, the social
> worker uses professional techniques to bring the individual or family into
> line with the built-in assumptions and values of the dominant
> constructs... (p. 281).

But this statement is also double-edged, for while it highlights the links between discourse and practice, it also has another effect. The formulation of this statement suggests that there is an inherent opposition between the cultural forms and experiences of black groups and the primary place accorded the individual in social work knowledge's (which here can be seen as being understood as deriving from western philosophical traditions). It is interesting because it repeats the notion identified earlier in Ballard's approach. Both writers uncritically accept the binary 'black/white' in which the one automatically and persistently excludes the other. There are fixed 'black' and 'white' experiences, understandings and perceptions of 'self' and no room is allowed for the possibility of shared understandings, correspondences of experience, or fluidity of identity across group boundaries, nor indeed of heterogeneity within groups. Thus despite differences between the two authors they are both occupying positions within the same discursive formation.

For Small, as with other authors associated with ABSWAP (see, for example, Maxime 1986), this notion of fixed, mutually exclusive categories is particularly pronounced in their conception of identity. Basically they work with an explicitly racialised version of the Cartesian subject, which, given the 'right' environment will grow into an adult able to express her or his unified and stable core. The only difference is that for Small the subject is black and this black subject is a coherent 'me' at ease with his/herself and his/her people (race) only if their social environment is conducive to the development of a 'raced' self. This is achieved through the

> phenomenon of primary identification" (which) "consists of all the constructs of
> black people. These constructs are derivative of the conditioning process that
> they had in *their own* societies and families. They include ideas, the
> construction of events based on experience, beliefs and practices. In short they
> represent total being. They constitute a social whole, embodying the basic
> fabric of character and personality, in an integrated and coherent structure
> (1989, p.280 my emphasis).

Nevertheless in referring to "their own", Small reproduces the dominant and racist idea that black is always already 'other' to British society. It was from a perspective such as this that ABSWAP was to launch a major attack on transracial adoption and it is within this context that we see their conception of identity and its formation brought into play.

This point can be illustrated through a range of comments:

> Transracial adoption has brought into being the phenomenon of identity
> confusion (Small, 1984, p.130);
>
> ... black children growing up in white families fail to develop a positive
> black identity. Instead they suffer identity confusion and develop a
> negative self concept, believing or wishing that they were white,

harbouring negative attitudes towards black people (Maxime, 1986, quoted in Tizard and Phoenix, 1993)

The aim of adoption must always be to provide a child without parents a suitable environment to enable the child to develop normally. the commitment must be to the child, not the parents, nor the agency. When we address ourselves to a suitable environment for a black child the issue of the child's identity should be given priority above all other factors. Identity is paramount. (It is) Only out of the appropriate integration of the black child's personality that a concrete identity can be formed. If a healthy personality is to be formed, the psychic image of the child must merge with the reality of what the child actually is. That is to say, if the child is black (reality) he must first recognise and accept that he is actually black (psychic image) (Small, 1984, p.139); and

The most important ingredients that contribute to a full integration of people are all the ways and habits that unify their world and give them a sense of who they are. If this is clear, then a constant picture of what they are and what they ought to be provides guidelines for conduct and behaviour. However the conception of self by black people and the conception by white society is generally contradictory (Small, 1989, p.288).

It is this purported dissonance between 'black' and 'white' conceptions, which in this view are always absolute and inevitable, that leads to psychic disorientation and subsequent mental ill health. As has already been said, care must be taken not to dismiss the realities of racism in British society which, as one of its effects has led to an over-representation of African-Caribbean people in mental health statistics and institutions. Evidence of the relationship between racism and psychiatric misdiagnosis on the one hand, and racism and actual mental breakdown on the other has long been documented (Littlewood and Lipsedge, 1984; Francis, 1993).

But it is a long way from recognising the effects of racism in both psychiatric and social work practice to arguing that a 'healthy' self image and an 'integrated' identity is reducible to the single issue of 'race'; or indeed to arguing that 'black' and 'white' are fixed binary opposites. As Tizard and Phoenix (1993) have argued such a position "assumes that there is a black culture, quite distinct and different from white culture, shared by all black people, irrespective of age, gender, social class or place of upbringing" (pp. 36-37). In the ABSWAP perspective these other axes have no place either as sites of domination and power, or as sites of resistance. They are certainly indeterminate in terms of the construction of identities the formation of which is seen as a once and for all procedure, either of 'success' or 'failure'.

Notwithstanding the Tizard and Phoenix suggestion of a more complex picture of identity, cultural forms and the politics of 'race', the ABSWAP position was sufficiently influential that by the end of the 1980s a new orthodoxy had emerged regarding the issue of transracial adoption and most local authorities had adopted a 'same-race' placement policy for adoption and fostering (Rhodes, 1992). What this represented was a triumph for various forms of ethnic absolutism as the basis on which social work policy and practice was to be formulated. General agreement on the part of policy makers and practitioners about the existence and content of 'racial' or ethnic particularities could be seen as the starting point for ensuring that black staff were employed in social services departments. In this way ethnically determined 'needs' could be recognised and met. The transracial adoption and fostering debate could help bring the black staff model into full fruition. By the time the adoption debate was fully on its contentious way, recruitment of black people to social work courses and social services departments was proceeding in some areas by the formulation of adoption and fostering 'good practice' as being equivalent to a 'same race' placements policy.

The Black Staff Model

This model also contains essentialist categories but this time knowledge, or at least the cultural knowledge which SSDs need to access, is conceptualised as residing in

210

particular racialized bodies or types of people. Thus black staff will ensure equality of service provision, free from racist or cultural misunderstandings because they will be like, indeed replicate, their clients, regardless of divisions of class, gender, age, locality or indeed even the professional/client relation. No learning process is required because in the social worker/client encounter like will meet like. We have already seen this in the previous chapter and in the earlier Manning quote and we see it replicated in the following:

> It is hard to overestimate the importance of black staff if statutory
>
> agencies are to achieve the kinds of relationships with black
>
> communities which are necessary. Whether or not they are employed
>
> specifically in specialist or advisory capacities, their roles inevitably are
>
> multiple where white staff are uncertain about what changes should be
>
> taking place (Connelly, 1988, p.29).

Similar arguments for employing black staff in social services departments can be found elsewhere.[18]

Particularity of need is matched by particularity of 'knowledge', both of which are seen as being literally embodied in people constructed as discrete and homogeneously sealed categories. As a result of this correspondence service delivery to 'ethnic

See for example, Association of Directors of Social Services and Commission for Racial Equality 1978; numerous contributions in Cheetham, ed. 1982. For a more sophisticated approach to the dilemmas black social workers may be faced by a simplistic 'ethnic matching' policy see Ahmed, 1978.

[18]See for example, Association of Directors of Social Services and Commission for Racial Equality 1978; numerous contributions in Cheetham, ed. 1982. For a more sophisticated approach to the dilemmas black social workers may be faced by a simplistic 'ethnic matching' policy see Ahmed, 1978.

minority' clients will be improved. Moreover black social workers will be able to help undermine racist practice and attitudes within SSDs.

However as Stubbs (1985) has identified, the extent to which black social workers will be able to undermine processes which reproduce racism and be in the forefront of a challenge to existing ideologies of 'professionalism', which are among the sites of such reproduction, is not at all clear cut. He goes on to argue that the answer to the general question regarding black social workers ability to do just this is an open and empirical one (p.14). The framework for assessing this empirical question is provided by the interstitial positioning of black social workers between equal opportunities policies, ethnic sensitivity models and departmental notions of the 'good black social worker'. The 'good black social worker' is one who "... at best, poses no threat to the reproduction of racist structures or, at worst, actually aids their reproduction"(p.17). Attempts by management and white social workers to position black colleagues in this way is inevitably a partial and contradictory process according to Stubbs. Thus whilst the challenge to social work as a state apparatus may be limited, organised challenges by black workers may have more impact on changing both the SSD as an organisation and the daily social worker/client interaction.

By considering the question of the employment of black social workers in this way, Stubbs moves considerably beyond the static approaches in the other professional literature considered here. However what his approach fails to include is any acknowledgement that the black social worker might be a heterogeneous and ambivalent subject. It is only their positioning within discourse and social relations which is recognised as potentially ambiguous. The interiorisation of these potential ambivalences and ambiguities as reflected in their subjectivities and identities is occluded in this view. The result is that Stubbs maintains his understanding of 'the black social worker' in structuralist terms alone and in so doing constructs an idealised and homogenous black 'community'. The effect of this is to undermine the strengths of

his analysis, for it tends to foreclose analysis of division and ambiguity amongst this 'community'.

Thus limitations of a perspective which inscribes racial or ethnic absolutes and constructs needs as always already predictable should be clear, not least because the everyday dynamics of an SSD are such as to place people in multiple positions which may be in tension or contradiction with one another. For example, Gilroy (1987, p. 66) has suggested that the adoption of an ideology of ethnic absolutism on the part of black social workers and other professionals working in the personal social services provides a partial means by which they can negotiate the contradictions of working within local authorities. The extent to which this is the case will be considered in the following chapter. But at the theoretical level what is clear is that if the complexity of these fields of social relations is to be captured, so that differential needs may indeed be recognised and met without recourse to absolutes or prescriptive formulae, a re-conceptualisation is required. It is to this that I now turn.

A Re-conceptualisation

Because the ethnic sensitivity and black staff strategies are underpinned by fixed and essentialist notions of 'race' and ethnicity all the experience of racialised groups is understood as deriving from these modalities. 'Race'/ethnicity is accorded a foundational status structuring all experience and determining identity/subjectivity. From this it is argued that social work practitioners need to understand this so that they can ensure both that needs are met and identities are stable and healthy. What is missing from such a formulation is the profound sociality of 'race' and ethnicity. How 'race'/ethnicity is deployed to position subjects in relations of power, the contestations over the meanings given to ethnic difference, and the ways in which ethnicity may intersect with racism, gender, class or sexuality to structure experience are issues completely ignored by these orthodox conceptions. As an 'ethnicising' discourse 'difference' in the orthodoxy fails to be considered in terms of the complex of power relations within which subjects are constituted and within which ethnicity is inscribed.

213

With the partial exception of Stubbs, the various positions outlined above entirely occlude these points.[19]

To develop an analytical framework which will allow social workers to recognise ethnic difference in all its complexity but without being reductive or simplistic we need to re conceptualise ethnicity as a social category which carries a multiplicity of meanings. Thus the meaning attached to 'race'/ethnicity will vary and shift in the process of lived social relations. Brah (1992) has offered a conceptualisation of difference which goes a considerable way towards providing an analytical framework which can capture this complexity. She identifies four referents encompassed by the word 'difference':

a) difference as experience. This focuses on the individual level of the 'everyday'. Importantly and in stark contrast to the formulations in the orthodoxy, this is not conceptualised as a 'truth' but rather as way of making symbolic and personal sense of the daily. It references in part the ways in which we construct 'narratives of the self' in an effort to integrate the multiple and fragmentary people we are;

b) difference as social relation. This operates at the level of the social structure and collective experience and history. It relates to the way in which meaning is given to the struggles over structural, political and historical commonalities;

See for example, Association of Directors of Social Services and Commission for Racial Equality 1978; numerous contributions in Cheetham, ed. 1982. For a more sophisticated approach to the dilemmas black social workers may be faced by a simplistic 'ethnic matching' policy see Ahmed, 1978.

[19]I would argue that this is true also of the perspective adopted by Dominelli. (ref) despite the fact of its importance or among the first to argue for an anti-racist social work.

c) difference as subjectivity. this relates to the psychic constitution of 'otherness' and 'self' in its racialised, gendered or sexualised modalities — that form of experience and self understanding that much of the social work literature on 'race'/ethnicity cannot allow.

d) finally difference as identity. This references the struggle over various modes of being in the world and meanings given to those modes and from which identifications of group belonging are made.

To re-conceptualise ethnicity or ethnic difference in this way offers social work (as policy and practice) the potential of using the concepts of 'difference' and 'ethnicity' in a way which is neither prescriptive, reductive, nor technicist. What this formulation allows for is the possibility of thinking about 'ethnicity' as constantly in the process of becoming, being constructed within the complex interplay of personal, collective, structural and political experience and location. Our ethnicities — gendered, sexualised and classed — can be seen as always in a state of movement, sometimes with one aspect more to the fore than others. What will be at play in any social worker/client encounter is not only the complex intersection of relations of power along numerous axes within which the client is positioned and which structure her life — but also the set of complexes which position and structure the social worker's life. Within the organisation social workers are also constituted as ethnic, gendered, sexual and professional subjects. The factors which act to bring any to the fore in a given circumstance cannot be predicted or reduced to an assumed primary or foundational modality. They will always be inscribed within a set of social and organisational power relations and therefore contingent. Within an ethnically diverse geographic area and with a multi-racial team of social workers 'ethnicity' is likely to be one of the major factors at play but it may or may not be the primary one at any particular time. As with other 'identities' the ethnic positions we occupy will be historically, and in the context of social services departments, organisationally contingent. How and when ethnic identities are foregrounded will be the result of the interplay of multiple

'differences' and the sets of power relations in which these are embedded. Moreover people who are discursively positioned as sharing the same ethnicity may or may not take up this position, as will be illustrated in the chapters which follow. The point is that cultural or ethnic identity

> ... is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being externally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past (Hall, 1990, p. 225).

Thus we are both structurally located and actively occupy a number of subject positions open to us. In so doing we will also position those with whom we interact in those spaces we think fitting for them. This triple movement in processes of positioning occurs within the context of the multiple meanings invoked by the concept of 'difference' and serves to establish the terrain on which social relations are lived out. The task is to develop an analytical framework sophisticated enough to deal with this so that policy does not become prescriptive and damaging.

It is not that formal or informal policy and practice can be developed without cognisance of the modality of ethnicity. It is rather than there are no easy or prescriptive answers. Resorting to a form of ethnic absolutism, either in the form of 'matching' social workers and service users, or in the form of identifying the 'real' causes of a service user's problems only serves to re-inscribe black people in racialised social relations. It is precisely this complexity and 'messiness' that both orthodox social work theory and the approach adopted by some radical black professionals fails to address. I would argue that a determined and rapid retreat from

the orthodox models of how ethnicity 'works' in social work is required if this complexity is to be grasped and addressed. The starting point for this is to consider the different forms ethnic belonging takes in different contexts, and how these forms intersect with other axes of identification and power **within** the organisation. To begin this process is to begin to think about how the experience black women and men have of social services, either as employees or service users, can be irrevocably altered for the better. It is also to lay the ground upon which recognition of differential need can be understood as part of the process for undoing relations of domination, not as part of the process of reproducing these relations.

CHAPTER EIGHT

'Evidence of Things Not Seen': The Complexities of the 'everyday' for black women social workers

In the preceding chapter I discussed the dominant professional discourses on 'race' and ethnicity and suggested that whilst these discourses had in part arisen as a means to respond to the needs of black client groups they had also had the effect of positioning such clients, and black social workers, in essentialised and fixed categories. This results in a reproduction of the 'othering' of these clients and social workers. As discourses they carry and produce systems of meaning and give rise to a professional knowledge about racialised populations which intersects with other aspects of social work knowledge. As such these racialising discourses both influence practice and construct subject positions and systems of representations. It is to the issue of the link between racialised representations of black clients and social workers and their impact on practice that I turn in this chapter. I want to discuss a small number of incidents which were recounted to me by different participants and which point to the ossifying nature of dominant conceptions of 'race' and ethnicity which circulate in the profession of social work. In so doing issues about the complex social relationships which are obscured by professional discourses on 'race' and ethnicity and yet which have to be negotiated in the daily working practice of black social workers will be brought into view.

Analysis and Discussion

In this and subsequent chapters where I introduce participants' accounts I have adopted the following method for organising the sequences of speech. Each new speaker has been allocated a number at the end of the first extract taken from their account. This enables her to be identified by 'ethnic group', grade and departmental division. It will be noted that 'ethnic group' as used here corresponds to that used in the Census. The number at the beginning of sequences of account is the one referred

to in the discussions. Where ... is used it is to ensure anonymity, especially in relation to the local authority, or to indicate where the sequence has been cut for reasons of space. Comments and questions in square brackets are those made by me.

Table Two

	Ethnic Group	Grade	Division
1.	African-Caribbean	'Senior'	Children and Families
2.	African-Caribbean	Basic Grade	Children and Families
3.	African-Caribbean	'Senior'	Children and Families
4.	African-Caribbean	'Senior'	Children and Families

This first case occurred prior to the 1989 Children Act and centres on the effect of rigidly held assumptions on the part of a team manager about familial practices amongst populations whose origin or descent is in the Caribbean.

Case one

1.a. [G.L. You talked about, or you alluded to I should say, some dissatisfaction around issues to do with staff or managers' attitudes, do you want to elaborate on that at all, especially if these were to do with 'race' or gender issues at all?] *"There were a lot of those! I mean I can do. With my first manager in ... she was very difficult. She was a white woman who had been a manager in the building for a long, long, long time ... she was just really difficult and some days she would be OK and other days she'd just be extremely difficult and she had very racist opinions that she covered up, or tried to cover up, in terms of, for example if there were particular cases. I can remember one case in particular where there was a particular child whose mother was suffering from domestic violence. The parents weren't married and she assumed the child was black which was an ongoing thing with her. It was something,*

that you know, I'd be correcting her about all the time. [right] *Now on this particular occasion the child was taken on a place of safety order on one night by the police because the father had tried to strangle the mother and the child had been caught up in that web and somehow they'd incurred some injuries that were not describable, I mean you weren't able to explain them as being accidental, so the police removed the child and the following day we got the out of hours referral ... after, the child was on the place of safety order and was put with a foster carer. Now the child had been placed with a black foster carer, now she* (the child) *was a white child, blonde hair, blue eyes and one of her questions* (i.e. from the manager) *the next morning was, I mean prior to this oh, let me give you some background. Prior to this incident this child had been handled by a black woman social worker who'd been suffering a lot of problems in the team for many years. She was another black woman whose post I had come into and covered as a locum because she had refused to come back to the team because there was a lot of problems that she'd experienced and she did not want to return there, em that was part of the history to do with the team* (1).

1.b. [G.L. That was around what year?] *"This was, you're talking around '87, '88, near the beginning of the time when I first came in.* [Right] *So this was the background to it, she had left and apart from me who had just come in, there was only one other black woman on the team erm, and what happened was that she* (the other black woman social worker still on the team) *had gone to this home address of the child and she had made an assessment visit and had recommended that this child be allocated to the black family because there were a lot of concerning issues. The child being left alone, you know there were untold allegations being made against the mother, whether she was leaving the child alone, there was the violence from the father that had been reported on numerous times and there was a lot of concerns in terms of the child and that some support was needed. Now we never had any notification or confirmation*

that this child had been injured in any way there was just an awful lot of concern. Well that can happen. Now this other social worker had gone, made the visit and recommended the child er, the case be allocated, meaning a full time social worker working on the case with the family".

There are two main points I want to draw attention to at this point in the account. Apart from the way in which the participant retraces her steps in order to establish that she is giving an example of the ways in which 'race' and racism enter into case management, the speaker here immediately constructs an intra-group divide between black and white women by fore-grounding 'race'. This is despite, or perhaps because, my question is concerned with difficulties arising as a result of 'race' or gender. This fore-grounding of the terrain of 'race' and racism is in some senses emphasised by the language she uses to describe the child involved in the case - "blond hair, blue eyes" - which could be factual, but also invokes an emblematic representation of whiteness. It also noticeable that at times the language used by the participant in these sequences evokes a matter of factness about the issues which social workers face - "there was just an awful lot of concern. Well that can happen." In the context where she is being interviewed by a black woman who is asking her to discuss her working life as another black woman this is perhaps not surprising but it does have the effect of highlighting the issue of racism that she wants to illustrate. Once she has established the focus of her account in the next sequence (1.c) the participant is able to convey some of the ways in which racialising discourse intrudes into daily work practice for black social workers. For example, she makes it clear that in the context of a "lack of respect" for the work of another black woman social worker a meticulous care to record all incidents and concerns arises. This appears to be partly motivated by a concern to pre-empt any undue criticism of work practice but in so doing the participant is also able to establish a high professional standard on the part of her colleague.

The account continues:

1.c. [G.L This was after this particular out of hours incident] *"No, this was before it, I'm just trying to give you some background to it. Now, erm another thing that used to happen is on certain cases, if this particular social worker, the black woman social worker, made certain recommendations they weren't always followed through and that was I think because of lack of respect for her work. Or thinking that she made too much fuss about certain things that she didn't need to. But she made notes of these concerns and she'd written them down, she'd made the assessment visit and recommended allocation. The case did not get allocated. Now I was a bit like, I used to go and argue and say this should happen or that should happen, and on that occasion she'd made three consecutive visits and had recommended the same thing each time. Now I didn't know this and then she came to me and she said this is what's been going on so I took the case on myself ... cos I had a big mouth and I wouldn't just leave things if something came up I would try and do something about it. So I took it upon myself and I booked in an assessment visit to myself and I told the team manager this is what's gonna happen. I had to argue with her because she wasn't happy about that because it's supposed to go through normal process and I said OK I understand what you are saying but she's made these recommendations and you've just totally ignored them."* [yeah, um, um.]

"And I erm think, it feels to me too concerning to just be left like that and I'm not happy with what you've done. So I said I'm going to do the visit and erm I'll bring the case back to you. Now I went off, did the assessment and I came to the same conclusion - that the case had to be allocated urgently because it was getting, the situation seemed to be just getting worse [right] *and she never did anything about it ... and she made some remark about erm, saying something er 'oh its what they do you know, it's just normal you know it's what they do'. I asked her what do you mean,*

222

what do you mean! She didn't say anything. And then she was talking to somebody else and she said 'well you know, West Indian families, you know it's not too unusual and I'm sure she's (the mother) *able to put up with it'. That kind of remark! Well I just flipped a lid and I said what are you talking about! Abuse and violence are not normal patterns of life, it certainly wasn't for me and I know a lot of people etc. but anyway, so I made the recommendation that the case had to be allocated and er it wasn't allocated. Now I was going away, I think I was going to Nigeria or somewhere, I was going on holiday for four weeks otherwise what I would have done is taken the case on myself and just told her that it had been allocated".*

But if racialising discourse on the part of the managers acts to both enhance professionalism and produce a need for meticulous recording, this sequence also conveys a sense of combat on the part of the participant ("I used to go and argue and say this should happen or that should happen"), whilst simultaneously showing the urgency of the actual case. This in itself suggests an added level of complexity since the need to guard against racism is superimposed on the need for all social workers to ensure that every aspect of their statutory duty to protect vulnerable children is implemented. This sequence is also the point at which the speaker gives the first strong indication that as far as she is concerned the managers approach to the case is mediated through a set of ethnicising assumptions about the behaviour patterns of Caribbean families. It is through this discourse that she constructs the meaning of the manager's (in)actions. In so doing the participant is able to establish that caseload management within her team is structured through forms of absolutist discourse which were the focus of the previous chapter. A more elaborated sense of this is established as the account continues.

1.d. [G.L. So you're saying that this was actually not a Caribbean family?]

"No! this is this same white family but she's just assuming that certain patterns

G.L.[that certain patterns - in unison]

l.d. *yeah* (laughter at the statement made in unison) *she's just assuming and this was quite indicative of the way she used to behave. Now what happened was that, erm, I was going away and what I would normally do is just take the case myself and if she's gonna argue with me then we'll have the argument. But on this occasion I was going away the following week ... and I said it needs to be allocated urgently. Now it was not allocated but she backed down a bit and said she would pend it for a period of time before it goes for allocation. So I said well on your head be it and I just left it at that, there was nothing else I could do. Then while I was away, three days before I got back, this place of safety order was taken out on the child with the unidentifiable injuries I described before. The mother had been beaten up and the child had got this bruising... The police removed the child and I said like why did this happen, sort of asked around and she* (the manager) *said 'well it's just one of those things', sort of brushed it aside and then there was a phone call that came through, because it was dealt with by the out of hours social worker, there was a phone call that came through that said, it was from Fostering and Adoption, that said that this child had to be moved because it was a mixed race placement, the child was a white child, she'd been placed in emergency care with a black foster carer and so she had to be moved to a white foster carer because it's a same race placement policy here.*

"But I'll never forget her response when I told her about the phone call. At first she said 'well why does she have to be moved, you know she's with a black foster carer'. And I said what do you mean, she's got blond hair and blue eyes just like you, I said you can't, she can't stay there and the shock that came on her face

G.L. [Yeah, you bet.]

"and she went really red and everything, and I said yeah she is you know, and she said well 'why' because she had this assumption that as well, that because I am a black

woman and because I argue certain things, I said I don't really care what colour the child is, I said if there are certain things happening that are wrong ... it's my job to get certain things sorted out and erm. But she said 'you were arguing certain things' and I said because there were a lot of concerns about this child and you were just totally ignoring what the other worker had said that is why I was arguing so much. But she thought I was arguing because it's a black child and I wanted the case to be allocated, you know which was dangerous".

Here it is clear that for this participant the daily workplace interactions were played out on 'raced' terrain. The interaction as presented here is overdetermined by the struggle over meanings between people who are positioned within racial discourse and occupy statuses defined by the organisational hierarchy. The participant constructs a narrative in which the senior person in organisational terms is eventually hoist on the petard of her own ethnicising assumptions and the (apparently) poor practice which this resulted in. Moreover the participant's triumphalism is carried in the tone of the account and indeed in her refusal to be located in an equally racialising black nationalist discourse - "I don't really care what colour the child is" and her insistence on her professional concerns - "there were a lot of concerns about this child". The paradox is that despite this refusal she uses the same 'race' placement policy tactically in order to achieve her discursive victory. This case demonstrates the implications for service delivery of ethnic absolutist readings or explanations of behaviour. Clearly readings of 'culturally specific' behaviour were being made on the basis of an interpretation of the 'rules' and 'codes' as constructed by a hegemonic discourse on 'race'. The result being that such absolutist ideas structured both the quality of service delivery and the way in which the black women social workers were able to perform their jobs. A further example of ways in which racialising discourses structure workplace relations and practices is evident in the case which follows.

Case Two

This case concerns a young teenage woman of Caribbean descent who was being fostered by a white foster carer. She had previously been fostered by a member of her extended family in a 'mixed race' household where it was felt that her 'cultural needs' were being met. However this arrangement could no longer continue and an alternative had to be found. The new arrangements were fairly complicated because it involved working across two local authority SSDs: the originating authority, which remained the lead one and who had allocated the case to a black woman social worker (the participant), and a second authority where the foster carer lived. No black worker, female or male, was involved in the case from this second authority. This was experienced as a problem by the lead social worker (the participant) because she felt the interpersonal/inter organisational dynamics to be structured through the prism of racism. As far as she saw it the social workers in the second authority had no interest in dealing with racially determined identity needs. Furthermore, the participant felt that the white social worker from the second authority who had daily responsibility for the case did not recognise, indeed undermined, her (i.e. the participant's) professional judgement, mostly because of the latter's concerns about the young woman's identity needs. At the same time the apparent 'matching' in terms of 'race' between the black social worker and the young woman did not make for an easy relationship as becomes clear from the account. The account also shows that in contrast to the previous speaker the participant here constructs a narrative which positions her within an absolutist discourse. However the two participants do share some factors in common. Firstly, both display an acute awareness of the way in which racism structures their daily workplace interactions. Secondly, they both explicitly derive meanings about these interactions through racially differentiating

discourses. Thirdly, they both use these forms of discourse to position and challenge white colleagues.

2.a. [G.L. So you are the authority really, you represent ... (the lead authority)]

"that's right so ... (the second authority) are doing it on our behalf, they have to check things out with us and that's the power that they don't like ... I always have a very hard time, my team manager has accompanied me on a couple of occasions because I had such an awful time. The first time I went there I wanted the case transferred ... I felt less than less, it was very bad, because I only saw white members of staff up there, there were no black staff in that particular office ... it was very hard work and to have to tell two white male team managers and a white female placements social worker who represented the family that the child was placed with, and another white female social worker, all these white professionals, to try and explain cultural needs and identity, because it's a black child we're talking about, to try and explain that to them was very hard work and at the last meeting the situation, because I am the only one talking about identity and talking about cultural issues at the statutory review, the child turned round to me ... she turned round to me and said 'what do you want me to do — walk around in an African outfit!'. So this is the level, this is what I'm trying to explain to them, that there are concerns, what input is there for her, because she's currently placed with a white family. I'm not pleased about that and ... (my authority) has a policy that black children are placed with same race placements where possible. I don't feel that ... (the second authority) has made an effort ... They know that I'm not pleased with her being placed with a white foster parent in an area where there are no black people ... and because she doesn't know anybody, she's not going to seek them out, so issues of her identity which is coming through, different things that she says, and that was a classic for me. Now for me as a black worker that's ringing alarm bells, for the white workers it was a case of mockery, that's right you know erm,

*you're seen as going overboard on this **black** thing, type of thing. So I felt very angry*
*at that because this child is internalising that all I do is go on about **black issues, go on***
*about identity all the time and I'm sort of trying to champion the cause. But it **has to***
*be prescriptive because she's not going to get it if it's not built into this **placement***
*that is **totally** inappropriate, with professionals who she's dealing with who are **all***
white ... if it's not put in a prescriptive way it doesn't happen at all and I have, I'm
accountable to make sure that her needs are fully met, so because it's put in a
*prescriptive way it's seen as if that's **all** I do ... and I can't convince the white*
workers, professionals supposedly, ... so how am I then going to convince this young
*person a long, long distance away, if I have to convince her social workers in **the first***
place that she is in great need".(2)

Here we can see an example of the use of a form of ethnic absolutism as a means to
negotiate a work situation redolent with contradiction. However the case also raises
a number of issues related to the adequacy of the black staff model for ensuring
equality of service delivery to multi-ethnic client groups. It also sharply illustrates the
contradictory effects of recourse to a discourse of ethnic absolutism.

The strength of feelings which imbue this account sharply illustrates the immense
difficulties which many black social work staff have to negotiate in their working lives.
This in itself is suggestive of the limitations of the black staff model if it is
implemented on the basis of a premise that the issues of 'race' and racism begin and
end with such recruitment. However the participant's awareness of her own feelings
and sense that her professional integrity is being undermined does not prevent her
from constructing a concern about the client's identity within an absolutist discourse.
Indeed it is precisely the client's apparent hostility to, and distancing from the speaker
that legitimates the latter's identification of an identity crisis. As will be remembered

from the previous chapter there are very strong echoes in this account of the approach adopted by Small and others associated with the Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professionals. Yet this notwithstanding, the account also illustrates that positioning within racialising discourse does not mean that the same identities are produced or that a 'raced' positioning cannot be disrupted by other, cross-cutting axes of differentiation and power - *"it's a black child we're talking about* (and yet this black child) *turned round to me and said what do you want me to do – walk round in an African outfit"*.

Despite this, the participant speaking here is very aware that in so keenly adhering to the 'same race' placement policy she is adopting a rigid and prescriptive approach to a job which does not operate with such certainties. Indeed in some senses she constructs a narrative in which she almost wants to distance herself from any reductive or rigid approach to her work but is prevented from doing so because of the attack on her professional judgement and the urgency of the girl's situation. Extreme situations such as this demand extreme responses - *"but it **has** to be prescriptive because she's not going to get it if it's not built into this placement that is **totally** inappropriate"*. Having established this, she returns to her concern to validate her own professional authority and legitimacy as a way of resisting being reduced to a one dimensional ethnic or racial entity - *"if it's not put in a prescriptive way it doesn't happen at all and I have, I'm accountable to make sure that her needs are fully met, so because it's put in a prescriptive way it's seen as if that's all I do"*. Prescription then arises because of the logistics, professional antagonisms and diagnosis of the girl's needs. Recourse to an ethnic absolutist discourse arises in this context as a way out of the tensions and contradictions of workplace relationships.

But if recourse to such discursive terrain comes from the dilemmas arising in a complex web of workplace relations, more generally there are a number of pressing theoretical and practical implications which flow from viewing 'race' and ethnicity in this way. Firstly, such an approach only serves to reproduce the persistent and damaging idea that black/'ethnic minority' communities are homogenous and as such its members will share a common identity. Indeed, as I showed in the previous chapter, such an identity is regarded as evidence of mental health and adjustment by those who subscribe to this discourse. Secondly, an approach such as this in its turn helps to sustain the production of racialising discourse since the idea of homogeneity is a central part of the process of racialisation and as such it reproduces the 'otherness' of racialised populations precisely because it can admit of heterogeneity only amongst white communities. Thirdly, the operation of any other axes of power in structuring the nature of the encounter between black social worker and black client is automatically occluded. Finally, at the level of the employment experience of black social workers one of the consequences of a racialised basis for their employment is their marginalisation and ghettoisation. Their professional knowledges and skills are denied because they are reduced to a bundle of ethnically derived (and therefore inherent) capacities.

Yet in terms of notions of cultural absolutes and fixed, coherent, if racialised, identities the case highlights the complex nature of the social relations which are brought into play in the context of social work practice and within which identities are formed and reformed. At one level racism is raised as a central structuring feature of black social workers' experiences of the everyday routines of their employment. But it is equally clear that recourse to an ethnic absolutism does not offer any escape from the processes of racialisation which worked to position her as a worker who is assumed to have limited professional skills. Indeed far from undermining racialisation the

stance she adopted meant that she could only make a claim to professional legitimacy on racialised terrain. Similarly her claim to 'insider' knowledge of the young woman's needs served not to elicit a bond of identification between 'racial' or ethnic 'equivalents' but to impose the power of the local state official over the black client. Moreover as Phoenix has argued "subject positions and identities do not always intersect" (1994, p.302) and whilst all the people in this example (white as well as black) were positioned within a racialised discourse and set of institutional practices, that two were black did not result in an automatic understanding or solidarity between the two. This was all played out on terrain mapped by a discursive formation in which 'race' and identity are seen as fixed, immutable categories and which took place in the context of (inter)organisational and professional imperatives. Thus the limitations of a perspective which inscribes racial or ethnic absolutes and constructs needs as always and already predictable from that should be clear from this example. The case illustrates the multiple, shifting and contingent nature of the identities which arise in the context of a social workers caseload.

Case three: social worker/client 'matching'
These last points are further illustrated in the next case which is directly concerned with 'ethnic matching' between social worker and client. This example focuses on the issue of social worker/client matching. It shows 'ethnicity' at work but in an hierarchical organisational setting in which shared ethnic group positioning is fractured by other axes of differentiation and power.

3.a. [G.L. So are you saying then really that management definitely have a view on 'race' and ethnicity, how would you describe this view?]
"Their view is difficult to pin down and it always strikes me as being convenient because on that level they won't challenge black workers because they don't want to

be seen as racist. But on another sort of level, a practice which is common is where white workers are working with black families and the case is complicated and the white workers feel or will say 'I think this family needs a black worker', but it is often convenient to get us to work with black families. The white workers can't cope really in that case. The contradiction is that for black workers they will be working with white families, very complicated cases because of the nature of the work and you get stuck sometimes, it gets difficult, because we can't say we think this family needs a white worker, what I'm saying is that white workers when they are stuck use us as an excuse, their whiteness to get out of work, and then it is said to black workers 'what it needs is a black worker'. Now that is quite convenient for managers, because managers are white yeah? [right] *And they often agree with the white worker, that this case, that they are not getting anywhere with them, yeah? Whereas if you have a black worker take it, somehow you are expected to be able to work with them.* [right] *"White managers, white workers won't acknowledge or are even aware of these sorts of intrinsic sort of issues involved for black workers, professionalism and boundaries, how you negotiate relationships with black families when they see you as a befriending person, you are having to assert that you are a professional person and that it is a professional relationship".*(3)

In this sequence of the account there is the first suggestion of a solidarity being formed around whiteness. This is indicative of a shift from the dominant emphasis in the professional literature where solidarity on the basis of 'race', ethnicity or colour is limited to racialised populations. In effect what the speaker achieves here is a 'racing' of the discursively 'non-racial' by explicitly positioning white workers within such a domain. She does this as a way of showing how white colleagues and managers avoid difficult issues by denying any 'racial' or 'ethnic' knowledge on their part. The account also makes visible ways in which being positioned within racial discourse complicates

the work for black social workers in ways which are not at all recognised by managers. Thus the entry of black social workers into SSDs has not been accompanied by any understanding of the changed supervisory and managerial needs and demands which may arise. Having established this the speaker elaborates the point by showing how similarity of position within racialised discourse is disrupted by being differently positioned in the social relations of social services departments.

3.b. [G.L. So there are professional pitfalls for black workers about professional boundaries, it's about...]
"it's about how black clients see black workers [right] *and how they want to see us, they don't want to see us as part of the establishment that they see as oppressive. A black worker knocks on the door and they think they are going to get a different service and they do qualitatively but some of their assumptions about the kind of service they are going to get is actually wrong. The two most common things that we have problems with is black clients not expecting black workers to use the authority of the law in a way which challenges the parents because they associate power with white workers and white managers.* [right] *And what black workers are having to say to white managers is you keep dumping this work on us as in 'birds of a feather so there is going to be no problem'. Whatever comes up we can sort it out, so we don't get decent supervision around those issues because white managers haven't even begun to think about them, so we have to teach them what the issues are, let alone expecting to be supervised. Because of the nature of the work you know it is not certainty, there is a lot of uncertainty* [Sure, sure, ah, ah] *You know it's not - you do it like this and you get this result, and it's all about processes and communication. So, to come back to your point, I think it is difficult for us as black workers to pin down what white managers and colleagues think because it is changeable and it is*

convenient. What they definitely don't want is to be seen to be racist because they are so changeable and that is clear."

What is interesting about the formulation of the issues here is that for this speaker the issue of non-recognition of professional authority becomes posed as black clients not expecting black social workers to use their professional power and status. This is in contrast to the formulation of a similar problem in the previous account where the problem was posed as one in which white social workers would not admit of their black colleagues **having** such professional power and status. Another point of contrast between this account and the previous one is that here the speaker explicitly *refutes social work as being about certainties. As a result prescriptive case handling* is ruled out for this participant but paradoxically it is through this that she is able to refer to the difficulties of working with white colleagues. Thus the lack of certainty and the inappropriateness of prescriptive formulae for handling cases is exactly the means by which white colleagues and managers can avoid confronting issues of 'race' and racism. What is common about this account and the previous one is that both women construct narratives which show the complexity of the webs of social relations within social work teams. What divides them is the ways in which they use racial discourse to understand these relations.

All the cases discussed so far have had issues of 'race' and ethnicity at their core but not in any simple or static way - a way which simply involves 'correct' cultural readings. Instead they have illustrated that 'race' and ethnicity are inscribed within *relations of grade and professional status which structure the social relationships* within the organisation. Ethnic identifications become disrupted by both the divide between professional and client and that between managers and fieldworkers. These complexities are further illustrated in the final case discussed in this chapter.

Case four: same 'race' fostering and adoption

This is also centred around the issue of same 'race' placements policy in fostering and adoption. It illustrates the intricate web of interests and identifications which are at stake within an organisational setting where wider societal axes of subordination and domination become articulated to professional and political agenda.

4.a.[G.L. Does the authority have an equal opportunities policy or an ethnic record keeping and monitoring policy?]

"Yes ethnic monitoring ... but they don't have a race placement policy but the practice and the ethos is same race."

G.L. [So they have a guidance, so I see what you mean erm but no formal statements is that what you mean?]

"Yeah, not around same race placement. In their adverts they always say they are an equal opps employer, I don't actually know if they have got an equal opps policy but the practice is a bit different for example same race placements for children" [G.L. What do you think about that?] *Well I have mixed feelings about same race placement, particularly the rationale that the borough gives is that if they have a policy they have to adhere to it, and it is not always the right thing to do, and I actually agree with that, because there has been situations where we would have placed a mixed race child. Well it is two things em, there is one example. We had a teenager recently, sixteen, who is mixed race who wanted a white foster family, regardless of what we thought about that, her mother's white and she grew up with, in a lone white parent family, so that is her experience. Under the Children Act she can exercise those choices and that preference, I felt we should have honoured it. Black workers in the Department blocked that, but the reason for not having a policy was*

precisely to allow that mostly exceptional practice be possible. [So the reason for not having a stated policy, a written formal policy ...]
is because people think they would have to adhere to the rhetoric regardless of the child's entire need that is the stated reason why they haven't got a policy."(4)

It is interesting to note that the participant here immediately establishes her ambivalence about 'same race' placements policies because she wants to be able to allow for flexibility in case management. In her discourse children's needs are constructed as variable and flexible and therefore she recognises that a departmental policy needs to be able to accommodate this. It is also notable that she establishes a tension between legal entitlements of children looked after by SSDs and a rigid departmental practice. But in the sequence of the account which follows (4.b.) her construction of social work as an occupation and social services departments as complex sites leads her to indicate the ways in which a 'same race' policy might be important or useful.

4.b.[G. L Right OK, but because the practice is one of same race you are saying that you might feel slightly mixed about it, the case like the one you have just cited, where the desires of that young woman has the right to say what she wanted?]
"Yes, I think we should have honoured that [and it was the Authority wide Black Workers Group who stopped it, not the local departmental group?] *Yes and they have always blocked cases like that, or it has always been very contentious because they adhere to the rhetoric of black children must have black families. And the fear is that if they give in on those sorts of cases that it will become common practice, so arguably if you have a policy you would avoid those situations. Do you know what I mean? where people could feel safe. Because it is not common practice to undermine policy.* [Right, right and did it cause divisions at all in the Black Workers Group?] *Em, no no,*

it caused all sorts of feelings in the local black workers group but the Black Workers
Group objecting to it was in another place, our adoption and fostering teams are in
another building. So it caused divisions amongst - the case worker and manager was
white - so it got polarised into this is coming to us, this request to us because of the
white workers, whereas if you had a black worker she would have worked to get this
dealt with, with a black family. Over-simplified really".

It is clear that here the participant makes the issue of 'same race' policy more complex
by distinguishing between starting points for thinking about such a policy. One view
might be formed if the starting point is the complex 'needs' of specific children,
whereas another view might emerge if the starting point is developing strategies for
disciplining departmental racism in fostering and adoption policy and practice - *"so*
arguably if you have a policy you would avoid those situations". However to some
extent she has undermined this argument by referring to the black workers group as
adhering to *"the rhetoric of black children must have black families"* - a terminology
which acts to dismiss or reduce their approach. Moreover she continues with this line
of argument at the end of the sequence where she refers to the representation of the
issues only in terms of a black/white split as *"over-simplified really".*
What is also notable about this part of the account is that she both presents such a
polarisation and counters any suggestion of an homogenous black view by
differentiating between the team specific black workers group and the black workers
group in fostering and adoption, (to which I have given capital first letters). Again this
suggests far more complexity to departmental relations than is allowed for in the
dominant representations of 'race' and ethnicity in the professional literature.
Moreover in an earlier part of the interview where she describes the 'race' and gender
composition of the teams to which she refers, she makes it clear that all the members
of the team specific black workers group are women. This takes on a significance in

the following parts of the account because it is clear that disagreements between black staff is also between black women and men. Thus she continues:

4.c.[G.L. So describe how this form, the practice in the absence of formal policy affects the work process if you can]

"Well the processes gets into personalities and it gets into who is going to challenge these black workers, white workers shy away from it because they don't want to be racist. And black workers don't want to be seen in open conflict with other workers, so the process is very messy and personalised.

[Yeah um, so the splits that kind of occur ... are very much along the lines of 'race', ethnicity, colour and so on. How do the managers respond to this?]

"Well it is interesting because in that particular example it went up to the assistant director level, because there were all sorts of other issues that made this girl very, very vulnerable indeed, including environmental health issues, and what happened was that management was stating to the black workers at the adoption and fostering unit that under the Children Act this girl has a right to make these choices, but that psychologically she can't cope with what we are saying she needs and therefore we should give her what she can use, yeah, and that we don't have to be shoving therapy down her throat that she is not ready for, it's a life process basically, but nobody would actually block the black workers because nobody was going to take the responsibility, so the assistant director wasn't prepared to take on this particular one and only black manager in the foster and adoption unit. So people just shied away from it and the view of black workers is that one day they (i.e. senior management) *are going to leave it to a black worker to kick him off his pedestal basically cos white workers they complain about it.* [Kick who off the pedestal?] *This bloke, black worker yeah, because he is well into rhetoric* [Right so the black worker, black manager who is responsible he is the person who is saying that you should put this

young woman into a black family?] *Yeah and he's saying 'over my dead body will you do anything else'* [And the management said well there is the Children Act already and you have to look at her individual psychic development but nobody would override his authority basically right?] *And it was an all white professional network from the assistant director down to the basic grade worker who was the child's social worker. The only black person involved in that process was that black manager, and nobody would actually say to him we are going to override you on this decision.* [Messy] *Very messy".*

The constraining effects of forms of racial discourse and the ways in which they position subjects within them becomes very apparent in this part of the account. However it also establishes that such racial discourse can have the effect of disrupting organisational lines of power and authority as exemplified in the refusal of white managers to negotiate a way through the complex issues of 'race' which where embedded in this case. In this way the speaker here repeats the point made by the participant in case three about the ways in which white managers and social workers refuse to tackle issues of 'race' and racism. Finally in sequence 4.d. the participant returns to the complexity of such issues and establishes that there is no easy or simple correspondence between positions within discourse and social relations and the subjectivities and identities which get inscribe within them. Moreover she establishes her own professionalism on the basis of just such a recognition.

4.d.[G.L. Is this common this kind of managerial response?] *Yes I have known it happen, it happens always with mixed race children* [Why is that do you think?] *Because parents start saying they don't want their children placed with black families em, mixed race children saying they don't want to be placed with black families, and that always brings a certain amount of conflict. Because the practice is that if you are*

239

mixed race you go to a black family unless someone objects and says they don't want to, or if say those kids were placed with white families and the social worker thinks they should stay there. It causes conflict if they want to move them into a black family and for me that is where the contradiction is. You place a very, very young child who's black mixed race with a white family who then develops attachment and sees those people as parents and then in three years they want to chuck them out. My own personal, well my own professional view is that to a black child that is his parents in terms of attachment and that you can't just open this wide just because of the race element. But there are other things you can do to assist that family. I'm looking at the wider context of that child's needs, where they live, how you assess those carers in meeting that child's needs [right] So arguably we shouldn't place them there in the first place but sometimes it happens that is all there is available at the time when they come into the service, they leave them there for whatever reason, and then we move them when it's too, when it doesn't make sense to the children. And they then spend time grieving the loss rather than accepting a new background."

In broad terms it is clear that this last case was being fought out on two analytically distinct but intersecting terrains. Firstly, there was that of racial divisions between black and white. This divide overdetermined the case and provided for divisions of grade and authority to be subverted or subordinated to the more hegemonic division of 'race'. Secondly however there was the terrain of gender divisions among the black workers in the department. This is where the gender composition of the teams takes on importance since it was from amongst black women who were expressing opposition (albeit muted) to the position being articulated by the male black manager of the fostering and adoption unit. The result was that rather than grade and authority being subordinated to other agenda they were being reinforced and in so doing re-articulated existing gender divisions amongst black staff within the department.

In this chapter I have tried to suggest that the 'play' of 'race' and ethnicity within SSDs is far more complex and multifaced than is captured by the dominant approaches to these matters which circulate in the profession. The four cases demonstrate the diverse articulations of 'race'/ethnicity with other cases of social and organizational differentiation. All the cases illustrated the way in which issues of 'race'/ethnicity and racism act to structure the everyday of working life for black women social workers. Similarly they all showed that an understanding of this formed a framework through which the participants' speaking here gave meaning to their 'experience'. However what the cases also illustrated was that whilst each woman was positioned within radicalising discourse their responses to such positioning varied. Thus whilst some adopted an absolutist position as a means to negotiate the complexities of her working life, others were more hesitant about such a position.

Together these cases demonstrate the impossibility of a foundational or essentialist view of 'race'/ethnicity or one which abstracts these categories from the social and occupational formations in which such differences are enacted. In the next chapter I want to turn to the ways in which managers constructed the categories 'race' and ethnicity as they negotiated managing multi-racial/multi-ethnic social work teams.

CHAPTER 9

SPEAKING MANAGEMENT: CONSTRUCTING 'RACE'

In chapters five, six and seven I was concerned to explore the various ways in which black women (and men) social workers were positioned in fields of representation and how such representations in part determined their structural location in SSDs. In first two of these I focused on the 'technologies' by which 'race' was elaborated in Central government debates on specific pieces of social policy legislation, and I then moved on to an examination of local authority Social Services Committee papers. My aim was to explore points of comparison and contrast in the construction and application of racial discourse in the two tiers of government. In chapter seven I moved on to consider those discourses of 'race' and ethnicity which have become dominant in the profession of social work since the 1980s. I suggested that the importance of this development lay in the fact that black professionals had been influential in establishing the dominant perspective and that as a consequence it could not be characterised as a 'white' approach.

In this chapter I want to begin to elaborate the ways in which these discourses of 'race' circulated amongst, and were rearticulated by, area office managers in the concrete setting of managing a range of social work teams. It will be recalled that eight of the sample were at this level. Four of these were black women (three African-Caribbean origin, one South Asian origin), two were white women (English origin), and two were white men (English origin). I also interviewed two Assistant Directors (one female, one male, both English and white). However a technical problem prevented the transcription of the male assistant directors taped interview. As a result I am not going to draw substantively on the interview with the white woman A.D., focusing instead on those managers removed from case supervision but with direct managerial responsibility for front-line workers. I focus on this level because I want to concentrate on how 'race' gets constructed and

articulated in the accounts of those who are unambiguously situated within the management structure but who are equally accountable to a tier senior to them. I have also focused on this level because it is the senior most level at which black women can be found in either SSD.

The chapter is structured around four themes which emerged from the analysis of Social Services Committee papers in the two authorities. These are recruitment and training; career development; restructuring, managerialism and service; and equal opportunities. Before going on to consider the accounts of the managers around these four themes a few introductory comments are worthwhile.

'Fixing Procedures': Equal Opportunities and Professional Social Work

It is important to note that the discursive structure within which managers speak on issues of (in)equality is comprised of three distinct, if at times overlapping or cross-cutting, vocabularies. These are those of equal opportunities, the professional discourses of social work, and more recently those of the 'new managerialism'. Despite the fact that these are overlapping discourses through which issues of (in)equality are known and articulated, there are often unresolved tensions within public sector organisations as they attempt to grapple with the problems of transition among these discourses both as frameworks of meaning and guidelines to practice. This is perhaps especially true in terms of the relation between equal opportunities policies (EOPs) and the 'new managerialism', not least because it is at this intersection that the encroachment of the 'new managerialism' onto bureau-professional terrain has come to challenge professional power. 'New managerialism's' critique of bureaucratic organisational forms and categories carries with it an attack on the established routes to line management which took the form whereby senior professionals progressively assumed a bigger package of management responsibilities. It was their expertise and accumulated experience as **professionals**

that gave social workers access to management positions, whereas now the restructuring of the welfare state and the discourse of 'new managerialism' foregrounds and values another set of skills associated with for example, budget handling and other financial expertise, 'enterprise', 'vision' etc. Of course it would be wrong to suggest that the older, established route has been completely usurped, rather it is increasingly subject to ideological critique and practical erosion. Moreover, both the language and practice of EOPs are situated within the old framework in the sense that they have a place in the bureaucratic organisational forms so predominant in local authority departments. The vocabulary of EOPs also connects with the professional discourse of social work and to some extent then, the former can be 'felt' or articulated as an aspect of the latter in the form of 'good professional practice', for example, in the ethical commitments to 'anti-discriminatory' practice.

Having said that the discursive structure through which manager's speak issues of racial (in)equality comprises these three vocabularies, the discourse of 'equal opportunities' occupies the dominant position. In part this dominance is achieved because the policies which articulate the discourse arose as the institutionalised response to struggles in the 1970s and 1980s over inequalities connected to issues of 'race', gender, sexuality, and disability. As a result, the 'knowledges' associated with a recognition of inequalities along these axes gave rise to a kind of public sector 'common-sense'. Gibbon (1990) has suggested that this in itself is the result of four factors: the political action of marginalised and discriminated groups, as already mentioned; the correspondence between the adoption of EOPs as a voluntary, but rational - in terms of business sense - responses to the issue of inequality and the commitment of successive Conservative governments to such non-state and non-compulsory initiatives; the work of statutory organisations such as the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission; and the

... efforts by specialists within enterprises to emphasise their own 'professionalism' and to define their organisational territory in a period where their traditional function of managing employee relations has been increasingly marginalised (p.6).

In part, such legitimation of 'professional' methods and autonomy has been linked to personnel officers whose traditional concerns with industrial relations, employee management, and rules of procedure governing staffing matters has led them to favour EOPs as regulatory packages (Young, 1987; Connelly, 1990). However in Social Services Departments a similar kind of reading of EOPs as a reiteration of the professional values of social work is possible.

At the same time it is important to note that a considerable amount of conceptual imprecision surrounds the term 'equal opportunities'. For a start there is the inter-changeability of the term 'equal opportunity' with others such as 'equality of access', 'anti-discrimination policies', or 'anti-racist policies'. Yet despite this level of terminological or semantic ambiguity, Jenkin and Solomos (1987) have suggested that it is possible to define all of the following as contained within the term 'equality of opportunity' as it pertains to 'race' and employment:

(a) To breakdown direct and indirect barriers to discrimination whose outcome is to stop the entry of black workers into certain occupational categories, industries, factories, etc.

(b) To help strengthen the career prospects of black workers who already occupy certain occupational positions at the bottom rung of the employment ladder.

(c) To help management to manage workforces which are multi-racial in composition but which have no channels of control or representation which cover the whole 'multi-racial workforce'.

(d) To help black workers (particularly the unemployed or those with language difficulties) to obtain training in order to enable them to compete for jobs equally.

(e) To educate white workers about 'race' and in this way increase levels of communication and reduce conflict among black and white workers (p.4).

Such approaches to EOPs in the field of 'race' is clearly all about employment, yet increasingly in local authority service departments generally and SSDs specifically, 'equal opportunities' is used to refer to service delivery issues. Indeed in chapter six I suggested that initiatives designed to enhance the entry or career opportunities of black women (and men) were being eroded as the price to pay for the increased emphasis on service issues. Moreover it is by no means clear that the use of the term 'equal opportunities' for both employment and service delivery is appropriate or helpful. Indeed Young (1987), following Connelly (1985), has suggested that the issue of equality in service delivery is subject to a different rationale altogether.

Notwithstanding this distinction and whilst it may be possible to distil a core list of objectives contained in EOPs, it is possible to discern another ambiguity or confusion. That is, that no distinction is made between EOPs as related to ensuring equality of treatment, and EOPs as related to achieving equality of outcomes. In part this second level of ambiguity or conceptual confusion relates to the interchangeability of names of such policies already mentioned. For this process of substitution indicates that the objectives are not clear in the first place (Jenkin and Solomos, p.7). It is this lack of specification of the objectives of policy that makes it possible for major points of tension and disagreement between constituencies of staff (and elected members) to be masked. Young describes this as 'the space between words'. As he says:

> Discussion of equal opportunity in employment is bedevilled by ambiguities and confusions which typically characterise areas of public policy where a powerful

rhetorical commitment to change exists. In such areas, a shared language may mask multiple and conflicting meanings ... While ambiguities may facilitate agreement at the symbolic level, they preclude clear specification of the ends of policy and so inhibit the proper identification of feasible means for its achievement (1987, p.94).

Thus a situation arises where onto a lack of discussion and agreement about specification and objectives is mapped the confusion between EOPs as being about equal treatment as contrasted to equal outcomes. In practice EOPs have been about procedures and policies aimed at facilitating equality of treatment in claims to public sector employment and for public sector services. In this way they have operated with bureaucratic categories and rules which have been concerned to establish conformity with the behavioural norms which the policy prescribes. This in itself relates to the 'treatment/outcomes' distinction, for as Gibbon (1990) has suggested:

> On the whole EOP development seems plausibly linked to bureaucratisation, and possibly appeals to bureaucratic organisations or branches of organisations because of its formalising qualities. Moreover, the more bureaucratic an organisation is, the more it is arguably likely to pursue implementation seriously. The promotion of equality of outcome, by contrast, requires the suspension or sidelining of bureaucratic norms and procedures within an organisation and (at least temporarily) the elevation of politics to a position of command (p.19, his emphasis).

In this view at least EOPs are suited to bureaucracy, yet at the same time limited in their outcomes by precisely this 'fit'. However if the outcomes are somewhat limited, the establishment of a 'knowledge' or 'truth' about (in)equality (and those who are so affected) has been successfully established as a public sector 'common-sense'. As such

they have been able to construct a set of definable and discrete 'communities' whose equal treatment EOPs are designed to ensure. Such 'communities' are subsumed within and 'known' via their linguistic categorisations. Most often these are 'ethnic minorities', 'women', 'gays and lesbians' and 'people with disabilities'. These categories, and the groups to whom they are said to refer, tend to be constructed as mutually exclusive. Moreover, as Cain and Yuval-Davis (1990, 29) have pointed out in relation to 'race', equal opportunities discourse has tended to conflate categories of 'community', 'culture', 'colour' and 'identity'. Yet it is clear that these terms neither have clearly identifiable referents, nor are they self-contained or internally homogenous. Indeed they have often been used in ways which establish essentialising unities and further a conservative, and sometimes anti-democratic politics (Gilroy, 1987 and 1990). In addition

> Being categorised, or being forced into a situation where one has to categorise oneself in one of the equal opportunities categories, in order to get employment or to compete, has consequences for the individual... (Cain and Yuval-Davis, 1990, p.21)

not least being positioned as one in deficit as measured against an unspecified norm. This norm tends to be 'white' or 'male' or 'heterosexual' or 'able-bodied' - all those normalised categories which act to construct 'others'. Yet this is precisely the 'commonsense' produced by the discourse of EOPs.

In summary then EOPs have tended to take the form of a set of bureaucratic categories and procedures designed to ensure equality of treatment. Whatever the link to outcomes, these procedures and categorisations have acted to position black women (and men) staff and service users in a particular welfare relation. It is this discursive frame which we shall see continuously reiterated in the accounts which follow, suggesting that there is now an EOP 'commonsense' which is hegemonic. Elements of this discourse are to construct black staff (and service users) as in deficit, thereby focusing the problem on the

people themselves rather than the relations which act to marginalise and disadvantage them. Having established the site of the 'problem' in this way, the EOP discourse then organises a set of procedures around the values or notions of 'fairness', 'good practice' etc.

It is here that it is possible to discern a commensurability with the dominant professional discourse of social work. This is so not only because of the echoes within EOPs of dominant social work ideas but also because of the imprecision and ambiguity attached to these ideas. Within traditional social work these received ideas are constitutive of a set of professional values and standards of practice. Rojek, Peacock and Collins (1988) have illustrated what these are by reference to two authoritative texts - the 'Code of Ethics for Social Work' published by the British Association Of Social Workers in 1975, and the 1982 Barclay Report which referred to the future of social work. In both these documents, social work was said to be about client 'self-determination', 'non-judgementalism', 'respect', 'understanding', 'justice', and 'equality' (cited in Rojek, Peacock and Collins, p.6). The established rules and techniques of casework are the means by which these professional values are translated into action in the everyday work with people defined as 'in need', 'at risk', 'inadequate', 'lacking parenting skills', etc. As such then the received wisdom of social work contains within it both a discourse and a set of categories and procedures. It is in this that there is an echo of 'equal opportunities' as a set of bureaucratic techniques and categorisations of groups of people defined as within their orbit of operation. In the 1980s these 'core values' were extended to include a cluster of principles and procedures which formed the basis of 'anti-discriminatory' practice. Such practice was meant to ensure that a range of client groups - 'ethnic minorities', disabled people, women, gays and lesbians - would receive equality of treatment through a reworked process of empowerment. This reworking was itself the result of a recognition within social work of the non-class derived forms of disadvantage and oppression. Methods of assessment and case/care management were then adjusted to ensure

'sensitivity'. The commitment to 'anti-discriminatory' practice was a way of managing the competing demands imposed on social work from 'above' and 'below' which were articulated around the critique of bureau-professional power.

Given this it is not surprising that shifts between these discursive registers is discernible in the managers' accounts considered here. What is of interest is the points at which the values and procedures of EOPs and professional social work are constructed as being undermined, cross-cut or reinforced by the 'new managerialism', which also forms a part of the discursive structure of 'equalities' within local authorities. I therefore want to give some brief consideration to the 'new managerialism' before going on to look at the accounts in detail.

Reorganising Cultures: The New Managerialism and Equalities

In considering the language of new managerialism I am not proposing that this discourse has become the hegemonic form through which equalities issues are spoken as, indeed, is apparent from the accounts which follow. It is however also clear that some of the language of new managerialism has become the frame through which managers articulate the general tasks associated with their jobs in these 'new times' of public service delivery and management. It is the points of tension which arise between the discourse of new managerialism and that of equal opportunities that are highlighted in the accounts which follow.

Four main strands have been identified as standing at the heart of the new managerialism: it must be people-centred; customer-centred; manage organisational culture; and its managers must be visionary (Clarke and Newman, 1993). In a later article, Newman and Clarke (1994) reiterate the points noted by others (e.g. Pollitt, 1990; Hopfl, 1992.) that

(t)he new managerialism is profoundly critical of traditional bureaucratic modes of managerial control which it sees as stifling individual and corporate initiative. In their place it seeks to bridge the motivation gap by vision + purpose + performance through devolved processes. It stresses reduced supervisory control to achieve enhanced integration, moving employee relationships from compliance to commitment. The objective is to work on the cultural or attitudinal dimensions of work experience to produce behavioural congruence for middle managers as well as front-line workers (1994, p.19).

These writers are innovative in that they seek to develop an analysis of the trends, patterns and rhetorics in public sector managerialism which is founded on the combination of two literatures or approaches which are usually separated. That is they seek to combine issues of culture, representation and meaning with those of renewed cycles of capital accumulation, recompositions of labour forces and labour processes and new regimes of control (Clarke and Newman, 1993, p.427).

Our argument is that the new public sector management has been forged out of a complex articulation between changes in the realms of both politics and management. The reshaping of public policy around a new set of ideologies connected with changes which were taking place in the managerial domain in the context of economic reorganisations in the 1970s and 1980s (Newman and Clarke, 1994, p.16).

To politics and economics they add culture, for in their view, one central element in the transformation of public services is that "... the new managerialism had come to take on a greater significance in practical terms as more emphasis came to be placed on the necessity of transforming the 'culture' of public services..." (1994, p.16).

This approach is useful because its analytical purchase is multifaceted. By recognising that a distinction can be made between the rhetoric of the new managerialism and the unevenness of its practical application this approach can highlight the internal tensions and contradictions which may be embedded in the 'new'. At one level there may be a simple mismatch between the rhetoric of valuing people/staff and restricted budgets for training: for example, cutting back the resources available for in-service training whilst requiring staff to become increasingly multi-skilled and 'flexible'. More fundamentally these tensions and contradictions may arise around the introduction of new systems of control aimed at reorienting the attitudes and behaviour of staff (1994, p. 20) and the rhetorical commitment to recognising and valuing diversity and enterprise. In SSDs with relatively large numbers of 'ethnic minority' social workers this tension may translate into an environment where cultural diversity is said to be valued but where the organisational practice and culture transmits the opposite messages, even if in coded form. Thus Newman and Clarke's approach also opens up the possibility for thinking about how 'diversity' and 'difference' may figure in managerial rhetoric and practice and is articulated through the networks of power at play within the organisation.

But 'diversity' and 'difference' are not to be thought of as flat, static or easily grasped categories. Of equal, if not more importance, these categories should not be divorced from power. Rather 'diversity' and 'difference' should be understood as highly relational and contingent categories. They are produced within shifting and contradictory sets of political, social and economic relations in which struggles over meaning and valorisation are embedded, as I indicated in the previous chapter. As a result an approach to managerialism which foregrounds 'culture' can also offer the potential for thinking about managerial rhetoric and practice as constitutive of relations organised around categories of 'diversity' and 'difference'.

In the context of public services generally and local government specifically, notions of 'diversity' and 'difference' are not only symbolically activated on the terrain of the new managerialism. They are also mapped onto a slightly earlier, but overlapping terrain of equal opportunities. In other words the elements which make up the symbolic structure of 'diversity' and 'difference' were drawn from two co-existing and increasingly interlocking discourses: those of the new managerialism and those of equal opportunities.

The elements from the new managerialism are derived from the language of 'vision', 'commitment', 'communication', 'value' etc. These provide the rhetorical flourishes within which the previously disadvantaged and under-valued can be welcomed aboard and recognised. These are then superimposed onto the discursive and bureaucratic space established by equal opportunities perspectives, with their notions of communities, structural (but external) inequalities and positive action. These embody two opposing tendencies and in so doing a tension arises. In managerialist terms, those responsible for implementing EOPs walk a tightrope between redressing the balance of past discriminations external to the organisation and ensuring that staffing policy and practice is 'rational' and unbiased. Since all forms of discrimination are ruled illegal under the Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Acts, positive action is the only form of action possible.

In the terms of the new managerialism, the promotion and implementation of equalities agenda require organisational flexibility and creativity. However, whilst at one level EOPs have been promoted by organisations such as the CRE and EOC on the grounds that they make good organisational and labour market sense (ensuring that prejudice does not prevent the allocation of the 'best person' for any specific job), at another level EOPs have operated with fixed and mutually exclusive categories (Cain and Yuval-Davis, 1990), which is precisely the stuff of bureaucratic management forms which new

managerialism so vilifies and is charged with dismantling. New managerialism's concern with equal opportunities then centres on human resource management. As Gibbon (1990) has remarked:

> EOPs may be said to embody two sorts of assumptions, although these are rarely if ever spelt out by their proponents or even their critics. One set of assumptions lays behind their promotion by organisations such as the CRE and EOC and concerns the economics of discrimination. The second lays behind their promotion by personnel specialists and concerns the economics of 'human resource management'. (p.7).

At the heart of the tension between these two sets of assumptions is the question of politics. That is, to what extent can EOPs retain their origin in the political goals of activists from diverse (and sometimes conflicting) social groups and movements. This is related to the distinction between the drive and desire for 'flexibility' and 'diversity' from 'above' (the politics and imperatives of capital) and from 'below' (the politics and imperatives of marginalised sections of society). What each of these two opposing sets of constituencies aimed for were in sharp antagonism. This in turn is linked to 'equal opportunities' in a complex way because in part its agenda emerged as a result of the increased struggle and power of marginalised groups to redefine the terms of access to the services of the local state. In so doing it met and easily became confused with the 'new managerialist' project of breaking bureau-professional power which was part of the rhetoric of the ideological politics which were prevalent in the 1980s. The irony was that it was precisely the terrain of equal opportunities which formed part of the attack on local government by central government who (along with sections of the print and broadcast media) defined the former as 'loony left'.

In this context the double meaning of 'managing diversity' takes on a particular ambiguity since while it can be understood as providing a managerial environment where diversity is

recognised and can flourish, it can also be read as managing, in the sense of coping with or containing diversity and so reinscribing already existing power relations. Establishing an understanding of the ways in which gender and 'race' are being (re)formed in the changed environment of public sector management is then no easy task. Moreover this has implications for formulating resistance's to a reinscription of power relations which act to circumscribe employment opportunity and 'fix' particular subjects in essentialised categories.

For if the new managerialism has at the centre of its rhetorical concerns values, networking, co-operation, team building, vision and mission, its implications for issues of 'race', gender and other areas of inequality is less clear. In terms of gender, both optimistic and pessimistic readings have been offered. Some writers argue that the correspondence between 'new managerialsms' core approach and 'women's management style' augers well for women's advancement up the organisational chain of command. Others have been more cautious in their readings of the potential opportunities which a shift in managerial style and culture may bring. Their arguments turn on the difference between rhetoric and practice; the overlaying of new organisational cultures onto old ones in which women and 'women's style' are not valued; the existence of internal organisational barriers to women's advancement summed up in the 'glass ceiling' syndrome; and the barriers to women's employment opportunity which exist outside organisational structures summed up in the 'sexual division of labour'. (see for example Cockburn,1991; Itzin,1995).

Useful as these analyses are they have limitations for my purposes. Firstly they often fail to interrogate the essentialised notions which are carried by the terms 'women's management styles' and 'men's management styles'.

The notion of 'women's management style' has been proposed as a by-product of, and antidote to, 'male organisational culture', but this notion also suffers from the limitations of essentialism and inadequate power analysis ... The concept is underpinned by notions of women's and men's essential difference, and has influenced not only analysis, but also much training targeted at women managers (Martin, 1994, p.124).

The problem is that working within the binary 'male/female' forecloses excavation and analysis of the webs of power relations which produce organisations as constitutive sites of gender (and other forms of) inequality. Moreover the essentialism carried by notions of 'women's management style'/'men's management style' are themselves exclusionary - of women who do not fit the stereotypical model, and of men from taking the responsibility to 'move over' and create the possibility for change. To avoid such elisions and foreclosures and ensure that the factors which produce and reproduce relations of power in which 'race' and gender are inscribed:

'Male organisational culture' (should be viewed) ... as neither static, nor a given of organisations, but a product of dynamic, interactive homosocial and sexist discourses and practices that produce institutionalised organisational meanings (ibid., p.122) ... It therefore follows that equality strategies within organisations need fundamentally to address power and how it is exercised, by changing management practices and behaviour; and by developing open and flexible structures for power sharing (ibid., p.124).

Such an approach is necessary for a consideration of the ways in which the introduction of a 'new managerialist' regime may remap the structural and discursive terrain which is constitutive of women's (relative lack of) management opportunities and experiences. Analyses which unproblematically work with the binary 'male/female' offer little by way of

analysing how new or reformulated equalities agenda might be produced and implemented within organisations.

But if organisational culture and management is not essentially 'male' or 'female', but a site constitutive of gender and other subject positions through which power is effected, neither are these organisational cultures and management regimes uniform or homogenous. In an article designed to explore the limits to and possibilities for change in organisations as gendered domains, Newman (1995) has identified three analytically distinct forms of organisational culture. These are 'traditional cultures', based on a mix of administrative and political discourses. 'Competitive cultures' are based on a freeing up of individual ability to be 'tough' and enterprising and where formal equality is tested through the ability to 'take the heat' and deliver in the new bureaucracy free zones. Finally, there are 'transformational cultures', based on "principles of culture, style, leadership, vision and empowerment" (p.196) or the new managerialist features outlined earlier.

These different forms do not correspond to a temporal demarcation of organisational styles and practices but rather intersect and overlay one another. They share temporal space but nevertheless mark

> management as a changing set of discourses and practices which involve shifting
> relationships of power, and which offer different kinds of organisational and
> individual identities (Newman, 1995, p.182).

By laying the analytical ground in this way Newman is able to assess the possibilities offered by 'new managerialist' regimes for changing gender relations within public sector organisations. Most important for my purposes is her stress on the fact that changing forms of managerialism and the accompanying shifting relations of power also construct new subject positions and identities. However to recognise this is not to deny or understate the enduring nature of the categories through which differentiation is organised

257

and power effected. Thus categories such as gender, 'race', class are 'always already present' and what requires analysis is how these become reconfigured and reinscribed in changing organisational regimes and cultures. Such reconfiguration and reinscription occurs both through the formal or explicit rules, policies and procedures of organisations and through the everyday practices and languages which construct and articulate meanings. Organisational subject positions and identities are produced within this cauldron and it is to this last aspect that I direct my attention in the analysis of managers' accounts of issues affecting black women social workers in the teams for which they are responsible.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis is drawn from managers' replies to a range of questions about training and career development opportunities; departmental equal opportunities policy; and changes over the previous ten years and since the introduction of the Children and NHS and Community Care Acts. (See appendix three for details of the aide memoir used for this subset.) In each area I examine extracts for the ways in which questions of 'race' and/or ethnicity enters the accounts. Numbers are given after each extract to enable the reader to identify the manager speaking. The 'race', ethnicity, gender and division of these of these is given in table 1. As with previous chapters the category 'ethnicity' is used in accordance with equal opportunities categories. The question being responded to is given in abbreviated form inside square brackets at the beginning of the extract. Extracts are in italics and each is sequentially numbered at the beginning of the quote and it is this number which is referred to in the discussions which follow. Where ... appears in an extract it indicates either that a word or two has been omitted to ensure anonymity, or that it has been shortened, however where possible this has been avoided. On occasion the form in which the answer to an issue came demanded further prompting questions to

get a full response. Where this is the case the full sequence of questions and replies has been included as a single extract.

TABLE ONE

'Race', Ethnicity, Gender and Division of Area Manager

	'Race'	Ethnicity	Gender	Division
1.	Black	African-Caribbean	Female	Children and Families
2.	Black	African-Caribbean	Female	Community Care
3.	Black	South Asian	Female	Children and Families
4.	Black	African-Caribbean	Female	Community Care
5.	White	English	Female	Children and Families
6.	White	English	Female	Community Care
7.	White	English	Male	Community Care
8.	White	English	Male	Children and Families

<u>Recruitment and Training</u>

Analysis of Social Services Committee Papers over a 10 - 12 year period revealed an early emphasis on providing entry routes into professional qualification and subsequent employment in the two SSDs. Once the innovative schemes had been implemented and relatively effective in meeting their aims, the focus shifted to other less vocational forms of training and non-qualified posts. The training offered often centred on awareness and assertiveness, or other types of equal opportunities attitudinal and behavioural issues, whilst career development and progression was mentioned but not subject to systematic and sustained policy development and resourcing. This was an issue for black women in SSDs as is evident from the Birmingham 'Black Women's Training and Development Forum', and indeed from some of the accounts cited in chapter six. Within actual SSD offices then issues of recruitment, training and career development continued to be a central concern for black women. To the extent that some pathways to these continued to exist within the two Departments it is clear that support from Area Managers was often key if they were to be successfully accessed. Here I want to consider to what extent and how these issues were constructed in the accounts of Area Managers.

1. [Describe your experience of Departmental restructuring] *There was one in 1987 I think, I'm not too sure, but from that time we had a more organised Home Care Service where we actually looked at writing criteria for assessments ... and of course there was active recruitment around actually recruiting people from the black and ethnic minorities in order to try and make services more sensitive to the needs of black elders.*(4)

2. [And how have black elders fared since the changes in the legislation - i.e. NHS and Community Care Act] *... looking from this particular office, Asian Home Care Assistants, numbers, I think it's only two, out of say ... a guess of 175 to 200 Home Care Assistants.*

You might have 30 Afro-Caribbean and 2 Asian, so it's still very low. So there's obviously a need for some sort of targeting to improve figures. (4)

3. [Is there an EOP or EMRK policy in the Department] *We've increased the, um, the number of er, black and ethnic minority staff in the Home Care Team to 20% but obviously that doesn't reflect the population which is 49% black and minority ethnic origin (i.e. in that ward). Also, particularly we're very under-represented with Asian staff, and what we're saying is that it really wasn't possible to provide a service to users in their first language ... like the Home Care Team at ... employs only 10 black minority ethnic staff out of a 160, right, although recently ... we've recruited many more ... so it's improved.* (6)

4. [How can the Department ensure that the qualities black women social workers can offer come on stream] *Well there are a number of ways, one is that you could make a policy decision, that you had to get more black workers in post, and you were going to be much more up front about that. Inevitably we use Section 38b ... you know it is slapped on the bottom of recruitment and it has become fairly meaningless, I think you would have to be much more up front about it. It is a personnel policy issue, and you would have to be clear we want more black workers, because we have many, many more black clients and we think that black workers have something special to offer. We haven't said that you see, so we would have to be clear about that. If you were going to do that you would also have to be very clear about how you were going to enhance these particular skills, what supports you are going to offer and so on, so that would be one way of addressing it.* (5)

5. [How does the EOP work in terms of employment] *We always inform the Equalities Officers of any recruitment that's going on and some is of more interest to them than others in these particular areas where there's an under-representation. So they would*

probably be more interested in sitting in on panels and we would probably be more interested in getting them to sit in on panels where we knew there was an under-representation. (7)

I begin by analysing these sequences in terms of their references to issues which were foregrounded in the Committee Papers which I examined. Then I want to think about what gets spoken, by whom and how, in order to see if any pattern is discernible and to elicit the constitutive processes of 'race' at work.

The first thing to note is that the issues of recruitment and training were raised by the speakers in relation to a range of questions. For some it arose as a direct response to questions about equal opportunities, displaying a kind of public sector 'common sense' about equality of employment opportunity. For others it is linked to the effects of restructuring or the measures for ensuring maximisation of black women social workers strengths. Apart from the speaker in extract four, all speakers reference policy changes or procedures and so there is an implicit foregrounding of the bureaucratic aspects of EOPs. This is particularly striking in the tone and brevity of the extract taken from the white man (extract five). The key point of connection to the Committee Papers is the link between employing black staff in the Department and serving a 'multi-cultural' population. As such there is a reiteration of the discourse which constructs an homogenising unity between black social workers and black service users. This masks but reproduces a switch in emphasis from equal opportunities as an **employment** strategy in its own right, to equal opportunities as a **service** delivery strategy which was evident in the Committee Papers.

Having established this as the discursive terrain extracts two and three point out the limited success of these policies in relation to ward population profiles and staff of South Asian descent. This is then linked to likely effects on quality of service provision, either

262

directly (in three) or implied by a cross-reading of extract one against extract two *("to try and make services more sensitive"* compared to *"so there's obviously a need for some sort of targeting to improve figures")*. Indeed under-representation is a feature at play in these accounts and this is raised directly in five, where the speaker also suggests that where resources are limited some sort of prioritisation in the implementation of EOPs occurs. Extract four reiterates some of these points but introduces a slightly different discursive terrain toward the end. It does foreground policy and procedure, (including Race Relations legislation) and links the idea of policy development and commitment to it, to the existence of black service users and the particular contribution black workers might offer as a result. In other words the speaker deploys the language and 'commonsense' we saw earlier in the Committee papers but does so in a very cynical tone. For example, *"you know it is slapped on the bottom of recruitment"* ... *"fairly meaningless"* and *"we haven't said that you see".* This is spoken by a white woman and it is clear that her account is constructed around a deficit model of EOPs aimed at black staff - *"you would also have to be very clear about how you were going to **enhance** these particular skills, what **supports** you were going to offer and so on".* It is the staff themselves who are identified as the object in need of change, development or support, and not the dynamics of the organisation. Moreover it must be remembered that she raises these points in connection with the qualities black women social workers might offer the department and it is in the slippage from this original focus to that of the supports such women would require that it is possible to detect the discursive shift.

Career progression

6. [What about opportunities for career progression] *But can I just say very quickly that the sad thing about social work and career progression is that the only way that you progress is through management, and I think that it is a very unfair way of discrimination against the actual practice itself.* (3)

7. [What about opportunities for career progression] *Obviously it's something that Departmentally is being tried, to encourage black, er, people to apply for management jobs, in particular team manager and above and also, as I said, something that we're looking at locally, we wanted to actually see where people were grade wise. For example, one of my things, cos within residential homes, its difficult to attract black people to certain of our homes because people don't want to travel, now if our homes are in mainly white areas then it's quite difficult to get people to come ... so one of my things is to say well OK but they'll be attracted to managers posts and if you get black people into positions of power, like managers in those areas then that opens it up a bit as well. (6)*

8. a. [What about opportunities for career progression] *We currently employ on a seconded basis, social workers, but as a local decision we have afforded social worker assistants, the training and development opportunity to participate in our access service.*

b. [and are there many black women in that team who would then potentially benefit from career development opportunities] *Yes, yes I have afforded that opportunity to our development workers as well as social work assistants, em, and it is dependent on the staff concerned as to whether they want to contribute, I made a decision not to compel them ... this would also strengthen our application for social work training etc.*

c. [So what? Does the Department as a whole offer secondment for social work training these days?] *It varies*

d. [could you explain?] *well, it depends really on a number of factors, there is a trainee programme ... and that will reflect what we might call Departmental priority groups which would reflect under-representation of black men and women as well as people with disability, so yes there is shall we say some positive action.*

e. [and if somebody were able to access that would it be for a full time DipSW course or what?] *As a rule, and there are one or two exceptions, the successful candidate, and it would be through interview and performance, would be offered, subject to there being a place at a college, a two year secondment.*

f. [so with tighter budgets there are still secondments?] *There are secondments this year, it's likely my development staff will have the opportunity to undertake social work training. But you will appreciate that they may be an identified priority group, and that other groups may not be so successful ... The scale of this secondment training programme has lessened and diminished over the last ten years.* (8)

9. [So how has the increase in delegated authority and responsibility as you put it, impacted on black women] *There is an area that concerns me that I think needs to be more openly on the agenda, and people need to feel free to speak about it, and I don't sense they are, and this is there is this tremendous push in ... to get women and black women into management positions, and I think that sometimes that black women are not being allowed to move up this management ladder at a pace that suits them, and are being pushed up before they are ready and could get into a position of being set up to fail, and I just think that this needs to go openly onto the agenda. I am not saying that there are not other ways that people move up the ladder before they are ready, I mean white men move up the ladder before they are ready because people you know, whatever the push to get black women into management actually take white men into management for all sorts of reasons, so they move up before they are ready too, and white women move up before they are ready, but in terms of black women I think that is having an impact I would say and I don't think it's sufficiently on the agenda ... [of senior management] yes, but what isn't open for discussion, it seems is that this may be putting unreasonable pressures on*

black women to move up the system when either they want to carry on doing what they want to be doing, or to move up before they feel ready to do so, and asking them to move up into a climate where they feel, and I know from some of my black colleagues, where they will be expected to demonstrate they are better than, and can't afford to make mistakes and are not adequately supported. (5)

In this sequence of accounts we can see the issue of management placed squarely on the agenda by all but one speaker (extract eight) but the way in which 'management' is spoken varies. Extract six, spoken by a black woman (south Asian), focuses on the inequality which she sees as deriving from the professional/managerial divide. The inequality is both in terms of black women social workers themselves and the wider effects on social work as a profession. This speaker then appears to be talking from her own subjectivity and identity as a black woman member of a **profession** which she sees as under attack in the current managerial environment. This is in contrast to the first white woman who speaks (extract seven). She focuses again on the problem of recruitment - this time of black women to managerial posts in residential homes - and suggests ways of using the procedures to overcome this. Thus this black woman and white woman fix on very different points within the general area of career progression, with the former placing the lack of opportunity for black women within the general value system now operating in SSDs as a result of the shifts in public service and the latter, focusing on more bureaucratic issues. In terms of the issue of 'race' and racism the sense of an 'insider' and 'outsider' perspective is striking.

The move away from a sense of closeness to the issues is even starker when we listen to the language and note the focus adopted by the white male manager here (extract eight). The language is very formalistic and the interpretation of the question is in terms of the entry of currently employed black women into basic grade qualified social work. The

discussion is carried out on the well established terrain of under-representation (but only at the lower levels) but whilst simultaneously foregrounding the issue of limited resources. The effect of resource limitation is that it is necessary to recognise both that there must be prioritisation while there is still some secondment and secondly that this could end at any time. It is here that we can see the primacy given to a notion of management as resource management, realism and a kind of calm bureaucratic detachment. This is mapped onto an interpretation of equal opportunities for black women being seen as centring on access to the lowest rungs of the profession.

The last speaker (extract nine) is the same manager who mobilised a deficit model of equal opportunities in the previous section and indeed she does so again here. Here it is perhaps more nuanced or subtle, pivoting around the "real" issue of being "set up to fail" that black women face. Indeed she uses a commonplace practice of claiming a legitimacy for her views by suggesting that they are derived from what black people have told her (*"I know from some of my black colleagues"*). But having said this, her mobilisation of discourses in which black women are identified as the deficient factor is nevertheless clear. *"I think that sometimes that black women are not being allowed to move up this management ladder at a pace that suits them"*. This in a department where there is no black woman (or man) higher than the third tier of the management structure so that the implication is that team manager level is somehow the structural level commensurate with black women's "pace" and (suit)ability. It is clear that there is some attempt to dilute this inference by reference to white men and white women, but it is precisely this attempt at qualification which serves to emphasise her general construction of black women as inadequate to the tasks of management for it is here *"that it is having an impact"*. As such it indicates an ambivalence to the issue of equal opportunity on the grounds of 'race'.

Restructuring, managerialism, service

10. [Have the recent restructurings had any racially skewed effects] *Yes, it just concerns*
me the direction in which social work is going, and you know you have to be a budget
holder and you have to have a knowledge of accountancy, because in the future if it
continues down this path it will discourage a lot of people, particularly women,
particularly black women from moving into management ... because for a start you have
only recently a lot of black women coming into departments such as this, they are not
going to have had the experience of having dealt with budgets and performing with
finance and that kind of thing, and if that is a criteria for getting a job, or a higher job,
then you have just about had it, and that is true for everyone. For black people they have
only just come in the last 5 years and they are not going to be exposed to that kind of
thing (3)

11. a. [What has been the impact of the restructurings] *In 1985 when I actually started*
in ... I was ... the first black Home Care Organiser, at that time it was called the Home
Help Service, which was basically a domestic support service, um it was really assessing
services and not needs. It was very very much around whether we were gonna give this
person once a week or twice a week, it wasn't really around whether they have particular
needs. You know I felt that assessment wasn't really always appropriate sort of, er,
sometimes it wasn't even necessary. (pause) I think coming from the Health Authority
background, where we used to assess according to needs, I actually found the difference
very, it was very very stark that you could actually, um, (voice drops inaudibly) people
without doing assessments ... They've asked so let's give them a day a week, that's how it
was. And it was also, and also, um, I would say oppressive, when you come to say, a
black users, it was like it wasn't recognised that we had to be working towards providing

services for black, em, black users and ethnic minorities. It was very, very much, you know a white users service. And the staffing, like I say was all white and I mean for me as a black person, it was the typical assumption that white people could provide services for, em, everybody ... and actually I would say in those days, the staff actually colluded a lot with racism, because they would actually write on the Home Care Card "not West Indians" or "not whatever" if the user didn't want that particular person ... and they'd actually colluded with racism.

b. [so if that's so how have black elders fared since the change from service led to needs led assessment] *I would actually say, maybe they haven't fared much better than, looking back, they haven't fared any better than the way it was when it was service led, um, we do have more black people now receiving services from us but it's not a high percentage. The Asian users are even less than the Afro-Caribbean ... yet in this neighbourhood we have a high percentage of Asian people living in the community.* (4)

12. [What have been the effects on black women's employment and career prospects of the move to specialisation? Could it be that it will just produce a clustering of black women on the lower status side?] *Yes, (pause) it's whether previously they've had opportunities to progress anyway, I think, em, I mean part of me would say that specialisation enables people, because I mean there have been changes generally, for a start you could only be a social worker if you were CQSW and then it was accepted that CSS was a change and that actually released an awful lot of people in residential work to enable them to come into fieldwork, which again was seen as the elite, so (pause) and also, em, I mean I think, certainly you do see that, yeah there are more black women in particular in residential day care work, but you are also now seeing those people progress into managers posts in those sorts of areas as well ... yes, if you've got those clusters, yes I can see that it obviously could reproduce it and certainly, but that's what I'm saying, I*

expect that people will feel the same as I do, that how constrained am I now in Elderly

Services, to go on to do other things in different bits and pieces, erm, so yes I do think

that's a generalism ... because for some people I think it's been really good that they've

split up because they see that there are more opportunities for them to progress within

one strand, because their skills will be valued in that strand then they have greater

potential to progress up in that strand than they would have done previously when there

were more wider responsibilities attached to it. (6)

13. [How has the delegation of authority and responsibility impacted on black women
social workers?]

Well I suppose I would look at it from the other way actually, I would look at it from, em,

the bottom up I would say, the majority of the time, I mean many of the service users that

we work with ... are black and are women and black women carers of their children.

Having had more authority and responsibility, more control over budgets has meant that,

em, all workers, field workers whatever their ethnicity, their gender, are able to offer a

better service to the bulk of service users, and I would say that has massive impact, if you

can work much more effectively in partnership with all clients, but particularly, if we are

talking about black women, with black women who are carers of children, then you are

going to feel differently if you are a black woman worker, about how valuable the service

is that you are providing. I would say, I would say, this is my sense of it, that you would

have more of a sense of doing a good job, a valuable job, which will hopefully make you

feel that because I am providing a better service it is worth me trying to have a hand in

the direction of how services are developing, so it is going to give me more say in how

people who live here lives are affected. So social work is a good job to be in, an

important thing to be in. (5) [NB: this said immediately prior to her comment about black
women progressing too fast].

Extracts ten and eleven are interesting for the differences of opinion between the two black women speakers and the apparent contradiction between sequence a and b in eleven. The speaker in ten continues with her concern about the potentially racially gendered effects of new managerialism on black women social workers. The increased focus and new demands associated with the rise of a new managerial focus automatically disqualify many black women because they have only relatively recently entered the profession. Black women social workers will be disadvantaged by the whirlpool opened up by the confluence of a devalorised professionalism and highly valued managerialism. In contrast, the second black woman speaker uses the rhetoric of needs led assessment to critique previous practice which she clearly identifies as racist. In so doing she draws on a form of 'new managerialist' discourse as it is articulated in the context of reorganised social services. The implication is that 'needs assessment' has the potential of being more 'culturally appropriate or sensitive' and she tends to reiterate much of the language which suggests that equality is achieved through the production and delivery of quality. What is particularly striking however is the apparent contradiction between the mobilisation of this discourse here and her subsequent observation that in **practice** there has been no real change in relation to black service users. In part some of this contradiction can be explained by thinking about what it is she is trying to achieve in the two extracts. In the former it is clear that she is attempting to establish a critique of both an ideological position and a common practice. The ideological critique is concerned to dislodge the idea that white people are universally and unproblematically suited to all service users whatever their ethnicity. The critique of practice centres on the ways in which the racism of some white service users was pandered to. In contrast, extract b concerns her assessment of the actual impact of recent changes on black service users. Having said this, it is noticeable that the move between a and b is achieved by switching discursive registers and in the first it is clear that she is working within the newly formulated professional discourse in which 'diversity' is rhetorically foregrounded.

The speaker in extract twelve offers a complex consideration of the effects of restructuring and the associated return to specialisation in social work. She focuses her argument on the general effects of the change, suggesting that these affect everybody. But she does point to contradictory processes. For example she argues that earlier shifts in the recognition of qualifications led to increased access opportunities for those in lower status sections of social work and related occupations - such as residential care. This could enable a reading of the recent split between children and families work and community care work in a similar way. That is, the emergence of two parallel tracks may also result in an increase in opportunities for progression into management in community care and adult services. Certainly service areas are more tightly bounded but the effect of this may be to restrict horizontal movement as opposed to vertical movement. And this is a restriction that affects everybody regardless of 'race', ethnicity or gender. However she does recognise that there may be a contradictory effect of the move back to specialisation. This will arise to the extent that there are pre-existing clusters of black women in lower status areas, since then the restriction on horizontal movement may act to reproduce racialised gender effects in employment opportunity. Given her recognition that there is no simple or clear indication of how the recent changes will reconstitute (racial and gender) exclusionary effects in social work employment it is particularly noticeable that she ends her consideration of these issues by recourse to a racialising discourse. Thus she moves onto a terrain which constitutes black women as lacking or deficient. This is subtle but she says "...*because their skills will be valued in that strand then they have greater potential to progress up in that strand than they would have done previously when there were more **wider responsibilities** attached to it"*. In so doing she unquestioningly sets up a correspondence between black women and a narrow range of responsibilities. Of course it is not clear if she is just restating a commonly held position or actually arguing that this is beneficial. However her lack of a fuller elaboration or questioning means that the racialising effect remains.

Extract thirteen was spoken by the same white woman who commented about black women progressing too fast (extract nine). This extract arises in the context of a description of the changes to SSD organisational arrangements and the implementation of some aspects of the new managerialism. What immediately strikes (given the 'too fast' comments) is the implication that black women's most effective place is in the fieldwork grades of social work rather than higher up the organisational scale. The assumed empathy between black women social workers and black women service users is used to posit a level of job satisfaction and valorisation. In so doing she fixes black women into a unitary and homogenising category. The juxtapositioning of the two extracts implies that there are limits to managerial responsibilities - i.e. only at basic level - and this restriction brings a discursive proximity between her and the end of the last account. In other words there is an invocation of the language of client centredness, empathy, value etc. - in a way which serves to assign black women to a specific location in the organisational hierarchy.

Equal Opportunities

15. [Does the Department have an EOP and how does it work in this office?] *Well, we have a very glossy equal opportunities policy document, but in terms of people reading the document, and I don't think many people do, em, because the document is specifically considered to be to do with what central departments do and is considered like a political tool rather than an everyday tool that social workers would use in the jobs in the sense that it is looked at as a selection policy and equal opportunities training and in terms of services, but it is never looked at as an overall area of responsibility for everyone. I mean I have my reservations about equal opportunities policy as well, in the sense that I think the policy has achieved its purpose, if you like, and I think we should be going to the root of the legislation, the policy is dictated to by the legislation ... on sexual discrimination and race, and well a bit about the chronically sick and disabled people, but*

there is no specific legislation for disabled people, ... because those are the ... most important aspects of the policy, and they need to be dictating the policy ... whereas what happens is the policy is seen as being separate, and equal means equality to everyone, including white people and I fundamentally disagree with that because that then defeats the object of the exercise, because I think that people are not equal, and not being treated equally and therefore the policy loses its momentum because it is actually saying everyone is equal, I disagree with that ... to an extent I think I am so cynical about it and I don't push it with the staff here, what I do push here is the legislation and take people to the root of the legislation ... There is also an expectation in this Department to increase the percentage of our black employees, disabled and women employees and I do believe that that is important in terms of the legislation ... but ... I think also what it doesn't recognise is the fact that there has been a lot that has been achieved, and there is no room there to actually say you are moving on to another stage ... I mean there are certain things that just can't happen overnight, like we struggled a few years ago to actually get blacks into social work, now we have got them here, not as many as we would like, because when you talk to trainers and universities, they will say it is not a profession that attracts a lot of people, particularly black people who are looking at other things in their professional development, plus the fact that it is a very small community, the black community, I mean there is an assumption that we are taking over the world ... and how many more black workers can you get, there are going to be 10% that are going to come into social work, 40% are going to be doctors or whatever and some who want to go into designing and artwork etc. so in terms of percentage there may not be what the Department wants in addressing all black needs, and having a complete mirror image of the community, because you won't get that. (3)

16. [So do you think the EOP actually disadvantages black and minority ethnic people?] *I think the policy is very good. The language and the wording is very good and very useful.*

It's people's, you know, interpretation, they don't understand what equal opp. means. I think we all interpret the policy according to our own needs, how it suits us at the time, you know, I think its really around that there is no common interpretation of what equal opp. is about. You speak to two people and you get two different perceptions. That's what I mean, it's not the policy, the policy doesn't disadvantage people if the policy is actually applied, some actually apply it very rigidly, not actually realising that the policy is there, it's a working document and you have to apply it according to the situation ... so it's actually people's perception of "we have to be treated the same otherwise it's not equal opp.". It's actually recognising that we need to be a bit more flexibility and recognise people as individuals. (4)

What is immediately noticeable here is the cynicism with which the speaker in extract fifteen opens up. She immediately references the lack of a sense of ownership of EOPs on the part of many staff, suggesting that it is seen as something to do with the higher levels within the SSD structure. As a result such policies have limited efficacy and are not seen as tools for everyday use in the workplace. This would suggest that for this participant at least, the organisation has failed to communicate the equality missions and values which the policy seeks to promote. Instead she seems to be confirming Gibbons' observation (1990) that

> ... there appears to be little or no relation between possession of even a developed and implemented EOP ... and stimulating change in employment outcomes. ... Where the latter had occurred to the advantage of black people, this was driven by political decisions within organisations to prioritise the equalisation of outcomes, often in conscious distinction to 'being fair to everybody'. The meaning of positive action for employers who took these decisions was not as a supplement to 'being fair to everybody', but as a set of techniques enabling organisations which had

275

decided to employ disadvantaged groups in greater numbers to conform to the
letter of the law. (p.19)

This account and Gibbon's research finding suggests that the use of bureaucratic
techniques does not automatically lead to change in outcomes. Rather the key factor
appears to be politics. Thus a distinction needs to be made between EOPs as a set of
techniques linked to political power and purpose, and such techniques as linked to
professional power and purpose.

A link between equal opportunity policy and the relevant legislation is also made in the
continuation of this account, only here she suggests that rather than use EOPs to ensure
absolute legality, the former should be sidestepped so that the focus can be on the law
itself. Moreover, she suggests that this will also ensure that anti-discriminatory practice
will be targeted at those who are excluded by organisational and structural factors
(*"whereas what happens is ... equal means equality to everyone, including white people
and I fundamentally disagree with that ... because I think people are not equal, and not
being treated equally and therefore the policy loses its momentum"*). For this speaker
then, EOPs need to be dynamic and reflect the changes which occur and adapt accordingly.
In adopting this focus the participant raises two important issues. Firstly, she suggests
that perhaps the issue of getting black people into social work is no longer the pressing
one and that perhaps professional development is now the main issue. But secondly she
also suggests that the pool of potential social work recruits from the black communities is
now limited because of the multifarious aspirations to be found there. In this way she
constructs a much more complex and heterogeneous set of black populations than is the
case in the majority of social work recruitment literature, assumed by equal opportunities
categories, or indeed contained in many of these accounts.

The next speaker, another black woman, reiterates some of the points raised in extract fifteen but without the cynical edge. For example she picks up the idea of EOPs as enabling documents, rather than ends in themselves, and also suggests that the aims and objectives of the policy have not become an organisational 'commonsense', this she relates to a rigid, bureaucratic application. Noticeably the woman here also raises a disagreement with an interpretation of the policy as being about treating everybody the same, and this reiteration raises a question about whether there is a more general concern on the part of black people within the SSD about the overall interpretation of the policy. Whatever, it certainly reflects the ambiguities associated with EOPs noted at the beginning of this chapter. In what follows the focus shifts.

17. [How does the EOP work in this office and what are the managerial responsibilities around it?] *Well, I would say, you know that the Area Manager has a duty to maximise the potential of the staff that you manage, and that is very straightforward, em, you have to look at what you have got in terms of staff resources and aim to constantly improve and expand that. And at the same time you have to be prepared to be very clear about what is not good enough and take steps to change that, em, at all levels and em, issues of race and gender should have no impact on the latter part of it, dealing with what is not good enough at all, and certainly I would say that I would hold hard to that policy, at the same time that has to be set in a context, as you know, me as the white manager viewing black people differently, I cannot do otherwise, it is the society I live in, and the way I have been socialised ... so I have to make a constant mental adjustment in my own head about if I think something isn't good enough. Is that something to do with, you know, my stereotype view of black people of being less good, less capable, less reliable, all the rest of it, and I have to make the same adjustments about am I overestimating the success of something that a black person does, because I want it to be that way. And so there are all these kind of things going on in your head, all the time.* (5)

18.a. [What changes would you say have occurred over the last ten years?] *Well I think the last ten years would see an acknowledgement of multi-culturalism, and for the first time the conceptualisation of what that means in terms of equal opportunities, and an acknowledgement that there is discrimination and prejudices and there are social prejudices and that they occur on an inter-personal level but more profoundly institutionally.*

b. [and how does the EOP work in this office?] *In respect of users or staff?* [both] *Both. I think obviously the knowledge of the ethnic origin of our staff is comparatively straightforward, the challenge is in determining that of our users. The Department has now implemented a system of monitoring, of ethnic recording, em, and I actually implement that quite strongly, which has improved over the last year, but we have encountered administrative difficulties with that process, but from being one of the poorer offices in ethnic monitoring, we are currently second best, and about, if my staff are correct, to move into first position. It has been useful to look at it, approach it on a competitive basis, but the target is 100%, and we are currently running at 73%. The difficulties have arisen, shall we say in inputting our data into our new technology. We are having a problem, and anticipate a very much improved rate of ethnic monitoring. So we are actually getting stuck on the details of the process, but I suppose I am emphasising to you that without that information we are not able to evaluate who is and who are not receiving our services. The information that I do have, and you do have a copy of it here, suggests that certain groups are significantly under-represented. We are, in our local unit race action plans, looking at how to address that.*

c. [And what other obstacles, apart from the new technology, are preventing pursuance of equal opportunities?] *We are talking more generally now, I have given an example of*

ethnic monitoring, which is a fundamental first step. I don't know whether the obstacles
are initially as they might appear because the local race action plan has been received
extremely positively by both black and white staff. I suppose the obstacle is having
someone provide a structure and conceptualisation and a framework to achieve certain
action points in a manageable and meaningful way. I think one of the problems has been
in the past, is that the race action planning has tended to be in terms of philosophy, and
value, and global and the actual hard thinking about sequential action points that are
actually very modest, this hasn't always been present. This action plan which emerged
through some quite important dialogue and consultative processes, is in many ways
modest, but it enjoys the support of all units, and we all have a role to play in
implementing it. Then if we can achieve it, in the course of the next year, the view is
that we can obviously be more ambitious. But we are actually setting ourselves important
but achievable objectives, so I suppose managerially there is an issue of process, about
actually taking and consolidating certain steps ... In a word we have got rid of slogans, and
the test of action plan will be in a years time, and it will be achieved with clear action
points ... and ... it is right that we should set ourselves objectives and measure our
performance against them. In this instance it relates to provide equal opportunities
services and addressing the needs of black users and black staff. (8)

The first white speaker (extract 17) shifts the ground quite profoundly by immediately
foregrounding a discourse of HRM where technique, vision, maximisation of resources is
key with 'extraneous' issues having no part to play. At times it is as if she is suggesting
a return to some kind of 'colour-blind' approach which was characteristic of public sector
organisations in the 1960s and 1970s. This however is mapped on to a kind of 'racism
awareness' (RAT) consciousness in which the racism of white people is seen as
inevitable. Such an understanding about the socialisation of white people leads, she
suggests, to the necessity to make mental adjustments so that good human resource

management practice ensues and black staff are not automatically judged differentially - i.e. either to their disadvantage or indeed advantage. In this sense she seems to be arguing for exactly the kind of equality of treatment which the previous two black women speakers argued against. Some of this RAT discourse is reproduced in extract 18a, albeit formulated more in terms of personal prejudice plus institutional racism, and indeed such a formulation was the dominant one in RAT. However the speaker here is keen to suggest that now there is a closer link between the rhetoric of multiculturalism and its practical implications for equal opportunities. Despite having begun in this way, as the conversation continues, the speaker shifts the focus away from "conceptualisation" and towards procedures and the success of ethnic monitoring, though heavily focused on 'service users'. In this sense he returns to the terrain of bureaucratic categories and procedures. These are factors by which evaluation is made and as such he utilises a language which has echoes of both the bureaucratic emphasis of much equal opportunities policy and the new managerial emphasis on outcomes. Having made this shift from approval a more precise conceptualisation, he then uses the newly established terrain to critique prevailing conceptualisations of race equality as too abstract and divorced from issues of implementation. This contradictory move is the way in which he can come to emphasise the need for 'hard' action points if equality outcomes in service delivery are to be monitored. In some sense this links to Newman's point that one form of articulation between new managerialism and more consciously political equality agenda might be constructed around a focus on outcomes, goals and performance targets.

> Organisations can move from a policy agenda oriented towards 'how things should be done' (for example, the procedural basis of recruitment policies) to an agenda which sets out what should be achieved (1994, p.204).

In fact there is a big divide between the approach Newman argues for and that embedded in these accounts. For example the speaker in extract eighteen does not allow any space for the role of organisational culture as either an inhibiting or enabling force in the pursuit

of equalities agenda in social services departments. Instead he concentrates on the terrain of bureaucratic categories and procedures albeit in their new form which has accompanied the reorganisation of SSDs. The result is that 'diversity' (or 'multiculturalism') is divorced from power and ethnic or racial 'difference' is understood as residing in fixed and essentialised subjects who diverge from a white norm.

The end of these accounts take us back then to the question of how 'race' is constructed in this 'managerial speak'. I want now then to give some brief consideration of this by way of concluding the chapter.

Concluding section

Clarke (forthcoming) has argued that the break up of the various 'settlements' encompassed by the Beveridge welfare reforms was in part:

> ... driven by the movements which insisted that forms of inequality that had previously been consigned to the status 'extra-social' (for example, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability) were, in fact, social phenomena and required social reparation. Welfare policy and practice was unevenly coopted by such 'socialising' analyses and demands (for example, in commitments to "anti-discriminatory practice" and equal opportunities policies). Becoming businesslike was expected to restrain this socialising tendency towards "ologies and isms" that was visible in the old welfare state. Managerialised dispersal may have changed some of the conditions in which such issues now appear (subjecting them to the requirements of business planning, market positioning and fiscal rectitude). It may also have produced a new dominant form of constructing the relationship between welfare services and social differentiation as one of 'managed diversity'.

In this context I would argue that these accounts point to the emergence of a stark and structuring tension between two approaches to the management of service delivery to socially differentiated client populations. On the one hand, the approach carried by a discourse of equal opportunities tended to predispose managers in SSDs towards an understanding of their task as one involved in ensuring that departmental practice was oriented toward eroding socially caused inequalities. This placed SSDs as significant local institutions for the promotion of equality of opportunity in both employment and service delivery. Certainly groups who were socially disadvantaged and discriminated against were conceptualised in essentialist terms, (especially in relation to 'race'/ethnicity), but the internal tensions in equal opportunities discourse (discussed earlier)were present precisely because the issues which they were a response to had been placed on the agenda by marginalised groups who emphasised the sociality of their condition.

In contrast, the discourse of new managerialism constructs the problem of managing 'diversity'[20] as one of the market. Premised on the notion of the 'customer', what SSDs, through their structures and managerial corps, need to get right is a system of service delivery organised along business lines. As I argued in the discussion of the two authorities' committee reports in this way the market is envisaged as free to act as an equalising force. The departmental 'product', i.e. its services, is 'custom made' in the form of needs assessment and the resultant care package. (What happens in this approach to those coercive 'services' associated with SSDs is not addressed.) In this way 'diversity', resulting from gender, ethnicity or other axes of social differentiation, is catered for in an efficient (and tax-payer friendly) way.

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[20]I place the term diversity in inverted commas because I would argue that in the context of new managerialism it is divested of a link to socially structured power differentials. For this reason I prefer the term 'difference', which because it is a relational term carries with it a notion of power. I do however accept that its use in certain versions of poststructuralist theory would want to suggest an endless play of difference thereby suggesting that all lines of demarcation are socially and discursively equivalent.

Clearly these two approaches to issues of (in)equality stand in opposition to one another. What is equally clear from the above accounts is that 'managerialism' also denies managers a language through which to address issues of social inequality. As a mode of organising and constraining managers' ability to act on their own initiative in response to issues of inequality (and indeed all aspects of the delivery of welfare services) 'managerialism' may well have achieved the project which Clarke identified. But to say this is not the same as suggesting that the issues have disappeared or that managers are no longer charged with developing means to deal with them. In this context they must find a language through which to both convey the continued legitimacy of equalities agenda and yet subordinate these issues to the project of managerialism. It is this tension that I would argue runs throughout the above accounts. By articulating the fixed, bureaucratic, and essentialist conceptions of 'race'/ethnicity which are a feature of equal opportunities discourse to a managerialist discourse which simultaneously excludes and marketises equalities issues, these managers attempted to mediate this tension.

CHAPTER 10

SITUATED VOICES: 'BLACK WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE' AND SOCIAL WORK

In reconstituting the history of feminism in the post 1960s era, white feminists in Britain and the USA have discussed how consciousness raising groups had the effect of historicising individual circumstance and individual experience (see for example, Wandor, 1990). By sharing the content of everyday life what was often believed to belong only to the individual was gradually and collectively understood as deeply embedded in a web of social and cultural relations which were themselves rooted in historical change. 'Experience' then was understood as collective and social: 'the personal as political'. This new understanding was to lead to the highly problematic notion of a global sisterhood organised around an appeal to a unified 'woman's identity'. In response, black and third world (white working class and lesbian) women protested at this totalising definition and began to point to differences amongst women. The outcome of these emergent critiques was that the content of 'women's experience' began to be disassembled, which in turn meant that the authority of white middle class women to construct a singular and hegemonic 'experience' was profoundly challenged (see for example, Carby, 1982; Parmar, 1982; *Feminist Review* 17, 1984).

These challenges notwithstanding, the *category* of 'experience' was not rejected by black and other feminists. As a privileged site from which to speak, and so constitute oneself, the category was appropriated for a different content and with an oppositional purpose. As feminist writings by black women on both sides of the Atlantic proliferated (see for example, Bryan et al, 1985; Grewal et al 1987; Sulter, 1990; Choong et al, 1991; Smith, 1983; Anzaldua and Moraga, 1983; Lorde, 1984; Jordan, 1986) the constitution of a 'black women's experience' was well underway.

Embedded within many of these was a notion of claiming a 'voice': a position from which to speak. This 'speaking' was necessary if the specificity of 'black women's experience' was to be articulated and a claim to a self-defined womanhood made. Such a claim had been denied by white feminist texts because of their exclusions and (perhaps unconscious) claims to universality.

At first the category itself remained unchallenged and unproblematised, not least because at this point the explicit turn to post-structuralist theory had not yet exerted its influence on much of black British feminism. Having said this the endurance of the category is testimony to its tremendous *political* importance and the power of its challenge to dominant epistemologies. For, in creating a legitimacy to speak *from* experience, feminists (black and white) had made it possible to begin to undo established ideas about what it means to 'know'. This, together with the adoption of some post-structuralist insights such as the category of 'the subject', cast new light on, and raised new problems about the ways in which social categories and the social/psychic selves which inhabit them, are constituted. Those who had erstwhile understood themselves as 'individuals' could now cast new meaning on their lives and think themselves anew as historically constituted 'subjects'. They could now become alive to their *gendered* selves. The link to the constitution of a classed 'self' is also apparent in a comment made by Patrick Joyce in his work about class and 'self' in nineteenth century England:

> In many regards we are still Engels' children, not least the most sophisticated students of the historical formation of subjectivities, (who are) alive to the complexity of textual positioning of subjects, but borne down by the leaden weight of an obsolete view of class *in which 'individual' is the sign of 'middle class', a 'collective self' that of the ' working class'* (1994, p.86, my emphasis).

Whilst the divide between self-knowledge as individual or collective is here a result of class, in the twentieth century feminist context we can add 'race' as the axis along which this divide is organised. As Nell Painter (1995) has commented, when transposed to the black/white binary, this becomes rewritten as white people having psyches while black people have community. So if white middle class feminists in the USA and Britain discovered through a collective process that they are constituted as individual selves and from there celebrate what they deem to be a universal sisterhood, black feminists (people) are denied any such individuality (which the notion of psyche suggests) from which to so 'discover' themselves. Those with an 'always already' 'community' are denied the very element from which such processes of identification are made.

Once the issue of what it means 'to know' is established as a site of contestation, the requisite broadening and deepening of the content of knowledge and experience can be seen as only part of the issue. As a result, if in the early years the sociality of 'experience' began to be accepted, some twenty years or more later, feminists (white and black) in these two national formations (Britain and the USA) have begun to problematise and theorise the category 'experience', to examine its ontological and epistemological status, to see, indeed, how it may be used in politically committed intellectual work.

To do this some consideration about how to theorise the category of 'experience' is required. Two United States based feminists have turned their attention to this - one white (Joan Scott), the other a woman of colour (Chandra Talpade Mohanty). Beginning with a profound sense of opposition to the foundational status of 'experience' in much academic (and feminist) work, where the category is constituted as "... uncontestable evidence and as an originary point of explanation - as a

foundation upon which analysis is based" (1992, p.24), Joan Scott argues for an historiography which would reveal the connections between the 'experiences' of different groups, repressive mechanisms and the inner logics by which difference is relationally constituted (p.25). To get to this, she argues, a problematised notion of 'experience' is required, one in which it is recognised that

> It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. To think about experience in this way is to historicise it as well as to historicise the identities it produces (p.26).

Here then, the very category of 'experience' itself is established as in need of examination, so that the web of historical relations in which all 'experience' is inscribed is brought to the fore. In this way it is possible to reveal not only the binaries, the boundaries, the closures and erasures which are produced, in time and space, but also the subjectivities and identities which it is possible for specific social groups to inhabit in specific places at specific times.

'Experience' is widened, deepened and embedded. While Scott addressed herself to historians and cultural theorists, Mohanty directs her attention principally to white feminists. Writing in a similar vein to Scott, but earlier and with more explicit emphasis on political imperatives (as well as intellectual ones), Mohanty argues that

> ... experience must be historically interpreted and theorised if it is to become the basis of feminist solidarity and struggle, and it is at this moment that an understanding of the *politics of location* proves crucial (1992, p.88-89, my emphasis).

Inspired by Adrienne Rich's work (1984), Mohanty uses the term location "...to refer to the historical, geographical, cultural, psychic and imaginative boundaries which provide ground for political definition and self-definition" (p.74). Her concern with the "politics of location" is derived from her project (shared with many black feminists) to challenge the singular and unitary notion of 'experience' such that it is at once both constitutive of the individual *and* the collective. Mohanty's criticism of such a formulation of 'experience' is stated thus

> There seem to be two problems with this definition. First, experience is seen as being immediately accessible, understood and named. The complex relationships between behaviour and its representation are either ignored or made irrelevant; experience is collapsed into discourse and vice versa. Second, since experience has a fundamentally psychological status, (in this approach) questions of history and collectivity are formulated on the level of attitude and intention ... If the assumption of the *sameness* of experience is what ties woman (individual) to women (group), regardless of class, race, nation and sexualities, the notion of experience is anchored firmly in the notion of the individual self, a determined and specifiable constituent of European modernity (p.82, 1992, emphasis in original).

Strategically it is key to understand that "... the experience of being woman can create an illusionary unity, for it is not the experience of being woman, but the meanings attached to gender, race, class, and age at various historical moments"(p.86). Hence the need to "locate the politics of experience".

Both Scott and Mohanty suggest that the way to theorise experience is to concentrate on its historical specificity and excavate its embeddedness in webs of social, political and cultural relations which are themselves organised around axes of power and which

288

act to constitute subjectivities and identities. Without such a problematising of 'experience', the binaries, exclusions and erasures which are embedded in it cannot be deconstructed and thus challenged and transformed.

Part of this task involves an analysis of when and how the category of 'experience' is mobilised. This entails an excavation of the location of specific speakers within multiple systems of subordination - those of class, 'race', gender and indeed sexuality. One writer who has been concerned with explicating the positions black women occupy in multiple and simultaneous systems of oppression is Barbara Smith, the black lesbian feminist literary critic. She emphasises the need to locate the contexts through which fictional texts by black women authors can be read. For her, black women's position could not be understood in a framework which conceived of systems of oppression as either discrete or hierarchical.

> A Black feminist approach to literature that embodies the realisation that the politics of sex as well as the politics of race and class are crucially interlocking factors in the works of Black women writers is an absolute necessity (1982, p.159).

And as she was to make clear in another, more polemical piece, the systems of class, 'race', gender and indeed sexuality, had to be understood as intersecting and giving rise to a simultaneity of oppression:
The concept of the simultaneity of oppression is still the crux of a Black feminist understanding of political reality and, I believe, one of the most significant ideological contributions of Black feminist thought (1983, p.xxxii).

More recent work by Mae Gwendolyn Henderson (1992) has adapted Smith's idea of "simultaneity of oppression" and taken it in new directions. She offers an

inspirational approach to the examination of the discourses through which black women constitute their multiple selves, give meaning to the content of their lives and define the parameters within which their 'experience' is produced and lived. As Henderson says:

> black women speak from a multiple and complex social, historical and cultural
>
> positionality which, in effect, constitutes black female subjectivity (1992,

p.147).

For my purposes the point of interest is the way in which Henderson moves from a recognition of the complex embeddedness of 'black women's experience', to a conception about how black women create a position from which to speak (and write), and the discourses which it is possible to discern in their speech (writing). She begins by suggesting that both 'raced' and gendered perspectives, and the inter-relations between them, structure the discourse(s) through which black women speak/write. This she refers to as the "simultaneity of discourse".

By using this concept, she argues, it is possible to hold onto the notion of black women as at once 'raced', gendered, classed, (and sexual) subjects and thus that they are both " 'Other' of the Same, (and) also ... 'other' of the 'other(s)' " (1992, p.146). The discourses which are simultaneously embedded within, and serve to structure black women's speech/writing, produce relationships of both difference and identification. This means that black women will speak/write "racial difference within gender identity and gender difference within racial identity" (1992, p.145).

Whilst this refers to processes of interaction within and between socially constituted groups in which 'othering' plays a central role, Henderson is attempting to get to another dimension as well. This is the constitution of 'self' that occurs through the

simultaneity of discourse. Thus she suggests that the complex multiplicity of black women's positioning, results in the discursive production of a 'self' in which 'other(s)' are always present. Black women's selfhood, and the speech/writing through which this is constituted, necessarily contains both a "generalised 'Other'" and "'otherness' within the self" (1992, p.146).

Critical examinations of how black women in Britain use the category experience to give meaning to the web of relations in which they are inscribed and of the multivocality which this produces are scarce. This chapter is based on interviews in which black women social workers talk about 'experience' as a way of making sense of and give meaning to their working lives. It discusses some of their views on the links between 'black women's experience' and social work as a practice; and then considers what conclusions might be drawn about the category 'experience' when 'race' and racism are vectors in the constitution and negotiation of power relations. More specifically their voices arise in response to two inter-connected questions. What, if any, are the particular skills or attributes which black women can bring to social work; and why are these important. There was a high degree of repetition of the major themes around and through which the women constructed their specificity as black women. These themes centred on 'oppression', 'struggle', 'coming through against the odds', all of which were presented as particular to black womanhood.

'Sisters Chant: I Struggle Therefore I Am'

I want to argue that the meanings which these black women social workers constructed about both themselves and their work were produced on similar discursive terrain to that which Henderson identifies in the works of African-American women writers. The processes of identification and differentiation; the implicit use of

historical memory; the acute awareness of diverse and subordinate social positionings, are factors which it is possible to trace in the accounts which follow. All of these are located within the context of what might be termed an 'occupational situatedness' which define the parameters within which the women are speaking. Their construction of 'self' and meaning is, then, cast within (the ever present) shadow of their paid employment and as such they draw on professional discourses in which a 'fit' between 'black women's experience' and the 'nature of social work' is posited.

The accounts are numbered sequentially and at the end of the first extract from a new speaker their 'ethnic origin' is given in brackets.

1.a. [G.L. Ok and do you think there are any particular skills or qualities that black women can bring to social work?] *(a big nod) I think we have the experience in terms of having to survive, in terms of whether it is limited housing, with our parents growing up, the areas we live in because yes, we can move on after you get into the job situation you know, and the area of schools, we have got all those experiences of having to cope with those problems repeatedly, whether it is going to school or wherever you go to, and having to speak up for yourself, and be heard and be counted, and I think that in social services that's what we are paid to try and empower".* (African-Caribbean).

Already there are a number of interesting factors being brought into play here. There is the **immediate** invocation of 'experience' as the privileged element defining black women's specificity, but importantly this 'experience' is situated in a social and geographical space where having to cope with a variety of 'problems' is foregrounded. Moreover, the necessity of survival is linked to the creation of a speaking position - a

struggle to be recognised - and although she acknowledges that social or occupational mobility in adult life can result in an individual moving away from these circumstances, the early experiences are privileged as being formative and it is these which correspond to the tasks of social work. The purported link between what she sees as black women's experience and the purpose of social work is elaborated and re-emphasised as she continues.

1.b. [G.L."So you are saying that there is an experience?"] *"Yeah, that if you stand up and be counted and speak up for yourself and what you need, and don't give up, and I need to keep repeating it, I think that is what you do with a lot of clients you know, with their poor housing or whatever else*
[right]
you know, you are trying to get them not to just accept things if they are not happy with it, and they feel uncomfortable with it, speak up, and a lot of it is also about the experience of grandparents, so we've experienced a wider idea of family, and the fact that it doesn't damage you. You know some people think that if you don't grow up with your mother and father you are damaged for life, a lot of black people have grown up that way and it hasn't damaged them."

Apart from the repetition of the themes concerning the empathy with clients which derives from their similarity of experience with black women; the need to "speak up"; and the nature of social work; she also begins to imply a critique of one of the dominant ideas in both psychoanalysis and social work about the place of the biological mother and father in the development of the 'healthy child'. This in turn prefaces a challenge to the pathologisation of Caribbean family forms in what follows:

1.c. *"So it is a different way of thinking being brought into social services, of what*

they will teach you at the college and what others at the top, which is white, tend to

think and you know, you can actually give those experiences out to people. A lot of

clients will come in and say well have you got children or whatever and I say well

even if you don't have children, you have been a part of, whether it is your cousins or

whoever, you have been a part of them, whether you take the responsibility to take

them to school or whatever

[G.L. "yeah right"]

You have had that experience, but when you look on it, a lot of white people don't,

because em, there are white people who deal with the extended families and they

strive on that, but there are a lot of them that are so sort of, em, just take

responsibility for the immediate one and so not that broader sense of responsibility".

In this part of the account the speaker is making a claim for a different form of

knowledge thus giving 'black women's experience' an epistemological status born of

its location in a specific body of people. Such knowledge can be imparted to clients

thus replaying the idea that part of the function of social work is to 'improve' or

strengthen 'needy' or 'deficient' clients. Here she also explicitly racialises 'black

women's experience' by foregrounding the opposition to what she purports to be the

pre-dominant approach of white people to family relationships and responsibilities. It

is also done in such a way that familial experience becomes recoded as an issue of

responsibility. In racialising, she also explicitly works with the binary and plays the

opposition 'white/black' - a move which is highlighted by the exceptions which she

invokes. Moreover in the opening sentence of what follows, her sense of a need to be

cautious about making too broad generalisations, is undermined by the emphasis

which her disclaimer gives to her main point.

1.d. *"I mean I don't think that is putting black people on a pedestal, but I think it's you know, talking to people irrespective of ages and so on and in terms of caring and sensitivity, again I don't know whether it is because we have cared for so many people, you know whether we know them or not, sort of like, generations gone past, that again we have put out our hands a lot easier than some white people..."*

This part is important because of the move which is made from individual experience of diverse family forms and differential positioning within contemporary socio-economic relations, on the one hand, to an emphasis on an historical location in modes of caring, on the other. This inter-generational location is then used to make the claim that 'we' are more emotionally generous and have a greater propensity to care. The distinction which has been made between caring *for* and caring *about* (see for example, Grimwood and Popplestone, 1993; Dalley, 1988) is not made here, but her reference to the inter-generational relation to caring and to the notion of strangers or 'non-kin' (whether they are known or not) would suggest that here she is highlighting the 'caring for' aspect. Earlier it is clear that both forms are referenced. What is equally noticeable is her invocation of the historicity of black women's experience, a factor which she emphasises when asked to expand on the issue of inter-gerationality.

1.e [G.L. "Could you expand a bit more on the second thing that you said though about the generations of caring for lots of people, what do you really mean by that?] *"It's actually in terms of that we are people, who whether we have done it through history, or through books, or whether we have done it through posters, or music or whatever, but we have actually to some degree identified with people who have fought for causes, whatever you want to say, and we have identified, some to a less degree than others, and we have identified this with people who are not living right in front of us*

now... so you are not blanketed into 'I can only understand what is happening in 1994 on the 3rd May', you have this other wider bit em, it's difficult to say".

Processes of historical discovery, which are also processes of identification, are foregrounded and this has the effect of reworking 'experience' into a kind of consciousness of connection and positionality. In so doing the sociality of 'experience' is emphasised, but it is also politicised since the sense of historical connection and continuity is actively constituted through the process of excavation and reclamation of those who have struggled for "causes". Moreover this sense of historical connection to 'fighters' is important for social work because knowledge of such genealogical connection helps create a key resource for dealing with the stresses associated with the job. Hence:

1.f. [G.L. Why is that important for social work?] *"Social work is a very stressful job and if you don't have that capacity to sort of, em, for that sort of tension, because the tension builds up, and you can relieve it because you have different ways of drawing in on things, you know, and if you don't have that then you will burn out and it will get to you quite quickly and you need that capacity to come into work not say 'oh I'm going home and never coming back'. It's like hard to say, it's like you can think of a lot of things, but like".*

[G.L. No I understand, but is it something particular to black women then these two things that you describe?] *"In terms of my involvement with working with people, whether it is FSU* (Family Service Unit), *in social work or whatever, in terms of how people react to situations, how they cope with stressful situations, maybe going out to a client who is shouting off, threatening or whatever else, in terms of coping with these things, I see a difference you know, in the way people come back* (to the office) *and it's with them for life. I'm not saying you shouldn't be concerned about your*

personal safety, but that you have to be able to deal with it, and put it in some kind of
perspective, otherwise em, then you just see those people sticking to one thing, and
only happy dealing with people they have met before you know, and you can actually
see that happening even in terms of new workers coming in and welcoming and that
sort of thing. Again maybe it is because a lot of black people have had to go in
situations where they have been the only one, sometimes they can welcome people on
the other side like going in and with the white workers, say if I am on a course, and
the majority of the time I am the only black manager, we haven't got that many
anyway, and you will be there, and you will have to talk to them first. If I go on a
course with the majority of black people, or a meeting and a few white people come
in, then we make them welcome, and it is the same in teams, that sort of thing,
students come in, whoever they are, it is that and that sort of ease will help you with
clients."

There are a number of interesting moves made in this sequence. First, is the way in
which she accords to black people a general level of ease with, and civility toward
white people, even whilst she constructs a hard boundary between black/white in her
use of the words "people on the other side". The divide between black and white is
also sharply made in her inference to the invisibility of black people to white people,
compared to the visibility of white to black. Such invisibility/visibility can be read as
both reflective and constitutive of the organisation of social relations along axes of
'race' in which 'black women's experience' is partially embedded. Her talk of visibility
is also organised around a notion of 'minority', which though referred to in numerical
terms in the examples she cites, is also predicated on an implicit conception of
'minority' as a social position ascribed by some marker of differentiation. To see this
more clearly we have to read between sections of the account. Thus if white people
find themselves in a situation where they are a numerical minority they will be

welcomed by black people. In contrast because black people will often find themselves in the minority position they will have an aptitude for dealing with difficult situations which is "with them for life". Her use of the ungendered term 'black people' is also notable given that she is responding to the question about black *women*, but as Brooks-Higginbothom (1992) has pointed out, 'race'-talk often acts as a metalanguage through which other axes of power, which organise social relations and construct positions, are at once spoken and masked.

The discursive resources she mobilises to give meaning to various sorts of interactions which social workers might find themselves in, are then expanded to suggest that the combined result of 'experience' and historical identification act to produce people with a greater capacity to cope with stressful situations. This differential capacity is exemplified in the ability to place potentially dangerous situations in a wider context. Though not stated, the chains of association which are embedded in all of her account, include the potential threat of racial and/or sexual assault which black women always face. That this is so is embedded in the psyches of all black women in Britain, but this does not mean that they are incapacitated by this potential. Understanding of these dangers, together with historical consciousness of the struggles waged by predecessors, not least in anti-slavery and civil rights struggles, means that the range of threats one might encounter in the course of a social work day, takes on a different dimension. Herein lies the importance and relevance for social work, because having staff with this capacity has implications for how workloads are managed, stress is dealt with, and inter-personal relations organised.

It is clear then, that the idea of a 'black women's experience', rooted in historical and contemporary relations, acts as a powerful discourse through which the benefits to

social work are constructed. It shifts away from any simple idea of ethnic matching between client and social worker as being the way to deal with the requirements of operating within multi-ethnic populations. This shift is achieved because she uses her argument to suggest that the strengths which such 'experience' produces in people who have undergone it, are impartable to all clients and other staff. Moreover the characteristics of the clients of social work are such that it is not just black clients who need these skills, but all or most of them. Employing black social workers can thus act as a resource for the whole department and all its clients.

Having said this, the language in which she gives her account accords to 'black women's experience' an ontological status which is in part undermined by her suggestion that its usefulness for work with clients is racially non-specific. For if such an 'experience' is shared across sections of the black community and across generations one would expect the survival skills, which she says flow from the 'experience', to be present amongst black clients. This contradiction arises from her focus on the usefulness Social Services Departments can derive from *employing* black women as social workers, and thus she seeks to stress their specificity in these terms. That there is an unproblematised category called 'black women's experience' is the ground on which she makes the claim to specificity, a claim which would be undermined if she had to begin to explore its points of discontinuity among black women. Such constructions and contradictions raise interesting issues which I want to return to in the discussion part of the chapter and in the light of points raised in the opening section. Similarly the slip between 'black women' and 'black people'. Because this slippage is a frequent occurrence throughout the numerous accounts, and indeed sometimes in the formulation of my own questions, from now on I will draw attention to it by marking the words 'women' and 'people' in bold. I want now to explore whether similar discourses can be found in the accounts of others.

2.a. [G.L. And do you think there are any particular or special qualities or skills that black women can offer social work, specifically black women?] *"Yeah, em I think (short pause), I think personally because this authority sets up so much things against black* **women**, *I think for a black* **person** *to actually reach the level of being a social worker and attaining qualifications, they have demonstrated already the amount they have to offer, because they have had to fight off so much things you know to start with. But thinking more of myself, yeah, I think I have a lot of understanding of you know, em, oppression and you know, and can, my strongest quality I would say, is being able to enhance people, because I think I had to do that myself, and I just like to sort of do that, I just think we are strong. I think black women are strong and we are fighters and we will work with a particular case, we will ultimately want to do the best for them".*(African-Caribbean).

2.b. [G.L. So where does this strength come from that you are talking about?] *"I think it's like, sort of like, fighting everything that is against you, you are fighting the sexism, you're fighting and you know you fight a lot of things within our own community as well, in terms of our male partners or whatever, in terms of parents, or children, or whatever, we do a lot of things on top of, our role is not just you know, it is, even from the social worker, outside of work I have so many other hats that I wear you know. I just think it is more like the oppressiveness predominantly from the white society and structures and whatever".*

Apart from a general repetition of the major themes already encountered in the first account, some of the differences in the language used here are interesting. The first thing to note is that the structure of address shifts from the detached, second person singular, 'you', to the first person plural, 'we' and in so doing she begins to construct a

community. Again the thread which binds this community centres on the experience of oppression, the multiple sites of those oppressions, and that the experience derives from the structural location of black women/people.

In developing the idea of struggle against institutions and structures, she suggests that black social workers are a physical embodiment of this struggle because they are a concrete example of achievement against the odds. It is at this point that she first makes the slip from 'black women' to 'black people'. In constructing black social workers in this way she introduces the link between 'black women's experience' and social work as an institution in a slightly different way from the first speaker. Thus although she refers to the empathy which this experience produces between client and black female social worker, she adds to this by saying that the SSD is itself a major locus of the oppression that black women/people suffer (*"This authority sets up so much things against black women"*).

Another shift of emphasis from the first speaker is that here there are specific references to issues internal to the ethnic community she cites as her own. It is an example of Henderson's contestatory discourse with a group constructed as 'community' but who stand in an "ambiguously (non)hegemonic" position in relation to black women. Thus her contestatory discourse points to the issue of gendered power relations between black women and men, and generational power differentials within families. In so doing she constructs a less 'innocent' picture of black family and 'communal' life. This, together with her indication of the temporary nature of the authority and power she may derive from her occupational status ("even from the social worker, outside of work..."), in turn allows her to point to the shifting and multiple subjectivities and identities which black women inhabit. But if sexism and age related subordination are referenced as partially determining 'black women's

experience', in the end she foregrounds class and racism as the primary modalities structuring that experience.

2.c. [G.L. Why is that important for social work though?] *"I think because social work is a role where unfortunately it targets a community that is like, you know under poverty... the majority of our clients seem to fit into that category, and I think the understanding of wanting to bring them out of that, or to offer alternatives, I just think it is, em, it is only where we are at, I mean like in this office, I know I am a social worker and everybody knows I am a social worker, but when I walk out, even around this community, nobody really knows until I say or show my identification or whatever ... I think it is because we are always having to advocate for ourselves, and I think that the role of a social worker is primarily about advocating for our clients. I think it is one of the things we bring to it."*

Here again we have the exposition of a social proximity to clients, a construction of social work as an occupation of advocacy on the part of those, who because of poverty, are less able to do it for themselves, and in this way she introduces a notion of class. Her reference to the tenuous nature of the role/status of 'social worker' contrasted to the enduring subject position of 'black person' is how she introduces racism. This of course points to one of the principle features of societies structured in 'race' - that is the tenacity and pervasive character of racial ascriptions and identifications. For this woman, it is this which speaks to a 'core' 'self', whilst a 'self' constituted through an occupation is vunerable because it is invisible in most situations and contexts. Thus if in some senses black people can be invisible, in others they are never able to be free of this marker of social identification and differentiation. There is a paradox highlighted here then in that it is the very visibility of the marker which creates the conditions for invisibility.

3.a.[G.L. Now I want to ask you a question specifically about black women social workers and I am wondering if you think there are any special qualities, skills or experiences that black women can offer social work?] *"Yes there is a variety of skills and knowledge that we can offer, em, I said the majority of us by nature are survivors, and we know how to survive in society, among all the things that we have to face, racism, sexism, disability, whatever it is em, (pause) em, we feel, I feel when I look at the way we operate with our caselist, we tend to be more logical, and we tend to organise ourselves that much better, and we have a high turnout in our cases, and we don't hold on to them for the sake of holding on to them. As soon as they need closing we just close them and get rid of them"*.

[G.L. This is black women you are talking about?] *"Yes, most of the black women social workers that I work with"* [G.L. And by black women now, do we mean African-Caribbean or do we mean all?] *"African-Caribbean that I have worked with and what I have seen and what I have worked with during my placements and things like that"*.(African-Caribbean).

This speaker gives a clear and unhesitant affirmation that black women have something special to offer and again this is said to be rooted in the strengths which are deemed to derive from experience of, and resistance to, the oppressive matrix of social relations organised around a variety of axes. This is understood to give rise to a positive approach to work organisation and 'getting the job done'. There is also an interesting 'naturalisation' of the purported survival skills of African-Caribbean women. Then, in what follows, she focuses on the office hierarchies and their associated job demarcations and responsibilities and the ways in which black women's 'naturally' confident and methodical approach to the work disorganises these hierarchies and demarcations.

3.b. *"We tend to, the managers say to us 'I'm the manager I should have made that decision' and ...we tend to have to, if you are going along doing our cases we plan it, I mean like most other social workers I guess, you know as well you have to plan your case, it's what you are doing anyway, but whereas we will go and start making whatever we need to do to achieve our goals, em, managers, when we come back and sit down in supervision, we'll be told 'well you should have discussed that with us'. Maybe it is not unique to us but that is the experience that we have had".*

In addition to the points already mentioned, what is notable about this passage is the shift between the impersonal "you" and the communal "we" when she wants to emphasise the specificity of black women's approach to the work. She marks the boundaries between black women and other social workers in this way and the meanings she attaches to managerial responses in supervision are constructed through the prism of 'race'. Later her constitution of a racially and sexually bounded community is crystallised.

3.c. [G.L. When you say through our experiences, what sorts of things do you mean?] *"Through growing up, especially, like say, the way we had to grow up in the system ... Going into the education system and things like that and the issues that you face in your own homelife as well ...* [G.L. What sort of things in your own home life?] *"The way you are expected to be a black* **person**, *and the stereotyping of how a* **woman** *should behave, and to be challenging that, like quite a few black* **workers**, *they feel they are going out of their station to be going into the white man's world and be working and ...* [G.L. By whom are they seen?] *" By our own, black people. Or you are getting too independent, women are supposed to be here doing this, doing that...".*

This reference to the fracturing of the African-Caribbean population along axes of gendered power relations disrupts any idea of a harmonious and homogenous community, and her intimation that black personhood and black womanhood are constructions is notable because it is the first time that such a suggestion is made in this way. In effect she adopts a multivocality and thus suggests that 'black people' are produced in tension and opposition to 'white people'. However she also suggests that 'black women' are produced in tension and opposition to 'black men'; 'black workers' in tension and opposition to 'white managers/power'. This last point moves the passage onto a slightly different register. She restates a link commonly made by black people between power and white males, with the effect that the gendered nature of social work as a *profession* is submerged under a gendered discourse of *power*, and power is conceived as a racialised (not gendered) field (of coercion). She does this by tapping into discourses which construct "the white **man's** world" as antithetical to black **people's** interests. This she assumes, I as her black woman interlocutor, will be able to read, hence her later reference to "our own". To enter "the white man's world" means to crossover, to not only 'forget' who you are, but also to enter into roles of control over other black people. The result of this, is that it creates a barrier to the processes of indentification between black social worker and black client. She continues:

3.d. "... *but having to work through those kinds of issues, and then being able to transfer the skills into your work environment and into your caseloads as well, and I guess sometimes,* (pause) *sometimes you get frustrated, and you find your mind is rolling ahead, and you are thinking this should be happening, this should be happening, but you tend not to think that the client still has to work through the process, like how you had to work through it, through whatever problem they are going through".*

This is the first time that the control aspects of social work are even hinted at since whenever 'black women's experience' has been linked to social work it has been to emphasise its caring or enabling side. It is also the first time that the possibility of tensions between black social worker and black client are implied, and the first time the strains that this tension produces for black social workers, as opposed to those between white colleagues, managers or institution are suggested.

4. a. [G.L. OK, let's come back to the issue ... of why black women staff ... You have sometimes referred to the ways in which sometimes it is racism, or conceptions of 'race', but there is gender and perhaps sexuality, all at play ... On the other hand , you have talked about (pause) black people have something to offer Social Services and I want you to say about what it is they have to offer, whether there is something particular that black women can offer?] "*I mean I would say so, people might disagree with me there, because our experiences are different, we experience different things on the whole, you know, but I would say so, I think as a race, or as races, as well as individuals, but also living in this country having experienced the racism, I think we have got a certain amount of resilience, I would say that for most of the social workers do you know what I mean, so you know there is something extra there*" {her emphases}.(African).

4.b. [G.L. But why is that important potentially for Social Services and what is it, you say you are resilient, I want to say to you 'so what'?] "*erm, well I am thinking now in terms of service users ok, so I am thinking in terms of what we can erm, I was gonna to say impart although that's not the right word, but you know, I was gonna say like role models, but no, like being able to support people who have been in, or have experienced, or are experiencing very difficult situations, so on that level*"

[G.L. Yes but why can you support them more than a white woman colleague?] *"I think because their experiences have been different* (said very quietly) [G.L. So the experience that you say as a black woman you have, gives you something particular? Is it another form of identification?, perhaps with the experiences of black clients, or?] *"Yeah that is along the lines I was thinking, em, I'm just trying to think of an example to make it clearer".*

4.c. [G.L. Yeah, I mean you can talk more generally if you like, it's just that I want you to say a bit more about it, if possible.] *"Well I suppose from my experience of service users, I have worked with a lot of single parents for one, so in terms of their experiences, whatever they might be or whatever their particular situations might be, there are often issues that come up to do with violence, or abuse, or both; to do with black men leaving; em, to do with their position in society, to do with not having power, you know all those sorts of issues, and I suppose I feel because I am a black woman and I have experienced some of those things, and the racism as well, I feel empowered to do certain things and make certain changes and I feel that as black women we can impart something, or we can facilitate some sort of change in service users at that level".*

4.d. [G.L. So it is common experience that forms the basis of this particular stuff that black women can offer?] *"Either common experience, or experience that is similar and I suppose the affects of racism and challenging racism and all that to me is a similar experience, you might not have exactly the same but you might need similar tools to deal with it and you can transfer those tools".*

The more lengthy interaction between myself and this speaker is noticeable in the ways in which I formulate the questions and it is evident that at times this produced a

307

thoughtfulness or hesitancy in some of her reiterations. However this hesitancy gave way to firmly articulated views when asked to expand. Again there is a repetition of a language in which strength, survival, resilience, as products of the experience of racism is highly profiled. 'Races' are identifiable and bounded communities, but the idea that the term 'black' covers more than one 'race' is implicit in passage a. This 'experience' gives rise to a type of person, but for her this 'person' seems to be one with an **additional** skill or capacity, rather than a person of a completely different 'type' as suggested in some of the other accounts. For example this speakers formulation of "something extra there" in contrast to the formulation by speaker three that "we tend to be more logical". This "something extra" acts to demarcate black women from white women.

Similarly the connection to service users is spoken in similar language to that already heard, although this speaker seems to particularly focus on links to, and empathy with, black service users. This is less clear in other voices. Importantly, in this formulation the changes that social work can effect on clients, suggests that they are the objects which are acted upon by a social work subject - "facilitate some sort of change in service users". Experience of and against racism, is the privileged factor which can produce this ability, but that this is so does not detract from the echoes of beneficient 'improvement' which was the hallmark of so much nineteenth charity and early twentieth century social work discourse. Moreover, such a discourse has a 'professional' version in the form of viewing social workers as major agents of change (personal, and to some extent social). In this there is a link to the establishment of psychology as the main element in the knowledge base of social work training. Thus, social workers have a key role to play in the rehabilitation of pathologised individuals and families. What is also interesting about this passage is that the speaker herself seems hesitant about using a language which carries these meanings. There is a

suggestion in the way in which she formulates her response that she is struggling to find words which are least laden with precisely these nineteenth century 'charitable', and twentieth century 'professional' discourses (cf Rojeck, Peacock and Collins, 1988).

5.a. [G.L. Right. Do you think there are any particular or special qualities that black women from diverse communities can offer social work?] *"Qualities?"* [G.L. Or skills, attributes.] *"Well because either, talking about qualities, I think about understanding and awareness of the immediate culture that they work with it does matter, and language is a skill, and is a special quality. So yes, I do think they are better skills, if utilised and taken into account."* [G.L. Bettter skills than?] (laughter) *"Better skills than white people working with ethnic minority background people."* (South Asian)

Here she firmly places the advantage of employing black women social workers in terms of **cultural** understanding and linguistic ability rather than in terms of an historical and contemporary 'experience'. Of course there has been evidence in earlier accounts about knowledge of, and embeddness in, particular cultural or racial communities, but, as we have seen, in those this was superimposed upon racism as the central principle organising 'black women's experience'. As this speaker continues, her construction of cultural knowledge as ungendered is both emphasised *and* undermined as the issue of gender becomes more complexly posed.

5.b. [G.L. And are those skills, you know, language, background, familiarity with culture etc, the things you described, could men from the black communities also offer that?] *"Men!?"* (quite sharp intake of breath) [G.L. Men, black men in other words.] *"Yes, because they can identify themselves, and they understand, not as much as a woman to a woman could, but they would be much more aware of the tradition".*

Her initial surprise at the idea of thinking about the role of men in this context is clarified when her emphasis on cultural knowledge and understanding as the key modality for good practice in social services is remembered. The way in which she puts the relation is such that she does not speak in absolutely ungendered terms, but rather maps a gendered differential onto a white/non-white binary. And it is this latter one which is fundamental. Once this is established, it is possible for her to elaborate on the ways in which gender enters to structure the relationship between social services and its 'ethnic minority' clients. Thus:

5.c. [G.L. But is there something absolutely particular to black women from all the diverse black communities, that black women from those communities can offer, even more, or over and above that offered by men from those communities?] (pause).

" Oh, I don't think so, because in this profession one has to be supportive and sympathetic, but I mean the majority of our clients are women anyway. And I feel they feel comfortable with a female, rather than a male. [G. L. Why?] "Well I can speak for the South Asian women, find it much easier to talk about personal issues to a female rather than a man, certain things could be affecting them but they can't come out and that is why I think, yes, a woman would be more approachable than a man. I worked with a social work assistant who was a South Asian male, and my clients still faced a problem, allowing him in the house, they wouldn't want a man to knock on the door and come in and if it was a woman it would have been easier for both. Personally, in my role, I did have a problem in seeing myself as a certain member of a respected community, if I had to go along with my colleague, and it wouldn't be as nice as it would be if I went on my own or with a female colleague. There is a certain reputation about women working in a profession, and then working with male colleagues, and the reception of the community would be different."

This extract is interesting because of the way in which her opening denial of any gendered specificity immediately moves on to argue the opposite. Her initial denial is premised on a notion of the caring nature of the profession. This means that all social workers be able to sympathise, if not empathise, with any client. It is, as it were, a professional requirement. But when her focus shifts from the profession to the client base of social work then gender can enter the field. In contrast to earlier speakers who focused on 'raced' experience (and sometimes class) as the basis of a connection between social worker and client, this speaker highlights gender itself. Similarly, while the gender identification must be underwritten by a cultural sameness and understanding, her differentiation between South Asian male and South Asian female social workers, tends toward a primacy of gender. Moreover, gender acts to structure her own 'experience' of the **work**. This in turn is linked to cultural views about the world of professional labour and its purported erosion of gender boundaries operating within specific ethnic communities.

So here we have some substance given to the suggestion made by other speakers that part of the issue for women from black communities is the hegemonic prescriptions about how a woman from 'their community' should behave. Because the starting point for this speaker was an emphasis on culture, the **intra-communal** dynamics affecting the social worker/client interaction is foregrounded, whereas for earlier speakers, the emphasis on combatting systems of racist oppression meant a focus on the **inter-communal** dynamics structuring the relationship. Her own status is spoken of in similar terms, such that her positioning within both the professional institution and "the community" is constructed in relation to the tension between them. Again it is not that an awareness of the affects of an interstitial positioning has not been spoken before, but the profound emphasis on something called a 'black women's experience' is absent from this account. It is hard to offer any convincing explanation of this difference. Certainly one can raise the question about a possible

link to the differential racialisations between people of African-Caribbean and South Asian origin/descent: for example, the organisation of racism directed at South Asian populations in Britain around **cultural** 'Othering'. However, the very small numbers of South Asian origin/descent women in the sample make any more authoritative suggestions inappropriate. The value in pointing to the difference here is twofold. On the one hand, the difference serves to shed light on the dominant discursive repertoires in the accounts. On the other hand, presentation of an alternative way of constructing the specificity of black women's potential contributions to social work, shows what terrain is opened up when the category of 'experience' is foregrounded as the vector through which meaning is constructed.

Boundaries of 'race': Boundaries of gender

Processes by which 'communities' are discursively produced necessarily involve processes of differentiation and exclusion. Recourse to some essentialised characteristic(s) (biological, social, even material) is made in order to construct the foundational elements of the 'us' as against 'them'. In the preceding section that foundational element in the constitution of the 'community of black women' was 'experience'. 'Experience' was seen as giving rise to an internal strength, an ability to empathise with clients, a methodical and unhesitant approach to the work. This was constructed as rooted in historical as much as contemporary social relations, but a key marker was oppression (always racism, but sometimes also oppression deriving from other axes of differentiation and power) and resistance to it. In short, each account gave rise to a harmony of voices in which it was proclaimed that being a black woman social worker was being a particular 'type' of person. A number of issues arise from this and I shall consider these below. Before turning my attention to this however, I shall briefly consider the ways in which the boundaries of the 'black women's

community' were in part established in terms of the limits or connections to white women and black men.

'Us' and white women

6.a. [G.L. But two things I want to ask you, one is that you have talked about how outside of the office situation black women wear lots of hats and do a lot of things in their role as women outside, but doesn't that apply to white women?] *"It does to an extent, but just because of racism, it clouds everything, every area, so it can't be, I just don't think it can be as bad, there is no way it can be as bad, it can be similar to an extent but I think racism tips the scales you know".*(African-Caribbean.) Similarly:

7.a. [G.L. Ok and what about white women can they bring those qualities based on their experiences?] *"Some ... but not erm, because I think it is different yeah, I just think that their experiences have been* (pause) *yeah, maybe I am talking off the top of my head but I do feel that their experiences have been different, I mean I think they tend to look at things from a different perspective, and even if white women have experienced racism in terms of having a link with black people, I think because of our histories, even just talking about some of these difficult things is going to be difficult and the understanding of it, Oh I can't explain it very well, but yeah* (pause) *I suppose because there is racism in the middle that is going to affect the process".*(African.)

It is notable that this speaker recognises that racism can also affect white people (white women with black children, which is perhaps the example most often encountered in social work). However if they can get a proximity to it, they cannot feel or experience it in the same way. The divide which results from being a white or black person erects an indissoluble boundary which determines experience. Thus

despite the variation between this speaker and the previous one, the way she poses the situation re-establishes the closeness between them because they both see racism as an essentially black experience. The boundaries created by racialised experiences are clearly expressed in the words of the following speaker.

8.a. [G.L. Yeah, but you said they (ie black women) can bring in real experience, now your white ... women, don't they have real experience outside.] *"Yes"*. ["But what are the differences?] *"They bring in real different things, they bring in their real experience as black women, the cultural experience and life experience, which no matter how much you live in England, and no matter how much contact you have with white people - you can live with them, and you can be friends with them, everything - your experience is still different to theirs and that is the bottom line. I mean they have positive real experience, but it is different".*(African-Caribbean.)

So 'black women's experience' is the factor which authorises the construction of the boundary between black women and white women. Racism is the modality most emphasised as the factor creating differential experience, with some reference to 'culture'. Moreover the boundaries between the two constituencies are expressed as fixed and immutable - "you can be friends with them, everything, your experience is still different to theirs and that is <u>the bottom line</u>".

Having said this, the fact that these discussions were taking place in the context of a specific occupational setting meant that issues of work informed the ways in which the boundaries were constructed. When pushed further some of the women began to suggest that the boundaries were perhaps more susceptible to manipulation, at least in the work context, than might be expected from things said earlier.

For example the following speaker goes on to say:

9. a. [G.L. Yeah right, so what I'm thinking is then, how do we get beyond, how can you envisage us getting beyond a situation where white social workers can take black cases and do it in a way and not be stumped ... because if it is about experience, well our experiences in the foreseeable future are going to be quite different ... yet earlier you were talking about the need for there to be cases allocated on the basis of a number of criteria, not just that you are the same 'race', so how do you match those two things?]

"I suppose it gets down to personalities as well, because I mean even though I say, and I do, that there would be different, you know (pause), *like one service user might get three different people and get different feelings towards them or be able to work in different ways with each of them and I suppose it is not as if to say they are not going to eventually achieve the same goal, but it could be a slower process, it could be a smoother process, those sorts of things ... But within that you can have white people, I hope this doesn't sound patronising, but you ... could have white women who could work well with a black family and you could have other people who have no experiences and totally, and I think that this is damaging ... so I am not saying that nobody can, but I think people need to be aware, self-aware as well and if you think this is not appropriate for you then you shouldn't take it on, and in terms of moving forward, I think that if people are looking to work in a particular area, then they need to have some training and some decent training, not just any old thing. I remember when I was in Fostering and Adoption and I went on a training course 'Working With West African Families' ... and it was a white woman running it, and 90% of the people on the course were white, and they left thinking 'oh, I can work with West African families', and it was a white woman who did it. I think she had been to Nigeria twice or three times, and spent some time with a family and said "they are so kind because they will even give you their food, even if they haven't got much, they will give it to*

you" in a very patronising sort of way, and I'm not talking about that level of awareness and you would be surprised but you still have people operating in that kind of way and I suppose it is about the degree to which people can actually take on board, you know and look at interactions and everything... there are two forums just within this office that work could take place, plus we have our central training section and social services training section. So they could have a series of days looking at race and culture and all that sort of stuff ... But the thing is, ever since I have been here, I think we have had one debate on race and as it so happened I was the person who had put it on the agenda".(African.)*

This long passage makes it clear that the issue of the barriers between black and white women were being constructed within the context of a specific organisational setting where the issues of 'race', racism and culture were thought to be continually marginalised and/or reduced to simplistic and patronising 'culture tours'. This resulted in the discussion of similarities and differences within gender group quickly moving into a discussion of the institutional approach to issues of 'race', racism and culture, and the organisational practices which authorise this approach. Experience of a white woman's approach to a specific training issue is used to both exemplify the problem and to justify the argument that black and white women's experiences are so different as to prevent any meaningful fluidity across the boundaries of 'race' and culture. The field of contestation is racism, but it is spoken through a reification of 'race". This has been evident throughout the accounts where there has been an emphasis on 'struggle', 'fighters' etc. Thus implicit in these sequences is the idea that if there was no racialisation and racism, then there would be no need for these terms. The situation with black men is slightly different.

'Us' and black men

Henderson has suggested that black women stand in equivalent distance of difference and identification with white women and black men. Black women's simultaneity of discourse delineates the specifics of the relation to one or the other but addresses both these groups as ambiguously (non) hegemonic. We have already seen from the above extracts that the black women speaking here certainly point to their difference from both white women and black men. However it is less clear that they draw points of different but equi-distant identification between the two. Indeed with regard to white women social workers, identification was at the very best fragile, even if there was variation in the ways in which speakers constructed the boundaries. Let us listen now to how speakers construct relations with black men social workers. It will be seen that the most notable point is that the discursive construction of difference between them and black men was less sharply defined for two reasons. One is because the talk was often more embedded in reflections on the general difficulties facing them as *black* women social workers. The following lengthy extract was a typical formulation.

10.a." *When I say I am a black woman, I know my black male colleagues find that terrible, if we are talking about racism and I talk about sexism, they say why are you talking about sexism, and I say I am oppressed and you oppress me sometimes, and they can't see it ... but as a woman as well, I experience sexism, and the power issues when I go into certain schools and talk to headmasters and when I am on the phone, and maybe to some headmasters I am speaking, I might speak recieved English, you know white English. So they think it is a white person coming in to see them, and when they see you it is like hey "hello"?!. After that they never return calls, ... the one particular headmaster who is working with one of my Asian families, I have been trying to contact that man since December* (six months) *to talk about work we are*

317

doing with this particular child, and I have only just managed to get in touch with him. ... I said the parents are concerned that you said he needs to go to a residential school, and they feel if that is going to happen they want him to go ('home', ie to country of parents origin). *And he sort of said to me, well the family is the one who said they want him to go ... and anyway we haven't got the resources* (needed for) *this child ... I said, well if he does need it, what are you going to do? I personally don't feel he needs it, residential, ... but educational psychological work alongside him ... and his family. And he goes, no, because there is no consistency with the family home, and whatever work is done in school, would it be followed up, and he thought there were more severe cases in the school ... And I was so annoyed, I said I will get on to our psychologist and services and I put the phone down, and I spoke to my team manager about it, and ... I asked him to phone the school, that man, to me, I said to my manager that I cannot prove that it is to do with me being a black woman social worker professional, and he is a white male head teacher ... and I found it really, really offensive".* (African-Caribbean.)

What is notable about this is that while she starts off by referring to the points of difference between black women and black men social workers which arise because of the power inequalities associated with gender, she gives far more time and energy in the pace and tenor of her account to the issues which arise from racism and sexism in relation to white men. This is where the reader 'feels' the strength of the obstacles she encounters during the course of her work. Of course the irony is that the interaction between herself and the headmaster is mediated by another white man (her manager), but this only serves to reinforce the sense embedded in the account that it is in this relation that her gendered 'self' is most acutely felt.

The other reason why boundaries between black women and black men are less sharply delineated arises from the ways in which meanings are conveyed through non-verbal forms of communication, for example tone, facial expression or other bodily signs. It was these which often acted to emphasise the relative strengths or weaknesses of the delineation between themselves and black men in comparison with white women. The reading of these signs was intimately connected to the interaction between two black women: one as interviewer, the other as interviewee. For example:

11.a. [G.L. But then I want to ask you, black men suffer racism too ... they may not have the same kind of gender issues, ... but they have racism as well. So if the marker between black women and white women is racism, and that is the key issue that makes black women strong, then wouldn't it just make black **people** strong?] *"Yes it does make black people strong, but specifically if we are just going to relate it to white women, I would have to say yeah, that is for me one of the higher dividing things, but yes black men experience racism as well, but I think black women we can experience oppression from our black men even in a professional setting as well as in the home or social settings as well. So it is like in a cocoon and we are just fighting everybody, just to get what we want."* (African-Caribbean.)

Her use of the words "one of the higher dividing things" in connection to the boundaries racism constructs between black and white women immediately suggests that the points of tension and distinction between black women and black men will be less emphatically enunciated. So while this speaker consistently raised points about the differentiations between black women and black men, she always suggests a more absolute divide between black and white women. Racism is privileged because "racism tips the scales you know".

Brooks-Higginbothom (1992) has argued that "race acts as a 'global sign' or 'metalanguage', since it speaks about and lends meaning to myriad aspects of life that would otherwise fall outside the referential domain of race" (p.253). Acting as a metalanguage it simultaneously provides a resource against racist subordination, whilst occluding problems of power internal to black communities around issues of gender, class or sexuality, and thereby obstructing their resolution (p.273). This twofold process is in evidence in extracts 10 and 11. The effects of the hegemony of 'race' as a metalanguage are such that these speakers appear less willing or able to construct a harmony of interests within the same gender group, and tend to soften the boundaries of difference between themselves and black men. This does not mean however that they do not speak such a boundary at all but rather that we need to be cognisant of the contexts which provide the frame within which their accounts are constructed, and listen to the subtexts which are embedded in their speech.

Colouring the category: 'Racing' the experience

In their different ways the authors considered at the beginning of this chapter argued for a reading of 'experience' against the grain of 'commonsense'. Rather than taking its ontological status for granted 'experience' needs to be situated in wider configurations of social, cultural, economic and poitical relations if the specificities of certain constellations of 'experience' are to be excavated. Only through such a situational reading can the subjectivities and identities produced by 'experience' be understood and analysed. But added to the 'big' locations along axes of differentiation which organise social formations are the more micro contexts of, for example, specific families or specific workplaces and occupations. These too need to be recognised as the contexts in which archaelogical cross-readings such as those proposed by Scott, Mohanty and Henderson occur.

It seems to me that there are three areas which are of particular interest in this cross-reading. Firstly there is the question of the processes by which concrete historical subjects are created and the place of 'experience' in that. Secondly, there is the issue deriving from Mohanty's concern about what happens when 'experience' is tied to issues of 'race' and racism (as well as gender, sexuality, class), ie what happens when the category is 'coloured'. Thirdly, there is the issue of the relation between multivocality and the fluid positionings black women social workers occupy.

Scott's argument is that "what counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straighforward; it is always contested, always therefore political" (1992, p.37), and that to think of it in this way "... does not undercut politics by denying the existence of subjects, it instead interrogates the processes of their creation..." (1992, p.38). This immediately opens up the possibility of thinking about the 'subject of experience' as at once shifting and multiple because she stands at the intersections of complex webs of relations organised around numerous axes of power and differentiation. While rooted in the terrain established by feminist constructions and valorisations of the category, it opens a way out of the totalising and universalist formulations of 'women's experience' common to early second wave white (and western) feminists. For whilst it demands that the experience which is spoken is heard, it also demands that the circumstances of that speaking are excavated and analysed.

Most of the speakers considered here proceed in such a way that 'experience' is taken as the starting point of explanation. It is precisely the ontological or foundational status of their collective 'experience' which confirms the importance of employing black women social workers in Social Services Departments. This 'experience' is said to produce an understanding, or form of knowledge, about the dynamics of racism (and

class) and oppression both historically and comtemporarily, which much of the client base will be familiar with. 'Experience' becomes the connective tissue binding social workers and clients and it is this which is vital for Social Services Departments. Their employment is an occupational and professional necessity based on a perspective of 'who feels it knows it'. At this level the women speaking here reproduce a way of thinking about and using 'experience' which both Scott and Mohanty critique. But I want to argue that if we take to their logical conclusion, their injunctions to interpret and locate 'experience' in light of the web of relations which produce it, then the voices of these women suggest a more complex use of the category. This is precisely because it is a situated use.

The women were attempting to construct their own specificity in the context of a set of questions about their employment. Being asked these questions by a black woman interlocutor ostensibly established an interaction in which the categories 'black woman' and 'black women's experience' needed no preliminary introduction. But even in these conditions, and perhaps because of them, a more complex mobilisation of the category 'experience' occured. For I would suggest that whilst there was a harmony of voices constructing a unitary 'black women's experience', many also spoke as if they had a peripheral vision of the contingent nature of 'experience' and its complex gendered, 'raced' and classed production. One speaker referred to the realisation that her institutional location results in her having a different set of 'experiences' from those with whom she had erstwhile constructed community. This distancing arises because her location in 'race', gender and class relations becomes reconfigured, a process which is both unavoidable and painful to her. This is similar to another speaker, who seeks a 'way out' of this 'dilemma of distance' by privileging early 'experiences' of oppression, relative poverty etc, and thus creating a legitimacy and specificity for black women social workers.

This would suggest that if we are to adopt the approach urged by both Scott and Mohanty three further questions have to be asked: what is it that speakers are attempting to achieve by the invocation of a particular foundational 'experience'; who is it that is invoking this 'experience'; and to whom are they speaking? When this is done, awareness of the contingent, produced nature of 'experience' may well be implicit in any given sequence of talk, but being subordinated to what is seen as a more urgent imperative. It is only by applying Scott and Mohanty's theoretical positions to concrete, but none the less historical, subjects that this can be grasped.

If black women social workers were using a foundational 'experience' to authorise their role and place in Social Services Departments they were doing so in an environment in which racism within their workplaces was once again coming to the fore. After an initial 'heyday' in the 1980s when recruitment of black staff to qualified social work positions was a priority in some authorities the situation in the 1990s is much altered. For example, the 1991 Social Services Inspectorate report on "Women in the Social Services" noted both that despite a recognition of the need for a multi-ethnic social work corps, black social workers were often viewed as a problem rather than an asset, and that black women seldom achieved managerial positions because of pervasive racism and sexism. As Community Care (1993) noted, when black women do enter managerial positions within their Departments "they are particularly exposed and isolated, and the institutions are slow to support them - worse, their performance is expected to be peerless. On the converse, there are many 'over-qualified' and experienced black workers, able to perform at higher levels, but discouraged within their organisations which go on to reinforce this perception of 'difficult people'" (p.14). All black workers are affected by the upsurge in racism and one of the measures of this is the demise in the numbers of black people at senior management levels in Social Services Departments.

In this context the 'coloured' or 'raced' nature of the 'experience' constructed by the women speaking here is not at all surprising. It is given a foundational status precisely because it is this which can provide the specificity of the contribution they can offer. They do not become 'good' social workers because of the technical or professional training they recieve, but rather because this is mapped on to a subject who understands the client base of social work.

But recourse to a foundational 'experience' also serves another purpose in this context. By constructing an historical continuity between themselves and previous generations of "fighters" and "survivers" they find a way through and give meaning to the everyday of their working lives. These speaking subjects are then located in an institutional context in which the intersections of 'race', racism and gender are such that their claims to a professional status and competence are being undermined as Departments reorganise in the wake of welfare restructuring and the attack on anti-racism in social work.

If this provides the context for this group of black women's multivocality other issues still arise. One of these is related to the totalising effects which result from privileging 'race'. Because of the closures and erasures which the metalanguage of 'race' can impose, we need a way out by which it is possible to capture some of the complexities and points of difference which can be at work WITHIN the dominant binaries which have organised meaning for people's everyday life. Henderson's notions of multivocality or simultaneity of discourse begins this because it enables us to situate the voices which engage multiple interlocutors in one and the same moment.

For her, black women's speech/writing is profoundly and self-consciously relational but it is this in both an *inter*-relational sense and an *intra*-relational one. For the

simultaneity of discourse through which black women create themselves and claim the space from which to speak, is directed to an external and internal same/other. "What distinguishes black women's writing, then, is the privileging (rather than repressing) of 'the other in ourselves' " (p.147) and in moving into this speaking position she disrupts the "... intervention by the other(s) who speak for and about black women" (p.151).

To enable this "dialogic of difference and dialectic of identity, ... black women must speak in a plurality of voices as well as in a multiplicity of discourses" (p.149). They must as she says "speak in tongues". Black women's discourses are both testimonial and contestatory because her interlocutors are comprised of a range of same/other(s) organised across numerous axes of differentiation and power.

> Through the multiple voices that enunciate her complex subjectivity, the black
> woman ... not only speaks familiarly in the discourse of other(s), but as Other
> she is in contestorial dialogue with the hegemonic dominant and subdominant
> or 'ambiguously (non)hegemonic' discourses ... As such, black women ... enter
> into testimonial discourse with black men as blacks, with white women as
> women, and with black women as black women. At the same time, they enter
> into a competitive discourse with black men as women, with white women as
> blacks, and with white men as black women. If black women speak a discourse
> of racial and gendered difference in the dominant or hegemonic discursive order,
> they speak a discourse of racial and gender identity and difference in the sub-
> dominant discursive order. (p.148).

As 'speaking subjects', then, black women in their multiple selves, move within and across discourses as they communicate in modes of identification and differentiation with those who constitute an element of themselves.

The voices of these black women social workers offer a clear example of such multivocality in a specific occupational setting. One aspect of their occupational situatedness is that the audiences to whom they are speaking are predominantly white women - as colleagues, managers and in some cases organisational subordinates. Because social work is such a highly gendered occupation, white (and to some extent black) men will also constitute the audiences to whom these women are speaking, but these men will much less often occupy subordinate organisational positions to them. It is this aspect of Social Services Departments as gendered domains which in part will account for the marked emphasis in the extracts on the differences between black and white women. They do this by drawing on the discursive repertoires available. As we have seen some of these involve a collective historical and contemporary 'experience' of racist exclusions and marginalisations occuring outside of the employment context. These 'memories' and 'experiences' are invoked to make sense of the work situation but are of course mediated by the occupational situatedness in which they are mobilised.

A second aspect of this occupational situatedness is provided by professional discourses about the nature of social work. For example the frequent references to social work as being about caring, support, help, imparting life skills. In this sense it is clear that the speakers were drawing on a link between a discursively constituted 'black women's experience' and professional discourses in opposition to the situation they find themselves in organisationally: a situation which they feel undermines and devalues them. The result is that their recourse to a set of professional discourses has to be read in the wider context of their racialised and gendered positioning.

This is part of the "multivocality" or "simultaneity of discourse" that these black women adopt. Moreover in terms of organisational situatedness they do so from a

position where they are unambiguously subordinate. However it is also clear that as black women **social workers** they have statutory and organisational power in relation to **clients**, the great majority of whom are white and black women. In this sense they can occupy a position of being "ambiguously (non) hegemonic". It will be remembered that in noting the constituencies to whom black women speak their "simultaneity of discourse", Henderson always positioned black women as in either a relation of identity or difference but never as in any form of dominance. It is clear that in the case of social workers such a formulation cannot be sustained. And in the accounts given here I would argue that the speakers claim to professional authority through the mapping of 'black women's experience' onto professional discourse constitutes them as at once organisationally subordinate and ambiguously (non) hegemonic. This can only be gleaned by "locating the politics of experience".

Chapter 11

Concluding remarks

In this thesis I have developed an argument about black women's employment as qualified social workers in local authority social services departments. Prior to the 1980s, where black women were working in such departments, it tended to be as unqualified social work assistants, often located in the residential work, or other parts of the sector which carried a lower status. By the mid-1980s this situation had begun to change in certain parts of the country and it was this change that I have attempted to analyse.

My argument is framed within a social regulationist perspective and begins with the Foucauldian notion of governmentality. This is concerned with the management of populations and the formation of citizen/subjects who can be incorporated into regimes of power. Central to 'governmentality' is the imposition of identities, but identities which are at once resisted and utilized in the construction of boundaries which differentiate 'types' of people. I appointed this idea in an attempt to understand the link between the formation of a new black subject called 'ethnic minority' and the opening up of professional social work to black women. From this I argued that state regulated institutions and practices were centrally involved in this process of reconstitution of the black subject and I gave some brief consideration to education and policing to illustrate this point. In particular I was concerned to show how black families were identified as a key site through which black populations could be incorporated into the nation on terms which continued to construct them as 'other'.

The identification of the family in this way laid the ground for the inclusion of social work in a project of 'racial formation' in which 'racial time' delineates the historical specificities of articulations of racial discourse. That it is necessary to periodize the specificities of 'race', racism and the black experience as they have evolved in the last

half century was identified by people working at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies more than a decade ago, as is evidenced by their publication 'The Empire Strikes Back' (1982) (see also Hall et al., (1978)). In this, racism was conceptualized as an unstable, shifting and contradictory phenomenon which constantly undergoes transformation, alongside and within wider political-economic structures and social relations. As such black experience in post second world war Britain was envisaged as being structured in three over-lapping but conceptually distinct phases. First, the period of immediate response to what was seen as relatively large numbers of black migrants coming into Britain: the period from 1948 up to the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962. The second phase, from 1962 up to the early 1970s, when various policy responses were initiated by central and local state agencies which were designed (albeit in an uneven way) to deal with the 'problems' associated with black settlement. The third phase identified by the authors of 'The Empire Strikes Back', began in the mid-1970s and continued up to the time of their writing. This period was characterized as a time of crisis management in which the control and containment of forms of black resistance to racist exclusions was given priority. This is the moment, among others, when a discourse of community policing occupies public debate and different black families are marked out as either comparable with, or resistant to, a project of relegitimation. It is clear from discussions in earlier parts of this thesis that black family forms and relations were identified as barriers to processes of assimilation and integration in all three of these periods. But in each of these phases it is a specific black subject which is referenced – i.e. the shift from 'coloured', through 'immigrant', to 'ethnic minority' – and each of these connotes a different dimension of the 'problem' to be solved. What is particularly important about the 'ethnic minority' is that this subject has the status of being citizen/subject whilst simultaneously being constituted as an essentialized 'other' who is now a permanent figure in Britain. The terms of their incorporation into 'the nation' are then necessarily distinct from that of the 'coloured' colonial subject, or of the 'immigrant'. It is because of this shift in the type of black subject that I argue

that the period of the early to mid-1980s constitutes another moment in racial time. This is also the time when a number of local authorities controlled by left Labour administrations attempted to incorporate many of the demands of those social movements which had claimed social reparation for socially produced disadvantage. Within such local authorities this took the form of equal opportunities policies and structures which were utilized as an alternative way of resolving some of the many tensions which were produced by and reflected the organic crisis.

Periodization of the politics of 'race', racism and black experience in this way facilitates thinking about the movements and contradictions in the constitution of different black subjects and it is in this context that I have argued social work came to occupy a specific place in the process of incorporating black populations into the field of governmentality. At a time of organic crisis, in part signified by the increasingly violent contestations between police and sections of the black communities, social work, as a specific, if contradictory, arena of the local state, is identified as a key institution in the mediation of this contestation. This is why the riotous rebellions of the early 1980s acted in part to create an impetus for local authority social services departments to seek to recruit and train professional black social workers. But why social work which by its very nature only works with specific families? Precisely because social work is the agency which monitors, surveys and moralizes those families which are constituted as 'deviant', 'pathological' or 'dysfunctional'. As such, social workers could be involved in the project of 'normalizing' and 'moralizing' those black families and individuals caught within its net whilst articulating this within a discourse of developing 'ethnically sensitive' services and therefore expressing its professional self-image.

While this has been my general argument, more specifically I have traced the ways in which a process of racial formation occurred in two local authority social services departments. I have argued that there were several layers which provided the context

in which this process took place. The first of these layers is produced by the structural relations between central and local government where central government sets the legal and financial possibilities and constraints on local authority action in matters racial but the local level is designated the proper location for the immediate management of 'race' and 'ethnic minority' populations. Thus parliamentary debates on pieces of legislation through which local authorities were able to act on 'race' were saturated by racial discourse but in a way in which this was both seen and not seen. In contrast to this elusive visibility in central government debate, the equal opportunities agenda of the 1980s legitimated explicit discussion and development of policy on 'race' at the local level. This was, of course, a specific and time limited moment which was to be eroded by the successive and successful attacks of Thatcher administrations and sections of the media. Moreover I argued that the focus on promoting equality of opportunity in employment by local authority social services departments was eroded by the rise of a discourse of new managerialism which accompanied the restructuring of welfare by central government.

Yet another layer framing the employment of black women qualified social workers was the rise of a discourse of ethnicity within the profession of social work. In this sense I argued that a form of contestatory politics articulated by black welfare professionals intersected with the equal opportunities 'moment' in local authorities expressed in the 'ethnic sensitivity' and 'black social worker' models which together were the means by which appropriate services were to be delivered to ethnically diverse client populations.

By charting a set of connections which move from the macro-social – to central/local government relations – to local/professional discourses I have suggested a framework in which a space was created for the entry of black women into qualified social work positions. But a framework for such entry is not the same as the everyday experience

of such employment and to gain some insights into the ways in which this was understood I analysed the discourses spoken by participants in the study.

For managers it was clear that an enunciation of issues of 'race' and racial quality in relation to black women staff as difficult. I argued this difficulty arose because they attempt to harness and articulate a language of equal opportunities to and through a language of new managerialism. However these do not offer the discursive repertoires through which to capture and 'know' the issues relevant to and perspectives of black women social workers themselves. Rather the managerial 'speak' voiced by the participants who held managerial positions pointed instead to their own struggle to negotiate two very different agenda in a context of what Clarke has called 'conditioned indeterminacy' (forthcoming). Thus managers speak to and through their own organizational location, a location which demands that they negotiate the tensions which arise from a continued rhetorical commitment to a politics of racial equality at a time when departmental arrangements and priorities emphasize very differing agenda.

Against the 'voices' of the managers we heard those of black women social workers themselves. Here there was a clear mobilization of a discourse of 'black women's experience' as a means of creating and legitimating the specificity of these women's contributions to their departments. What these accounts showed was that racial and ethnic categories are simultaneously occupied and resisted as a way of mediating a set of working lives which are over determined by 'race' and gender.

Overall then I have presented a deeply textured narrative of the creation of spatially specific employment opportunities in one occupation. I have tried to identify the webs of social and discursive relations which position black women social workers in ways which constitute them as essential racial/ethnic subjects and which have the paradoxical effect of providing an employment opportunity whilst simultaneously

constraining their professional autonomy. It cannot be overstated that this is an argument about employment in *welfare* which articulates with a specific moment of racial formation. Even then it remains for further work to be carried out which explores the applicability of this approach to other sites of state organized welfare, whilst within social work further research on the formation of other racial and gendered subjects is required if the picture presented here is to be contexualized.

APPENDIX ONE

AIDE MEMOIR FOR INTERVIEWS WITH BLACK WOMEN SOCIAL WORKERS -
TOPIC AREAS

1. **Employment history, including level of qualification, training etc**

a) how long a social worker
b) what qualifications
c) any other training courses of significance
d) how long employed by this authority
e) employed elsewhere before? - where?/How long?
f) present grade/ grade at entry

2. **Employment duties etc**

a) what section of the SSD are you in (eg families, elderly, disabled, fostering/adoption)
b) are you in a special post - eg S.11 or any other
c) do you have any management responsibilities - eg budgetary, staff, inter-agency
d) are these 'official' responsibilities - if not how do you come to have them
e) how many people are in your team
f) how many are social workers
g) do you know how many are qualified

3. **Career opportunities**

a) is there a formal career development structure
b) what are the mechanisms for using this structure
c) are there any obstacles which prevent their full use
d) have you been able to utilise the structures and with what'outcomes
e) are there any particular obstacles which black women face in attempting to use these
   structures
f) if absence of formal career structure by what processes do you advance your career

4. **Client Groups/Colleagues ('Race'/ethnicity/gender)**

a) what is the social profile of the clients on your caseload
b) is this profile broadly similar or significantly different to that of other staff in your team -
   if different in what ways and what do you think about it
c) what is the ethnic and gender breakdown of the team
d) is there any overlap between the ethnic/gender composition and the seniority scale in the
   team
e) generally speaking does there appear to be any pattern in the composition of teams in terms
   of ethnicity and/or gender
f) if yes. do you think this is significant at all
g) does gender and/or ethnicity provide a basis for forms of solidarity amongst groups of
   colleagues

5. Own ethnic identification

a) how do you identify yourself in terms of 'race'/ethnicity

b) what is the basis of this identification - eg colour, religion, geographical or cultural origin/descent

c) does this identification extend so that you feel part of a specific community in racial/ethnic terms - if yes, how do you identify this community

d) if and when you get clients from this community do you express recognition of common group status - eg in forms of address, language, mode of dress

e) do you think this helps or hinders the work process

6. Professional identity/status

a) would you describe social work as a profession

b) if so what features make it so

c) does the requirement for professionalism create any barriers between yourself and clients with whom you feel you share your ethnic identity

d) similarly does the requirement create forms of identification with colleagues of differing ethnicity

e) are these barriers/identifications inevitable - why/why not

f) do these barriers/identifications have any specific implications for women social workers who are from communities defined as ethnic minority

7. Why black women staff

a) why did you become a social worker

b) do you think there are any special qualities/experiences which black and other women defined as ethnic minority can bring to social work

c) why are these important (or if don't think there are - what do you think about the idea that there are any special qualities/experiences)

d) can white social workers and/or black men bring them as well

e) if yes why/ if no why

f) if the work of the team/section is to benefit from these special qualities/experiences what kinds of organisational structures and processes are required

g) do they exist in this authority

h) if not - what are the barriers to them

i) how do these barriers affect the working life of black and other women social workers defined as ethnic minority

j) are links between the Department and ethnic minority community organisations important if any special qualities/experiences ethnic minority women can offer are to be realised

k) do such links exist here and how do they operate

8. Management perceptions of 'race'/ethnicity

a) does the authority have an EOP/EMRK policy

b) how does it work - eg in recruitment, on-going monitoring etc

c) does it affect the daily work process

d) what do you think of the policy

e) do you have any sense of the way in which management staff view issues of 'race'/ethnicity

f) how do these views express themselves

g) are they different from your views - in what ways

h) *in your view do management staff have different expectations/ treatments of staff of different 'race'/ethnicity*

i) if there is a difference - how does it affect the work - eg allocation of cases etc

j) *is there any attempt at organisational level to anticipate, pre-empt and relieve any of the tensions which may arise between yourself and colleagues/clients as a result of ethnic and professional identifications/divisions -*
please give examples

9. Processes of change (links to recent legislation and the changes brought about)

a) can you identify any key dates which have marked changes in the work of the department

b) why are these particularly significant

c) what has been the impact of the recent legislation on your work and that of the team/section

d) have there been any organisational changes as a result of this legislation

e) have the legislative and/or organisational changes resulted in any new opportunities for you/other women social workers who may be defined as ethnic minority - if yes why, if no, why not

f) (for those working on the Community Care side) has the introduction of the 1990 Community Care and National Health Service Act had any impact on your work

g) are there any aspects of the CC plan which have potential to radically affect the work of black women social workers/ other women defined as ethnic minority in the authority and/ or their clients

h) *why is this so*

i) any other similar legislation, policy or organisational changes with similar potential

j) (for those working on the Children/Families side) has the introduction of the 1989 Children Act had any impact on your work

k) does the Act offer any new opportunities for black women and other women social workers defined as ethnic minority - why is this so

l) are there any organisational barriers which prevent the exploitation of these opportunities

10. Futures

a) if you could have free reign to organise and staff the department in any way how would it look and why

b) what direction is the organisation actually taking

c) assuming you stay in this organisation where do you expect to be in five years tim

APPENDIX TWO

<u>ARE YOU:</u>

*   A woman whose origin or descent is from a community defined as ethnic minority?

*   Are you also currently employed as a social worker and carrying out social work tasks?

*   Are you a woman manager from the above communities?

*   Are you none of the above <u>but</u> are you a manager with responsibility for staff in the above categories? (male or female; ethnic minority or ethnic majority)

*   Would you be willing to participate in a research survey being carried out by the Open University?

TOPIC AREAS

If the answer to these questions is 'yes' I would welcome your volunteering to be interviewed by me for about one hour. The discussion areas I want to cover include the following: what has been your experience as a woman social worker from a community defined as ethnic minority; do recent legislative changes, such as the Children Act or the NHS and Community Care Act, offer opportunities or impose constraints on the career opportunities for women from these communities; what particular skills can women from these communities bring to Social Services Departments; what kinds of problems do such women face; are these related to ethnicity and gender; how do ethnicity and gender impact on your work; what are managements views on issues of racism, ethnicity and gender.

TIMESCALE

I plan to carry out the interviews during the **last two weeks of April**. If you are willing to volunteer please return the tear-off slip overleaf to the address indicated. Please give a contact number and/or address where I can reach you to arrange a specific date and time for interview.

THE PROJECT

The interviews are part of a research project into the experience and position of women social workers from the black and other communities defined as ethnic minority in the context of organisational change. It is being carried out by a black woman.

PERMISSION

I have the agreement of the Department's Director and Paul Dolan at Louisa Ryland House, to carry out these interviews. **ALL** interviews will be in the <u>strictest</u> confidence and none of the information given or views expressed will be attributed to participants by name or any other method of identification.

Many thanks for your support in this.

Research Project on Black and Minority Ethnic Women Social Workers

I am willing to be interviewed in connection with this research. I understand that all information given will be anonymous.

Name (block capitals)..

I can be contacted at/on..

....

Times when NOT available..

Please reply to: Gail Lewis, c/o Dr. E. Saraga, Open University, Parsifal College, 527 Finchley Road, London, NW3 7BG

APPENDIX THREE

TOPIC AREAS FOR MANAGERS

1. Could you start by outlining your job:
   - areas of responsibility
   - staff responsible for
   etc

2. Could you give a brief description of the structure of the area office
   eg - division between two divisions
      - number of teams
      - structure of management etc
      - total number of staff in the office
      - gender/ethnic breakdown of staff

3. Does the Directorate have an EOP/ERMP
   If yes how does this operate at Area office level
   Is it part of you responsibility to ensure that equal opportunities are followed
   Please give examples

4. What skills/qualities do you expect from the social workers etc on your staff
   - eg professional, interpersonal etc

5. Do you think it is important that the Directorate/Area office teams have black women
   social workers.

   - Why/Why not

6. Do you think there are any special qualities which black women social workers can offer
   the Directorate.

   - What is the basis of these qualities (where do they come from)
   - Why are these important for the Directorate
   - Are these qualities more important in some aspects of the work than in others (Egs)
   - How do these qualities differ from those white women offer

7. What steps are taken (ie at policy, procedural, structural level) to ensure that the
   Directorate is able to fully utilise these qualities (ie black women's).

   - Are there any managerial implications which arise from this.

8. Do you think that differences of 'race' and gender are reflected in the workplace at all
   eg in terms of - relations amongst staff
                  - relations with clients

   If issues of racism arise in the office how are they dealt with

9. Give a summary of the ways in which the recent legislation has affected the structure and work of the Directorate/Area office.

   - Do you think there are any particular aspects which affect black women social workers differentially

   - Similarly with the recent reorganisations

10. Future:

   - if you had free reign to organise the Directorate what would be the first two or three things you would do

   - what direction do you see the Directorate actually going in

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