

Politicking the Personal: Examining Academic Literature and British National Party beliefs and wishes about intimate interracial relationships and mixed heritage¹

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Abstract

Drawing heavily on our earlier work in this area (Perry and Sutton 2006; 2007), this article discusses the issue of Intimate Interracial Relationships (IIRs) within the context of the UK Government's current concerns with social cohesion and provides an overview of the literature on hate and prejudice against those in IIRs in the UK and USA. Following an examination of the official statistics and the numbers of mixed race people in England and Wales, we move on to provide a brief but disturbing glimpse of what it would mean if the BNP's long-term dream of winning a national election were actually to happen in light of their Official Website published proposed policies against IRRs and mixed heritage people.

“There is no better point of departure for sorting out the type of racial community we really want than the subject of interracial intimacies.”

(Kennedy, R. p33. 2003).

Introduction: Intimate Interracial Relationships, Multiculturalism, Social

Capital and Cohesion

We would like to begin this article by making one major point. Namely, that while in this article we focus upon the UK and USA, we are in no doubt that it is extremely important that academics understand more about how Intimate Interracial Relationships (IRRs) are the target of hate groups and hate crimes in other countries. In this article our main ambitions are simply to play a part in beginning to get this relatively taboo topic on the policy oriented academic agenda. Clearly much more research than that which we have conducted is required, and while that is beyond the scope of our current work it is needed to examine this strangely neglected topic to any degree that might help to fill this important knowledge gap.

At the time of writing, despite criticisms, the British Government's current 'race relations' agenda remains focused upon closing equality gaps by promoting social cohesion. The primary objective of this social cohesion policy making is to facilitate better bonding and bridging capital for minority ethnic communities in British society. The Government Cabinet Office's concepts of bonding and bridging capital are taken from the work of Putnam (2000) and an earlier Cabinet Office Strategy Unit paper (2002). Putnam, a political scientist, exploits the concept of social capital that was first developed by Bourdieu (see: Bourdieu 1986), and later by Coleman (1988), to show how people secure benefits as members of social networks, as a feature of communities and nations (Walters 2002). Putnam's bonding capital is essentially

those aspects of a community's life such as family, religion, language and culture that links its members together. Bridging social capital refers to the networks that link members of a particular social group with wider society. The British Government's aim to develop community cohesion is based upon seeking to achieve the primary objective of developing more bridging capital within minority ethnic communities – against the straining benefits and the purported drawbacks of bonding capital in those communities.

Explaining that a lack of bridging capital might account for the relatively large economic disadvantages of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Britain, the Cabinet Office Report, Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market (2003), goes on to say that it is not so clear why Black Caribbeans experience such large economic disadvantages – since they appear to be the most socially integrated minority ethnic group. Here, it is important to emphasise that the crucial, indeed the only, empirical measure actually used to date by the British Government to determine the extent of social isolation between white and minority ethnic communities is the percentage of men and women from different minority ethnic groups, living in the Greater London area with a white partner (Cabinet Office 2003. p37). Therefore, one of the Government's key measures of social cohesion between ethnic groups and the majority white population appears to be the proportion of those in intimate interracial relationships.

The problem

While the UK Government clearly sees IIRs as a measure of successful social cohesion, there is a degree of social resistance to such relationships. A recent online

survey conducted by the BBC (2007) found that only a third of Britons think people in the UK are very tolerant of mixed race relationships. Contrary to such optimistic popular headlines such as “Interracial relationships increasingly accepted” (Stokes, 1996), and “Interracial Marriages Ending Barriers” (Fletcher, 1998), intimate interracial relationships (IIRs) frequently evoke hostile, even violent responses. Those engaged in or perceived to be engaged in IIRs, are subject to ridicule, abuse, even violence. In this article we draw links between prejudice and violent victimization – hate crime – perpetrated against interracial couples in both the UK and USA. This is a strangely neglected area in criminology and other fields of bias, prejudice and hate crimes research, particularly since contemporary work in this area, for example, suggests that a great deal of ‘racial’ violence has for many years been attributed to retaliation in the face of men and women crossing the dual boundaries of ‘racial’ and sexual propriety (Perry 2001; Hopkins Burke and Pollock 2004). This was the tragic lesson learned by black murder victims Anthony Walker, killed in Merseyside (UK) in 2005 and Jody-Gaye Bailey, killed in Florida USA in 2006. Both were killed by young white men offended by their relationships with white men and women. The most dramatic illustration are the murders committed by Joseph Paul Franklin – it is estimated that between 1977 and 1980 he took the lives of thirteen the black and white victims, all of whom had been involved in IIRs.

Why does this problem exist?

Racialised depictions of sexual purity, dangerousness, appetites, desirability and ‘perversion’ are part of the performative construction of sexual respectability and disreputability, normalcy and deviance. Ethnosexual frontiers are exotic, but volatile

social spaces, fertile sites for the eruption of violence. Racial, ethnic, or nationalist defence and enforcement of in-group sexual honour and purity strengthens ethnic boundaries and subjugates members enclosed inside ethnic borders. Negative images or accusations about the sexuality of ethnic 'others' contribute to the creation of disreputable and toxic outgroups and can be used to justify their exclusion, repression, or extermination (Nagel, 2003: 55).

Our earlier work in the subject area of this article (Perry and Sutton 2006; 2008) focused upon a broad spectrum of hostility to IRRs in both the USA and UK. In this article we develop that work to focus specifically upon the published 2005 general election manifesto of the British National Party (BNP) and writings by its leader, Nick Griffin, regarding IIRs and mixed heritage people (<http://www.bnp.org.uk/>). The BNP have been careful since 2007 to remove from their website many of the papers that we examined for our research. Unfortunately for them, in the world of the WWW that they have so readily raced to exploit, delete never means deleted and their old texts have been copied from their website and archived by us for current and future generations of criminologists, sociologists, lawyers and political scholars.

In the UK, the BNP won 50 council seats in the May 2007 local elections. They received an average of 14.7 per cent of votes within the 742 borough and district wards they contested in England. In the Eastern region, BNP candidates averaged 19 per cent and in the East Midlands 18.5 per cent (Searchlight 2007). In local elections in 2008 the BNP made further small gains and now have 55 councillors (see: http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/elections/results_2008.php), including a seat on the London Assembly (see: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7381633.stm).

Reflecting upon these figures, Searchlight (2007) notes that the BNP is not yet Britain's fourth political party but that many commentators believe unless the current voting trend is reversed it will not be long before it is. This serves to get things into perspective, because the BNP are unlikely to ever win a general election in the UK. This article is, therefore, not intended as a warning of impending nationalist rule in Britain. Rather, our aim is to begin to articulate what might be useful consciousness raising issues for those inclined to vote BNP, or else not vote at all, in local areas where the BNP is establishing political footholds. Our aim is to show also how the BNP have exploited the technology of the WWW to promote their racist messages and use them in a deliberate effort to recruit like minded individuals and sway others to their way of thinking.

Official Statistics for 'racial' mixing in Britain

The 2001 Census found that 87.5 per cent of the population of England and Wales (seven out of eight people) are 'White British'^{II}. And it also reveals that Britain has one of the highest rates in the world of inter-ethnic relationships (BBC 2007). In 1997 a half of black men and a third of black women living in London had a white partner (Modood, et al.1997). However, only a very small proportion of all marriages are inter-ethnic and in England and Wales the figure is 2 per cent. Most of these mixed marriages included a white partner and the most common type of mixed marriage comprises a white and a mixed race partner. Nationally, those who are Mixed 'race' are most likely to be married to a white person. Almost half of young Black men born

in Britain and three in ten Black Caribbean men are married to White women (National Statistics 2007b).

The number of mixed race people in the UK grew by more than 75 per cent during the 1990's to some 677,000 which is around 15 per cent of the minority ethnic population. For the first time, the 2001 census allowed respondents to record their ethnicity as mixed race and revealed that with 50 per cent of those ticking one of the four types of mixed race options available being under 16, this is now the UK's fastest growing ethnic minority group. Mixed race people now account for 1.2 per cent of the total population and they are the fastest growing ethnic minority group in Britain. Nearly three per cent of all under 16 year olds are mixed and nearly five per cent of under-fives (Guardian 2007). And these are national figures, in urban centres such as London, Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham the figures are much higher than this where BME communities are particularly concentrated. For example in Nottingham two per cent of people are Mixed White and Black Caribbean (National Statistics 2007a) and 8 per cent of school age children are Mixed (CRE 2007). In Lewisham, South London, 11 per cent of school children are Mixed.

Research by the Home Office (Salisbury and Upson 2004) reveals that people of mixed race were at a greater risk of crime than all other groups across a range of offence types including racially motivated victimisation. The reasons for this are likely to be varied and complex and without further research speculation is not particularly helpful. That said, it does raise a number of telling questions regarding the likely impact of media and political prejudice against IRRs and the children that are born from these unions. Little is known about the influences of US civil rights

history, news media, popular entertainment television and the movie and music industries upon American and British people's perceptions about IRRs, but in this global Information Age we would hypothesise that they will be significant to say the least. These influences are discussed in detail in the next section.

The Literature on Intimate Interracial Relationships

Our examination of the literature in this area reveals considerable evidence of popular and academic intolerance for 'racial' mixing that is part of a long legacy of discrimination, harassment and hate crimes.

Minority ethnic groups are perceived generally as threatening – in social, economic and political terms and are especially feared, ridiculed and censured on the basis of their presumed sexualities. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) male sexuality is constructed frequently as a dangerous force that is hazardous to white women and a threatening to white men (Daniels, 1997: 93). Moreover, BME women are also feared and reviled or sometimes desired - on the same basis: they are racialised, exotic 'others' who do not fit the Western ideal of womanhood. Additionally, whether male or female, whether cast as over- or under-sexed, BME people are most at risk when they visibly cross the racialised sexual boundaries by engaging in interracial relationships.

On the basis of these controlling images of BME people, white women and especially white men are fearful and suspicious of the sexualities of the 'other'. Speaking of the

white fear of black bodies in particular, West (1993: 119) contends that this fear is rooted in visceral feelings about black bodies and fuelled by sexual myths of black men and women - either as threatening creatures who have the potential for sexual power over whites, or as harmless, desired underlings of a dominant white culture.

White Western culture has long held to disparaging controlling images of the sexualities of black people. Foremost among these has been the tendency to imagine them as (Frankenberg, 1993: 75): "...excessive, animalistic, or exotic in contrast to the ostensibly restrained or 'civilized' sexuality of white women and men". At different times, in different contexts, most non-white groups have been perceived as sexual predators, guided by their animal-like instincts. Since all but the white 'race' were historically held to be subhuman creatures anyway, it was a small step to paint the 'others' sexuality in similar terms. Unlike their 'white superiors', BME people had not learned to tame their sexual desires, nor to direct them toward 'appropriate' people, i.e., members of their own 'race'.

Because the plantation economy of the USA led to large numbers of African people being shipped there as slaves, fear of BME communities 'race' mixing with white Americans has been a much more longer running and intense issue in the USA than it has been in Britain – where the issue of IIRs only arose to any really notable extent following the arrival of the commonwealth immigrants who were encouraged to settle there in the late 1950's. Consequently, there is much more American literature in this area than British. This USA literature does, however, provide important insights into White and Black concerns about IIRs that are relevant to the British experience.

In historically chauvinistic cultures like the US and the UK, it is not surprising to observe popular cultural constructions that reaffirm raced and gendered hierarchies.

What is surprising – indeed dismaying – however is to find images within critical academic discourse that are also problematic for, if not disparaging of IIRs.

Consequently, writers, commentators and others who engage in general discourse that adopts this line cause immense difficulties and tensions for mixed heritage offspring (Ali 2003), feeding and reinforcing more banal popular resentment. As Moran (2001) makes clear, constructions of the racialised and sexualised ‘other’ find scholarly purchase in two popular accounts of IIRs, “juxtaposing rational calculation with irrational lust” (Moran, 2001: 114). The first of these popular notions is exceptionalism, wherein: “Someone with a devalued racial status becomes exceptional by acquiring unusually attractive characteristics through fortune, hard work or both” (Moran, 2001: 114). Only the ‘exceptional’ few can gain access to white privilege via this assimilationist effort. It does not truly challenge or blur the colour line since it is, in fact, so circumscribed by the particular genetic, social and economic attributes of those few individuals.

In contrast, exoticism implies that the rationale for IIRs lays only in lustful attraction to the exotic and foreign ‘other’ – racial differences become a: “...source of sexual titillation” (Moran, 2001: 115). This account accepts the taken for granted stereotype that black people are highly sexualised both physiologically and culturally and it is informed by the aforementioned controlling images that see others in largely sexual terms. Such a construction enables hostility toward interracial relationships deemed to be inherently deviant because they are grounded only in lust – not love – and boundary transgressing lust at that.

While generally supporting of IIRs as a matter of personal choice in a free society, Kennedy (2003: p102) tells us about how ugly and exploitative manipulation can be at the heart of some of these relationships. Notably, however, he does not touch upon this side of things with white men and black women. Nagel (2003) is less supportive of IIRs and describes those in interracial relationships in course and sometimes, arguably, seedy terms as simply ethnosexual Settlers and Sojourners – who are crossing ethnosexual frontiers. The essence of Nagel’s explanation for interracial relationships is couched in a history of what she calls ethnosexual imaginings that basically seems to imply that so many black men are choosing white women in the USA because they conform to the European ideal of beauty and are perhaps eroticised as past forbidden fruit. And the implication of Nagel’s explanation here is that white women choose their black partners because they eroticise them as hypersexual, hyper masculine beings. Strangely, the academic-taboo issue of white men with black women partners is again ignored. However, From Nagel’s same explanatory source of ethnosexual imaginings white men are portrayed as seeking out Asian women because they are believed to be hyper-feminine, petite, exotic and compliant. And yet Asian women are in turn portrayed as choosing white men – *why* - simply because they are economically powerful. Contrary to this position, other writers in the field (see: Letherby and Marchbank 2002), speculate that Asian mail order brides may not be as exploited as many feminist writers suppose, because the Internet may offer them a degree of agency (albeit limited) that they otherwise would not have in seeking better educational and economic conditions. Letherby and Marchbank (2002) also suggest that the reason South East Asian women are attracted to white American men is because they look like Hollywood movie stars. The source of this revelation is a US

Government report on the mail order bride industry

(www.wtw.org/mob/mobappa.htm).

Given the statistics regarding the much lesser proportion of black women in white black interracial relationships in both the UK and the USA, more research is needed to determine the extent to which these statistics are shaped by community pressure, physical attraction (or lack of) on the parts of either male or female notions of desirability, or opportunities to meet potential partners.

Nagel's (2000) work is important in that it enables us to lay down some obvious ethno sexual hypotheses that we can then test through research in this area to understand why the statistics on IIRs are so gendered. This is an important area for social policy, not least from the perspective of Asian men and Black women, who it appears from an analysis of the literature, must be – when compared to Asian Women and Black men - either lacking in social and economic opportunities, confidence, freedom or notions of desirability. And it is also important to seek out the truth regarding existing interracial marital choices - rather than relying upon a convenient academic reworking of old ethnosexual stereotypes by way of explanation. Unfortunately, these simplistic, and racially offensive, explanations are all that Nagel offers to explain these socially compelling statistics. But, in her final paragraph Nagel (p.261) paradoxically refers to those in IIRs in a more heroic vision as ethno sexual resisters, revolutionaries and innovators who overcome the scrutiny of observers. Clearly, without any empirical research to go on, Nagel is covering her bets as to the motives and private meanings in interracial relationships.

Problems occur in Letherby and Marchbank's (2003) attempt to assess what they describe as popular discourse notions that white men who marry with the assistance of online Thai bride marriage agencies are in effect 'buying women' because they are pathetic losers who are ineligible as dating partners in their own society. Without the benefit of any empirical research that takes into account in-depth interviews with these marriage partners, Letherby and Marchbank (p76) are reduced to applying stereotypical female notions of male eligibility in terms of wealth and power with no reference to looks, compatibility and personality. Conversely, USA writers in support of IIRs and seeking to debunk what they describe as myths surrounding sexual deviancy as the main attraction for interracial couples, also lacking any empirical evidence, are left to rely upon their own untested theories regarding the legacy of slavery to explain why there are relatively few white men in black white heterosexual intimate relationships (Yancy and Yancy 2002: 42):

“One may wonder why black women, who attend college in greater numbers than black men, do not interracially marry as often as black men. There are two possible reasons for why this is the case. First, black women have historically suffered sexual abuse at the hands of white men, thereby making it harder for black women to build romantic interest in white men. Second, white women and black men may share a greater affinity for each other due to a shared experience of discrimination by white men. Black women experience both sexism and racism, whereas white men set up the power structure. This gives those two groups little chance for developing an affinity for each other. As we get further away from the period of time when white men were free to sexually abuse black women, we may witness an increase in the number of black women who enter interracial relationships. This will remove some of the

pressure causing this resentment.”

While Yancy and Yancey’s (2002) theory may be true, it is it is contrary to the findings of other research on attraction (Buss 2003) that women in both the USA and UK are particularly attracted to powerful men – particularly women living in the USA. Further, we need also to consider whether the gender differences in IIRs might be explained, at least in part, by the colour line being policed by black men. If this is happening on a wide enough scale then it could mean, for reasons of other racial stereotypes, that many white men feel sufficiently physically intimidated by this as to be deterred from black and white interracial dating. To repeat the point already made, here is a clear case for more empirical research.

Legal regulation of IIRs in the USA

Our examination of BNP beliefs about IRRs is covered within the third and final main section of this article. Before moving on to look at that however, it is useful at this point to examine how American history provides insights into past mistakes that are the natural result of racist policies in this area of private life.

Historically there have been legal strictures against IIRs in the USA. This came into being as early as 1662, when Virginia became the first state in the “New World” to enact legislation prohibiting miscegenation. Shockingly, it would take over 300 years for such prohibitions to be repealed by edict of the Supreme Court of American in 1967. In the intervening years, legal regulation of IIRs in the USA would take myriad, often contradictory forms, allowing “sexual transgress” between white men and some

'women of colour' but not others, while generally banning similar relationships between white women and any *'men of colour'*. As late as the twentieth century, for example, it was a federal offence in the USA to transport white women across state lines for immoral purposes – such that black men travelling with white women were subject to criminal prosecution. Moreover, in 1924, Virginia enacted the provocatively titled “Bill to Preserve the Integrity of the White Race,” which prohibited any white/non-white unions. By 1967, eleven states still had anti-miscegenation legislation on the books.

The prohibitions on interracial unions took a variety of forms, all of which sent very direct messages about the relative value of whiteness over *'colour'*. Most typical were those statutes barring IIRs outright. However, during the era of slavery, these were supplemented by legislation that essentially stripped white women of white privilege in the event of their involvement with black men in particular. So *'defiled'* were women in such situations deemed to be that they could be banished from the community, or required to *'serve'* their husbands' masters. Similarly, any children born of such unions were denied access to their mothers' white privilege by being designated slaves themselves.

Anti-miscegenation laws were primarily intended to police the colour line between black people and white people, thereby preserving white privilege and *'white purity'*. However, as immigration patterns shifted over time, attention turned also to the regulation of relationships between whites and other non-whites – primarily Chinese and Japanese entering the USA in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The western states – California in particular – led the way in restricting marriage options

for Chinese, banning any White-Asian unions. In 1907, Congress went so far as to strip white American women of their citizenship if they married foreign nationals,” such that (Moran, 2001: 32) the: “...marital autonomy of White women was sacrificed to preserve racial distinctions.”

Hostility toward interracial relationships and interracial sexuality is ultimately grounded in the essentialist understanding of racial difference. Boundary crossing is seen in this context to be not only unnatural, but threatening to the rigid hierarchies which have been built around these presumed differences.

Dreams of the BNP

The Mission Statement of the BNP that was published on its official website in the Summer of 2007 is effectively based upon a fundamental desire to keep Britain white:

“...we call for an immediate halt to all further immigration, the immediate deportation of criminal and illegal immigrants and the introduction of a system of voluntary resettlement whereby those immigrants who are legally here will be afforded the opportunity to return to their lands of ethnic origin assisted by a generous financial incentives [sic] both for individuals and for the countries in question.”

This bedrock of desire for a more white Britain is picked up by many articles written by official contributors to the BNP website’s ‘Articles’ section. Despite the Tartuffian

nature of the BNP on the issue of race, an article on the site that was written by an author named as Harry Preston in 2004 is not untypical in seeking to whip up racist fervour:

‘The teeming masses of immigrants and their progeny who now huddle in our inner cities are largely irreducible. They could never be assimilated even if we, or they, wanted it. Their numbers increase prodigiously. The religion of many of them, Islam, which has the meaning of submission, is better fitted to unthinking obedience to religious authority than the mindset of a freeborn man or woman, perhaps particularly a woman.... ...Will we just sit back and throw away the unique achievement and sacrifice of many centuries, supinely casting ourselves into a new Dark Age, through folly and self-seclusion? Or will we be worthy of our history and ancestry and rise to this new, deadly challenge?’

Rather than seeing immigration and its resulting IRRs as arising from colonial links, economic forces and natural mixing between people who are attracted to one another the BNP write about immigration and IRRs in the language of conspiracy theorists as a forced social experiment that has gone wrong. While claiming not to be a racist himself, the BNP leader Nick Griffin engages with the BNP website in what can only be described as a literary form of the child's party game Twister:

“We don’t hate anyone, especially the mixed race children who are the most tragic victims of enforced multi-racism, but that does not mean that we accept miscegenation as moral or normal. We do not and we never will.”

And:

“So while we don’t hate other peoples, we would rather mix with our own. In a nutshell, we want to walk down our streets and see the familiar faces which a hundred generations would all have recognised as ‘British’ – and all normal people of all races feel the same way.”

And further:

“We live in a System in which the current masters of politics, popular entertainment, education and the legal system are overtly, even fanatically in favour of what they call integration, which honest scientists call miscegenation, and which we recognise as a form of genocide.”

White racists’ fears of IIR’s

Arguably there is no element of this planet’s human population that is more concerned about IIRs than the white supremacists who are found predominantly in the USA and the white nationalist BNP movement. Their discourses of race and gender represent an extreme position on miscegenation that nonetheless resonates with popular imagery. Their strictures against interracial unions are an attempt to control and regulate equally those who are not white and not male. The womb of the white woman must be preserved for the bearing of pure, white children. ‘Men of colour’ must not, ultimately, be permitted to defile that vessel (Ferber and Kimmel; 2004).

Moreover, white supremacists in the USA consider white women to be especially to blame for what they call ‘racial suicide’ (see: www.kkkk.com):

Anti-miscegenation rhetoric thus seeks to reaffirm the boundaries between genders and between races, to reaffirm the appropriate “place” of white women and non-white men. (Daniels 1993). Such hostility toward interracial relationships is grounded ultimately in the essentialist understanding of ‘racial’ difference. Boundary crossing is seen not only as unnatural, but threatening to the rigid hierarchies that have been built around these presumed differences. Whether god-given or biologically derived, the white ‘race’ is deemed inherently superior – intellectually or else culturally – and worth preserving for the sake of ethnic group preservation, peace, civilization a just society and even bio-diversity. The creation of race categories and valuations represents a means of identity construction for both ‘whites’ and other ‘races’. ‘Race’ is seen as an essence that carries with it inherent differences between groups, differences which are claimed as justification for ‘natural’ hierarchies. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) states this position very clearly (Sapp, Holden and Wiggins, 1991: 123-124):

“Our main and fundamental objective is the Maintenance of the Supremacy of the White Race in this Republic. History and physiology teach us that we belong to a race which nature has endowed with an evident superiority over all other races, and that the Maker in thus elevating us above the common standard of human creation has intended to give us over inferior races a domination from which no human laws can permanently derogate.”

Strom's treatise on miscegenation (Strom, A at www.FREESPEECH.com) provides ample evidence of this perspective. The title of Strom's essay – "Racemixing - Worse Than Murder: Murder is Homicide; Racemixing is Genocide" - is indicative of the tone of his argument. Strom fears that the increase in interracial births will ultimately lead to the elimination of the 'white race', and with it all hope for progress and civilization. For him and others of like mind, 'race-mixing' constitutes part of the genocidal agenda of non-white 'races'. Strom links the rhetoric of white supremacy with that of anti-miscegenation, arguing that the 'white race's' (Strom, A, at www.FREESPEECH.com):

“. . . continued existence would undoubtedly (sic) be assumed by our superior intelligence and unmatched technology, if it were not for those who practice and promote the genocide of our people through racial mixing. By their actions they are killing us . . . They kill infinite generations of our future. Their crime - the crime of racial mixture - is far, far worse than mere murder.”

Race mixing is deemed to be yet another symptom of the loss of white power and identity, since it violates the sacred order of the established hierarchy. Moreover, it directly threatens the perpetuation of the 'white race' (National Alliance, at www.natall.com/free-speech), since:

“Every White man who commits the crime of marrying a non-White will not be fathering any White children. Every White woman who pollutes her body and her spirit by marrying a non-White will not be giving birth to any White children. And by their actions they will be committing the crime of misleading White boys and girls to

follow their example.”

Consequently, white supremacist miscegenation elicits calls for enforced racial purity as a means of correcting the emerging imbalance in the relationship between ‘whites’ and ‘non-whites.’ The latter must be put back in “their place,” by force, if necessary. Such responses are especially encouraged where the “race-mixing” is “involuntary,” i.e., where white women have been forcibly raped by ‘*men of colour*.’ White supremacists are masters of the perpetuation of controlling images of ‘*men of colour*’ that portray them as “animal-like” or “less than human” in their sexual appetites. Roots “100 Facts About Blacks and Whites” (See: <http://www.americancivilrightsreview.com/african101facts1.html>) makes consistent reference to the “simian-like” nature of Africans, with such phrases as “similar to an ape,” “approximating the simian form,” “Alike that of the gorilla,” or “thus more characteristic of an ape.” For white consumers of this racist discourse, these characterisations distance “US” from “THEM” in a very dramatic way, constituting the “Other” as non-human and therefore not subject to the same respect, rights and protections as their white counterparts.

Keen to be seen to distance themselves from such overt and obviously atavistic race hatred, the BNP have disingenuously adopted the politics of BME identity politics in order to frame the white majority as a threatened tribe in danger of an ethnic holocaust that will make white people an oppressed and victimised minority group ‘in their own country’ leading to a genetic ‘holocaust’ for white British people. Here their arguments are not framed in terms of the old racist fears of ‘them’ having ‘our’ women (or vice versa) but, in spurious genetic notions and cultural loss fears of the

growth of IIRs and the mixed race birth rate. However, BNP leader Griffin and other writers on the BNP website cannot resist hedging their bets by dabbling with white supremacy to promote notions of White European people being on the whole physically, mentally and culturally superior to those who are Black or of mixed ethnic heritage.

The essentialist, mutually exclusive categories of belonging that frame hostility toward those in IIRs assume an either/or understanding of identity, in which one is forced to choose “a side.” Discrete, “normally” impermeable boundaries are assumed. Consequently, identity formation is often concerned with “drawing boundaries, engaging in boundedness, configuring rings around” the categories of difference (Weis, Proweller and Centrie, 1997:214). The task of difference, then, is to police the borders between categories. There is no room for elision or “border crossing,” since this would threaten the “natural” order. This is neatly demonstrated in a review of Jill Olumide’s book *The Alchemy of Mixed Race* (Olumide 2001), by Mansaray (2003) using a quote from one of the authors respondents:

‘As a white woman out on my own, I can go anywhere. As a white woman with my black kids I am called names. As a white woman out with black kids and a black man, I am a ‘white bitch’ and my kids are ‘black bastards’ (p.31)..

Either side of these borders is significant to the extent that each is “posted” with exclusionary signs that keep whites on one side of the fence, and blacks on the other. They are integral, then, in creating the boundaries that inform public responses to IIRs.

The profoundly anti-IIR stance of the BNP that can be read in its manifesto, by clicking on the 'Policies' tab on its official website and in the on-line articles written by its leader Nick Griffin (recently removed from their website) provide, arguably, a written excuse for racist abuse against those in IIRs and against mixed race people. In such a context, those perceived to be publicly involved in IIRs may become vulnerable to attack. With this in mind, Miller's (1995:57) questions can be answered:

"... when does ... confrontation with difference have negative effects: when does it lead to great difficulty, deterioration, and distortion, and to some of the worst forms of degradation, terror and violence - both for individuals and for groups - that human beings can experience?"

The answer: when boundaries are threatened, when men or women, black or white, 'forget their place', when they reach across 'raced' borders and dare to become intimately involved with the 'wrong' person (Perry and Sutton 2006, 2007). The threat must be repressed, and, in the context of IIRs, raced boundaries of sexuality preserved. It is here that hate crime can emerge as a response to either media and/or party political portrayal of these "unnatural" relationships, as a punishment for those in the real world who have chosen an inappropriate partner. Within the essentialist understanding of identities, there is very little space for ambiguity, or for crossing the boundaries between categories of difference. In other words, accountability involves the assessment of behavior as either conforming or deviating from culturally normative standards. Whenever we 'do difference' - which is a recurring effort - we leave ourselves open to reward or censure. So it is that we are discouraged from the "attempt to cross the line, to transgress, desert or quit" (Bourdieu, cited in Fine,

1997:58).

The stuff of nightmares

1. What would happen if the white supremacist dreams of the BNP came to fruition and they formed a government? To begin with, over 4.6 million people^{III} would find themselves living in a frightening and hostile land as unwelcome non-white people who will be re-defined to begin with not as citizens but as “visitors” either from their place of birth outside the UK or otherwise from their ‘ethnic homelands’ overseas. And imagining this nightmare world of BNP dreams their Party leader Nick Griffin writes in the BNP website articles section:

“We all know that our first aim is to once shut the gates on any further immigration, to put an end to anti-white discrimination, and to spend whatever it takes to persuade non-whites to return to their ethnic homelands that Britain once again becomes – and will remain for all time – the fundamentally white nation that it always was before 1948.

And we all know that this will mean that a greatly reduced number of non-whites who have integrated with our society and who accept the new position will be allowed to stay and be granted full protection of the law as citizens. They and their descendants – and any failure or any group to adjust its birth rate to match ours would have to be taken as a sign that they have not integrated and cannot stay – can live here on that basis for as long as they accept the democratically

expressed wishes of the native British whose country this must always be.”

Griffin goes on to describe what would be in store for nearly 1 million mixed race who do not leave the country - the non-white people that he claims to hate the least. In seeking to discourage any further mixing of non-white with white people and perhaps also, presumably mixed race with mixed race people, Griffin's proposed nightmare policies include:

1. Discouraging mixing by inserting negative plot lines in TV soaps
2. Having an education system that teaches children of different races to understand the essentially unnatural and destructive nature of miscegenation
3. Replacing promotion with rejection – but not persecution!
4. Implementing 'national preference schemes' to further weaken any remaining tendency of white young people to seek partners from other ethnic groups.

Summary, conclusions and the way forward

The main focus of this paper has been to explore issues of bias and hate directed at those in IIRs with an aim to provide a review of the literature and determine the way forward for future research.. To that end, there are two main questions that we raised in it. The first arises from a concern to determine what is really down

there at the very roots of much of the racism and hate crime perpetrated in both the US and UK; that is, to probe at what is in effect a taboo area for empirical research in order to find out exactly how popular perceptions of racial and gender propriety shape reactions to men and women involved in interracial relationships.

This question addresses the fundamental need to understand the influences of the past upon the present.

The second question asks about the present day specific dynamics and impact of these prejudices: who is prejudiced against whom, in what way, where, when, why and with what effect? Both of these questions are important. The first is about motivation. When we understand the motivation for offending we can devise policies and strategies to tackle it. The second is about knowing more about the way that something actually happens. This enables us to fine tune policies and strategies to real life situations –to increase their likelihood of impacting on the right people in a sensible way. Knowing who suffers the highest incidence of particular types of race and ethnic prejudice, how to recognise it happening and the seriousness of impact enables us to target scarce resources where they are most needed.

Taking things forward: in order to understand how, where, when and the effect of prejudice and violence against those in interracial relationships it is important to talk with victims. Here there is a great need to undertake grounded research with those currently in IIRs or those who have past experience. Among other things we need to ask victims about their experiences of prejudice to determine what anti interracial behaviour looks like. We need to determine what the repertoires of

anti-interracial relationships are. In other words what do perpetrators of hate, prejudice and bias say to those in interracial relationships during the abuse stage?

Understanding the dynamics of victimisations means finding out from the victims and perpetrators themselves the finer details about these prejudicial and criminal behaviours in order to determine: *who does what to/with whom, where, when, how and with what effect?* Questions focused on these areas are useful because they enable us more finely to tune policing, anti-hate crime reduction initiatives and policy making to fit better the social systems or interpersonal interactions that cause and shape social exclusion, prejudice, anti-social behaviour and crime. In effect, the questions above:

- Reveal previously unknown motivational factors for particular manifestations of prejudice including REP offending choices
- Identify the risks for potential victims
- Help to assess the importance of particular REP attitudes and crime facilitators – such as the influence of the Far Right or other political rhetoric
- Enable us to understand more about what prejudicial attitudes and violence against those in interracial relationships looks like.
- Provide key information to inform strategies for dealing with the problem

Quite clearly then we need to ask what we know about victimisation of those in IIRs and how prejudice affects life chances and choices. Is informal policing of the colour line gendered? And how do men and women do difference differently? Most of the literature in this area is US focused and a peculiar omission in much

of the literature is the acceptance of the need to discuss in great detail the social issues surrounding black men in IIR's with white women – but very little consideration of the same issues surrounding Black women in IIR's with White men. This comparative lack of interest in how racism and gender issues particularly impact upon black women has been highlighted by Mirza (2003: 121):

“Gender is still seen as a white woman’s issue, while it is taken for granted that ‘race’ is a black male issue. Black and minority ethnic women appear to fall into the cracks between the two. They are often invisible, occupying a ‘blind spot’ in mainstream policy and research studies that talk about women on one hand and ethnic minorities on the other.” So that: “In effect, a gap remains between policy and legislation on one hand, and experience and practice on the other. At the heart of this gap is the lived reality of black and minority ethnic women.”

There is a puzzling element of enigmatic and unfinished academic business regarding reactions to interracial intimacies. This article has sought to highlight what we do and do not know about public reactions to IIRs and shows, in particular, that the knowledge gaps in this area are dramatic. If we are to understand how the long lived and hackneyed ethnosexual stereotypes, and their consequent behaviours affect those in interracial relationships, we must engage in research that involves collecting in-depth information from these very people. Here we agree with Ali (2003: 27) that such research should not be about ‘Othering’, rather it should seek to examine: “...how things are and what they really mean to real people – like us.

Whatever the findings of future research, fostering IIRs as government policy would be untenable because, even though the proportion of minority ethnic people in IIRs with white people is seen by the UK Cabinet Office as a sound indicator of social cohesion, albeit an extremely dubious and white-centred indicator, government ethnic matchmaking of any kind belongs in the domain of dictatorships and other totalitarian regimes that both culminated and terminated in the west along with the drive to breed Aryan supermen and women. However, if those engaged in IIRs suffer discrimination and harassment, and others wish to engage or remain in IIRs but do not do so for fear of such treatment, then this is an area deserving policy intervention in any democratic and civic society.

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ENDNOTES

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ⁱ This article is based upon a paper that was presented at the International Conference, Law and Society in the 21st Century. Berlin 2007.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/commentaries/ethnicity.asp>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=273>