Perpetrators of Racist Violence and Harassment

A Runnymede Research Report by Omar Khan
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The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry was a judicial inquiry, not a commission of inquiry. The difference is important. A commission can range broadly around a subject. The Lawrence Inquiry had narrow terms of reference to address “matters arising from the death of Stephen Lawrence and to make recommendations mainly in relation to the policing of racist incidents”. As a result, no significant attention could be paid by the Inquiry to those who apparently carried out the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Nor was there much discussion about those who have committed countless other racist attacks. Remedial action about racist criminals was not on the agenda.

Victims of racist violence bring out in all of us justifiable feelings of sympathy and anger. It is not surprising that most of the research, and the project activity, is around victims. The perpetrators provoke feelings of horror and fear. Perhaps it is inevitable that researchers and care professionals are drawn more to the problems of victims than of perpetrators.

The Runnymede Trust has decided that it is high time to look at what can be done to turn potentially violent racists away from resorting to stabbing young men like Stephen Lawrence. This report is a first step. It summarises the trajectory of work on prevention, and out of this framework suggests what might be done next.
Prevention can roughly be divided into three kinds:

- “Primary” prevention stops something from happening.
- “Secondary” prevention aims to block a second occurrence in an individual where one episode has already occurred.
- “Tertiary” prevention is the activity of working with groups of people or society in general to reduce recurrence.

A Runnymede project would concentrate on primary prevention. Most research and preventative work, we believe, has been and is being done on secondary prevention. This is most visible in the probation field, where probation officers maintain long-term relationships with some offenders. Their skill and expertise would be a valuable resource in seeking ways of doing primary prevention – to prevent people becoming offenders in the first place.

We would like this report to be read both by probation officers and academic criminologists. Moving beyond stage 1, police officers and Home Office officials, as well as people in education and other fields, could help us develop an action research programme around initiatives aimed at preventing racist violence and harassment. We urge you to read our preliminary ideas and join with us in bringing together examples of all the preventative practices that have been tried, both those that worked and those that did not. Let’s learn from what little experience there is.

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Introduction

While some of this endless antagonism seems based upon a realistic conflict of interests, most of it, we suspect, is a product of the imagination. Yet imaginary fears can cause real suffering. (Allport 1954: xv)

In surveying the literature on perpetrators of racist violence and harassment, it soon becomes apparent that there is much scope for further research projects. Furthermore, guidance for probation officers, community organisations and individuals is not extensive and there is a clear need for best practice handbooks for those working in this difficult and sensitive field. However, there is significant material in related fields, and a review of a small sampling of this literature illuminates some of the concerns that need to be addressed in the area. But before addressing the specific research on working with perpetrators of racial violence and harassment in the UK, a brief overview of related literature will help place the issue in an appropriate and forward-looking context. This report is therefore divided into three text sections, with Section IV containing the case study appendices and Section V being the Bibliography.

Section I
The first section deals with the broader topics informing the issue of perpetrators
of racial violence including chapters on:

1. sociological and social psychological literature on prejudice;
2. issues in criminology such as delinquency, and
3. a shorter review of youth cultures and cultures of masculinities.

Much of this literature is theoretical in nature and an overview of these topics will set the stage for the second section, dealing more specifically with perpetrators of racist violence and harassment.

The first two chapters form the bulk of the analysis, in keeping with the notion that perpetrators of racial violence and harassment can be treated in two ways. The first chapter attempts to address prejudice in society and eliminate its appearance, which in turn will limit the numbers of perpetrators. This approach seeks to undermine and eventually destroy the breeding ground for ideas of racial superiority that so often inform offender behaviour. The second chapter addresses the school of thought that criminal behaviour is the true source of all forms of violence, with racist violence merely a subset of a larger tendency. In this case, understanding the roots of criminal behaviour will help identify perpetrators. Policies aimed at reducing the level of criminality will also reduce the prevalence of specifically racialised violence.

Section II

Section II turns to the UK situation specifically. A review of the general history of minority ethnic communities in Britain, especially the range of difficulties faced as 20th-century immigrants and the level of ill-treatment suffered, which constitutes the first chapter of the section. This emphasis is not meant to suggest that such treatment is the only or indeed the dominant experience for members of minority ethnic communities in relation to British society, but it is a significant one with long roots - over 1000 years of them - that affected most black and minority ethnic Britons long before the situation was officially recognised.

In understanding and at times confronting the perpetrators of racist violence and harassment, the origins of the black British experience should not be forgotten. Recent and contemporary policy formulation by central government precedes the discussion on perpetrators of racist violence. There are different areas of focus in working with perpetrators and Runnymede (and any other organisation) will have to decide which area can be test targeted and which area is in most need of further development.
Section II also attempts to meld the somewhat diverse issues of Section I into the topic area of working with perpetrators of racist violence and harassment. Although the literature on this topic is fairly small, the issues involved are highly complex. In addition, it is clear that a single institutional response would necessarily fail to bring about positive change in the next generation. This means that a wide range of bodies and individuals will need to be involved together, in what has been referred to as a “multi-agency” response.

**Section III**

Section III offers some preliminary findings and makes recommendations for further work. As stated above, future development will crucially depend on the aims and goals of the project. In particular, Rae Sibbitt’s three-part typology of individual perpetrators, potential perpetrators, and the perpetrator community suggests at least three different target groups for future action. Not only will each group require different strategies, but any methodology that fails to capture the importance of addressing the communities surrounding perpetrators will miss the crucial opportunity to prevent potential perpetrator groups from forming in the next generation.

This report does not advocate specific ways of approaching a future project for working with perpetrators but offers a background understanding that will suggest the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches as well as the assumptions that lie behind such projects.
Sociological and Social Psychological Literature on Prejudice

Violence is always an outgrowth of milder states of mind. (Allport 1954: 57)

The sociological and social psychological literature on prejudice, including some classical works of sociology on the subject, was originally produced after World War II. Within this subject area there are socio-economic and social psychological investigations of the nature and form of prejudice, with contemporary foci on cognitive behaviour and thinking about difference. A short investigation of some of the major concerns and developments in this literature will hopefully help to place perpetrators of racial violence and harassment within appropriate social, economic, psychological and historical parameters. It might also suggest where and how strategies should target the breeding ground of prejudice, and consider the appropriate steps in recognising and relating to future perpetrators.

Following the harrowing experiences of World War II, there was a great deal of interest in the social and psychological pressures that allowed seemingly normal humans to behave in inhumane fashion towards other individuals and groups specifically because of the communities to which they belonged. Adorno et al’s detailed work, The Authoritarian Personality (1951), attempted to draw
comparisons between certain social, familial and psychological histories and right-wing thinking, which could in certain circumstances create an authoritarian personality type (evaluated by the F scale). These individuals were more likely to insist on the importance of order, draw rigid distinctions between right and wrong, place strong emphasis on obeying authority and traditions, tend to punish unconventional behaviour, sometimes violently, and display generally closed views of the world.¹

One of the work’s key points is that explanations of prejudice should not seek to understand the roots of prejudice in the attributes of its victims, such as the Jews, but rather in factors in the subject responsible for antisemitism. This insistence was a reaction against the commonly held notion that victims of prejudice are at fault, simply because of their presence. Unfortunately, such malformed ways of thinking are still alive today in anti-immigrant hysteria as well as informing the notion that strict immigration policy leads to better race relations. In concluding, Adorno and his co-researchers discovered a lot of prejudice in the United States and were concerned about the possibility that such tendencies might lead to a fascist party gaining support and perhaps usher in even worse developments in the future.

For the purposes of this project, it is perhaps more constructive to examine Gordon Allport’s influential work, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), which also examined social beliefs among Americans following World War II. Allport was drawing on a tradition of sociology that stretched back to Dollard and Myrdal in the 1930s and 1940s, but his insights are worth exploring in some detail.

**Understanding Prejudice**

Allport begins by asserting that rivalries and hatred between groups is nothing new. What is new is that technology has brought people together and in close proximity where before they would have been separated by distances too vast to travel by the means then available. Today, we are so used to this state of affairs that it is difficult to imagine it as being “new”, but it is clear that Allport was also troubled not only by the recent events in Nazi Germany and elsewhere during World War II, but also by the level of prejudice he discovered in the United States. Despite the level and extent of prejudice, Allport also made the significant

¹ In Appendix 1 we revisit the table of Open and Closed Views of Islam, from our publication Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All, because its typology of closed and open views is useful in helping indentify the revelant characteristics of approaches to “prejudice” more generally.
observation that “cruelty is not a desired human trait”. This, he claims, helps to explain why individuals, including Hermann Goering at his Nuremberg trial, deny the cruelty of their actions and seek to place the blame for suffering elsewhere.

Allport’s work seeks out the roots of prejudice in many different factors and conditions, evidenced by his comments that race “had the stamp of biological finality, and spared people the pains of examining the complex economic, cultural, political and psychological conditions that enter into groups relations”. Some of the deep prejudice cited by Allport may be less visible today, in particular the virulent levels of antisemitism and anti-Black racism he encountered in the United States during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Nonetheless, his explanations of the sources of prejudice still seem resonant today. He rejects a definition of prejudice that sees it as thinking ill of others “without significant warrant” because such sentiments can never have “sufficient warrant”. Instead, Allport’s definition of prejudice is as follows:

an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objective qualities ascribed to the group.

Much of this stems from overcategorization, namely when an interaction with one or two members of a group or community is extended to generalize about all the members belonging to that group. These prejudgements are properly understood as prejudice only if they are not reversible when exposed to new knowledge.

Allport’s study is quite exhaustive and he spends a great deal of time looking at social psychological roots in childhood, including the formation of cognitive tools such as categorization, the creation of in-groups and rejection of out-groups. He then shifts to examining group differences and how these can impact on prejudice in society, groups and individuals. Before turning to his discussion of socio-economic factors, it is worthwhile to revisit his typology of degrees of prejudice and the case of violence. This might suggest some of the sources of violent racism in Britain today and possibly chart courses for working with perpetrators of such crimes.

**From Prejudice to Violence**

In *The Nature of Prejudice*, a five-scale typology is employed to understand the acting out of prejudice, a typology where the first element involves the least
amount of active prejudice, and the fifth and last occurs only in those individuals whose prejudice severely impacts on their everyday actions and reactions.

1. The first stage of acting out prejudice is anti-locution; at this stage individuals simply refuse to talk or talk meaningfully with members of other groups, but that is the limit of their prejudiced activity.

2. The next stage, avoidance, is much less passive; here the prejudiced individual tries to avoid members of certain groups but stops short of involvement in acts of outright hostility.

3. Discrimination involves treating members of different groups differently, such that their life chances are diminished. By now, prejudiced actions are occupying a significant proportion of the individual's social behaviour.

4. The next stage is physical attack.

5. This reaches an even more catastrophic form in the final stage – extermination. Allport clearly believes that these stages are progressive; an individual who discriminates against certain groups is bound to have attempted to avoid significant social contact with such groups and those who commit racist violence are highly likely to discriminate as well. Where violence breaks out, Allport sees a number of preceding stages, starting with “a long period of categorical prejudgment”. The victim has long been typed and perpetrators have begun to lose the power to think of members of an out-group as individuals. Furthermore, there is likely to have been a long period of verbal complaint against the victimized minority group, with firmly rooted habits of suspicion and blaming.

One stage leading to potential acts of violent racism is growing discrimination, which can be made worse in a society that enshrines such discrimination in legislation or where it is given credence by “respectable” politicians. Secondly, outside strain on members in a potential perpetrator community is often evidenced in a low economic position, a sense of low status and irritation due to political (non)developments. The impact of these two causes could easily be extended in Britain or any other country, but Allport identifies at least four other developments that could allow prejudiced sentiments to erupt into violent acts, all based more at the local or individual level.

For example, in situations where violence erupts, people have often grown tired of their own inhibitions and no longer feel they can or should put up with unemployment, rising prices, humiliation and bewilderment. In such circumstances, irritation can become a precipitating force. When organised
movements such as the Nazis or Ku Klux Klan (or the BNP or NF in Britain) have established bases in these communities, they are often able to attract such discontented individuals. Significantly, within the structure of such organisations individuals derive “courage and support” and see their irritation and wrath as socially sanctioned. The socio-economic and psychological unrest in individuals is thus given sanction, fostering a climate where violent action becomes a natural outgrowth of prejudiced behaviour, a situation which may not have been the case before.

Even this background of social, economic, psychological and local agitation often cannot be enough to spark violence. Allport envisages some “precipitating event” and argues that once violence breaks out, the operation of “social facilitation” becomes important, with mob violence auguring its own excitement. While this may be an accurate description of riots and mob violence, it does not seem to address the smaller but more common incidents of daily harassment and violence against individuals. As we shall see in section II, these incidents constitute the vast majority of violent racism in Britain.

Theories of Prejudice

There are a number of ways of understanding prejudice and prejudiced acts, from broad historical approaches to specific phenomenological approaches in dealing with a particular situation. Any project dealing with perpetrators of racist violence and harassment will need to be clear about the strengths of each approach and the actions or remedies appropriate in working with perpetrators. Allport considers roughly six approaches with increasingly narrow foci. He adopts all six approaches, arguing that the more causal influences are more immediate in time and more specifiable in operation, but that the more “remote” approaches also offer important causal influences and help explain background scenarios.

1. Historical. The broadest approach is that which emphasises the historical aspects, and considers the background to any conflict and larger societal superstructures. Marxist accounts that emphasise the role of economic phenomena in justifying exploitation fall into this category and offer strong arguments. However, like other historical approaches, Marxist theories often fail to understand why certain groups respond in a certain manner or why individuals act out in varying ways.
2. Sociocultural. A sociocultural emphasis examines the total social context and emerges in analyses of urbanisation, seeing it as a cause of insecurity and uncertainty that further erodes social ties. Sociocultural theorists also look at particular groups and how their understanding of their own history and beliefs determines the sense of group identity.

3. Situational. A more specific approach, classified as a situational emphasis, would understand the more immediate social circumstances such as the multiple influences surrounding a child. It would also examine the employment situation, social mobility, forms of contact with other groups and demographic features such as population density.

4. Psychodynamic. Psychodynamic emphases stress causation and are broadly psychological. Widespread conflict is examined through a lens of what underlies individual and group circumstances. Freudian understandings of developmental psychology and the experience of the infant in its early interactions and affiliations are also enhanced by frustration theory and scapegoat formulation.

5. Circumstantial. Even more immediate analyses of prejudice and prejudiced action emphasise the role of the circumstantial by attempting to understand a person's behaviour in the moment, and divine what the individual believes and perceives at the instant of response.

6. Stimulus Object. The final approach undertakes to study the stimulus object itself. Hostile attitudes are understood through interaction theory, with actions being interpreted partly through the reputation and perception of the stimulus object as well as other considerations, such as life's daily vicissitudes.

Allport argues that the above immediate levels of causation must be combined with other approaches. Much of the rest of his book examines these approaches in greater depth and makes for fascinating reading on the early stages of learning prejudice in childhood and later in life.

For reasons of space, however, this paper now turns to the final section of Allport (1954), on reducing group tensions. Some of the questions will by now be outdated, but a summary of the strategies proposed centres our concerns on what might be done to reduce the overall level of prejudice in society, which is
of course a source of violent racism and harassment in its many forms.

**Combating Prejudice**

Allport strongly advocated a law against discrimination and he was critical of Brown v. Board of Education, the Supreme Court case that desegregated United States schools in 1954, for not going far enough in targeting differential treatment between white and black Americans. Furthermore, legislation can be encumbered by interpretation, and is unable to “coerce thoughts or instil tolerance”. Therefore, he turns to six programs – educational methods, contact and acquaintance programs, group retraining methods, mass media, exhortation and individual therapy – dealing with reducing prejudice, most of which he commends for certain strengths. Contact and acquaintance models have recently received a good deal of attention and emphasis in the United States through the work of Gaertner et al. in the 1990s. However, in his conclusion Allport underlines that any single program or approach is likely to be ineffective, a point resonant in future projects attempting to combat prejudice and violent racism.

**Current Approaches to Prejudice**

More recent theories of prejudice have not adopted the holistic approach advocated by Allport. This is partially explained by the growing institutional divide between psychological and sociological work and also by the growing specificity of academic research. In this context, there have been research investigations into specific forms of prejudice, such as antisemitism, “colour” racism, homophobia and Islamophobia, among many others. There have also been studies of far-right and racist organisations in the United States, continental Europe as well as Britain. Additionally, recent psychological literature has examined cognitive behaviour, stressing the fundamental cognitive errors or flaws in reasoning and cognitive processes made by prejudiced personalities. Recent “postmodern” theory has focused on conceptualisations of difference and some research in prejudice has looked at specific relations arising out of the distinction between self and other. Finally, some theories of aggression are dealt with in the following chapter on criminology more generally.

**Psychological/cognitive errors**

The social-psychological tradition of analysing prejudice also has some of its roots in the work of Gordon Allport, who spent a great deal of time examining
the cognitive behaviour and patterns of young children and young adults. While the ingroup/outgroup distinction was an important point of formation for children, in certain circumstances it could lead to the development of a prejudiced personality type. Some of these sorts of analyses directly invoke Freud’s stages of childhood, where ineffective resolutions of the issues involved at each stage can lead to problematic relationships with others and with society in later life.

Today, however, cognitive errors or mistaken reasoning is often seen as a source of prejudice with recent influential titles such as *Cognitive Deficits in Long Term Prisoners* (Clark 1994) and *Prisoners of Hate: The Cognitive Basis of Anger, Hostility and Violence* (Beck 1999). The literature in this field crosses over into that of criminology, since much of this research is concerned with altering mistaken cognitive processes in offenders, rather than simply evaluating them. Understanding how the mind works is therefore no less apposite in dealing with prejudice than in any other field. While some of this research is undoubtedly an excellent source for understanding the mental processes of offenders, it is clear that rationality and “normal” cognitive processes are only one form of justifying prejudice. Paraphrasing Allport, we should remember that even where rational cognitive processes have been “corrected”, the source of prejudice can linger in emotions. That seemingly well-educated and cognitively stable people continue to hold forms of prejudice, no matter how small, demands that other sources of prejudice are investigated.

Young-Bruehl and the plurality of prejudices

Many theorists note that forms of prejudice often do not follow the sorts of patterns expected by Adorno’s and Allport’s study. Allport cited a study in which individuals who showed strong biases against particular groups were found to similarly dislike other groups, though correlation values varied widely. Additionally, and somewhat surprisingly, prejudiced personalities were found to dislike groups that did not even exist. Thus, invented nationalities were found to be disliked by university Americans despite never having heard of or encountered these apocryphal people.

However, recent research suggests that most individuals today are more specific in their target groups of prejudice. Elizabeth Young-Bruehl in *The Anatomy of Prejudices* criticises Allport for seeing prejudice as a single phenomenon. Instead she focuses on four types of prejudice, each with different
contexts and each fulfilling different needs – antisemitism, racism, sexism and homophobia – though she also emphasises that other forms exist and eschews an empirical study on one form of prejudice. If prejudices are simply classified according to target groups, then the particular needs or desires fulfilled by each form of prejudice are obscured, she claims.

It is a mistake, Young-Bruehl believes, to lump all forms of prejudice together. She similarly criticises cognitive approaches for focusing “on cognitive processes pure and simple” without regard to motivation and without regard for the unconscious. In doing so, faulty generalisations and poor education become the main culprits, with no need to eliminate inequality or question child-rearing practices and social habits as sources of prejudice. This makes prejudice a superficial matter, spread across all cultures in somewhat the same way as perceptual illusions and historical misinformation. To Young-Bruehl, such approaches normalise prejudice, and offer a pithy “just say no to prejudice” attitude in believing that tolerance can be taught.

Self/other

Although sociologists and psychologists have long considered the conceptual issues arising out of ingroup/outgroup distinctions, “postmodern” theory has turned to the concept of difference and the relating self/other dichotomy in more systematic fashion. Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault are influential theorists of this school of thought, but it is works such as Edward Said’s Orientalism that applied these theories to social science and conceptualisations of race and nation. According to these texts, the impact of colonialism and the power/knowledge imbalance in this interaction of peoples indelibly impacted upon the thinking processes of the colonising power and by extension its citizens. Beliefs of superiority soon emerged in which the “other” became an object of derision and a source of all that was opposite to the positive qualities of the colonisers.

Such theories become influential in Britain as it emerges out of the history of its imperial past and comes to terms with the significance of colonialism as a binding force and fundamental aspect of its national identity, especially as the processes of modernisation take effect within British society and within institutions set up during the 19th century. There is no reason to assume that some form of pride in the British nation will lead to prejudice, but the notion of imperial greatness and the unique pre-eminence of a British way of life can
clearly lead to prejudiced conceptions of “other” groups.

These concerns are not simply those of Great Britain, but of Europe and the United States more generally, whose pasts are infused with public and private evidence of prejudice. The peculiar impact of power on such nations has further complicated the roots and manifestations of prejudice. As the extent of this power wanes globally, particularly in the case of Britain, it is important to be vigilant about the potential for a festering sentiment of nostalgia to exhibit real and frightening levels of violence against those who were once the colonised and oppressed and remain at a disadvantage in all postindustrial democracies. The US literature on hate crime, though not analysed here in great detail, offers two important reminders. First, it has given us a definition of hate crime that indicates its sources, conditions and victims, namely: hate crime is seen as a power mechanism which exists for the purposes of sustaining “somewhat precarious hierarchies” by means of violence and threats of violence (both verbal or physical). Hate crime is generally directed toward those whom society has traditionally stigmatised and marginalized. Second, while it is important that hate crime and racial violence are identified as principally, though not exclusively, affecting the marginalised, it is equally crucial to remember that they also actively contribute to that marginalisation.

Concluding on Prejudice

Allport underlined that prejudice ought not to be understood to originate in “one single taproot”. The sources of racial violence and harassment as an extreme outgrowth of prejudice must similarly be multifactorial. This chapter has explored some of the more important historical trends in sources of prejudice and offered an indication of where these theories will be applicable in Britain, particularly in the case of violent offenders. Because such offenders are sometimes thought to be motivated as much by their violent tendencies in general, the aim of identifying these perpetrators, as well as processes for dealing with them, must further turn to criminological theory. Together with an understanding of the roots of prejudice and forms of youth cultures and cultures of masculinities, criminological theory will indicate the programmes and frameworks needed to reduce the number and level of perpetrators of violent racism in the future.
Criminology, Delinquency and Offenders

Murder is among the most horrendous of crimes, but any discussion of violent racism must link the extreme with the ‘everyday’. (Bowling 1998: xiii)

Criminological and psychological literature on deviance encompasses a vast amount of literature that includes theories of delinquency and both socio-economic and psychological investigations of the backgrounds of offenders. The literature on dealing with offenders more generally is helpful because some research suggests that racist attackers are often perpetrators of other crimes as well. A short survey of the criminological literature, specifically the causes of delinquency, constitutes the first section of this chapter.

Early Conceptions of Criminology and Deviance
Classical criminology viewed deviance as part of an empirical question about criminal legal evidence. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, the questions were whether or not the accused committed the act and whether the act was committed of the defendant’s own free volition. In 1764, Beccaria examined criminal behaviour and underlined the processes of seeking out pleasure and avoiding pain, a motif later associated with the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham.
and John Stuart Mill. Indeed, in his influential intervention, Michel Foucault (1977) used the concept of the panopticon, an architectural prison design of J.S. Mill popular throughout the industrialised world, to explain the project of disciplining and punishing the minds and bodies of a class of “criminals”. In effect, the entire development of the 19th century is understood by many followers of Foucault as coinciding with a distinct increase in and outreach of the instruments and bureaucracies of the state, especially through classification, categorisation and enumeration, as censuses began in that century. Some would argue that the process of government even went so far as to create categories, which include the nebulous and debated concept of “criminal classes”.

The category of “deviance” as opposed to “criminal classes” probably owes its origin to Emile Durkheim. Durkheim developed the concept of anomie to describe a pathologised but socially conditioned attitude of despair and hopelessness, which could in cases paralyse an individual from leading a productive or happy life. As a sociologist, Durkheim’s interests were neither mainly nor even in part to do with criminology, but his work begins the process whereby criminological theory and sociological theory become linked. For example, where Durkheim investigated deviance and anomie especially with regard to suicide, later research attempted to understand criminal or delinquent behaviour. The use of his concept of anomie would become crucial for theorists such as Merton, whose work is explored below. Although it was influential in earlier frameworks, this chapter will ignore biological theories that were quite popular in earlier periods but have very few proponents today, though concepts such as “intelligence”, “IQ” and “insanity” continue to provoke debate.

“Lower Class” Theories of Delinquency (Cloward and Ohlin 1960)

As demonstrated above, the notion that certain classes of people have more criminal tendencies has as long a pedigree in criminology as the apparatuses of the state in disciplining and punishing such people. Even today, there are a host of criminological theories that can be broadly defined as “lower class” and even theories that do not isolate the socioeconomic status of the offender as the main driving force often indicate it as a major factor. Many common sense understandings of criminal behaviour, especially including violent behaviour, assume a lower class tendency for such crime, even if different reasons are offered to explain such a class difference. In the case of perpetrators of racial violence
and harassment, it will be important to keep such considerations in mind, but also to allow for the possibility of more complex contributing factors.

One of the earlier attempts to understand delinquency was strain theory, an approach that continues to have adherents today. In essence, strain theorists ask the question “Why do men not obey the rules of society”, therefore viewing deviance as problematic. The answer for strain theorists is that delinquency is caused by the difficulty certain groups experience in achieving legitimate life ambitions or desires that don’t conform to society’s values. Strain theory can be partially classified as a “lower class” theory in the sense that deprivation, discontent and frustration are key elements and that the values of society are determined by powerful people in “higher” social classes. In other words, strain theorists judge that people commit crimes due to their failure to realise goals, usually because their life chances are frustrated, putting a “strain” on their psychological well-being.

Cloward and Ohlin’s (1960) theory of differential opportunity structure can be understood as a major contribution to a form of strain theory. Their work assumes that blocked economic aspirations form the basis of a general feeling of frustration and later criminal behaviour. Furthermore, poor “self-concepts” can cause early psychological damage within young people, a psychological evaluation also offered by other theorists. However, Cloward and Ohlin then postulate that blocked aspirations, a feeling of frustration and poor self-concepts lead directly to delinquency in a specialised gang context. Significantly, gangs have been the subject of much theorising on crime, particularly since they seem to offer social situations where normality is defined differently from that of the dominant culture. As a result “delinquency” becomes an acceptable social condition within gangs, with Cloward and Ohlin seeing such forms of delinquency as “rational” assessments given their poor economic opportunities.

Another significant contribution to “lower-class” theories of delinquency is Cohen’s (1955) examination of middle-class and lower-class socialisation and value systems. Cohen’s most significant contribution is probably his notion of a “middle class measuring rod”. His analysis turns on two noteworthy statistics arising from comparisons between middle-class and lower-class young people, particularly males: the underperformance of lower-class children in the education system, and their overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, including the prison population. Cohen saw the educational underachievement as a prime cause of later delinquency and his “measuring rod” develops out of
his analysis of early socialisation and the encounter between lower-class children and the education system.

Cohen argues that poor school records are a direct cause of delinquency. However, performance in schools is significantly determined by a conflict between middle-class and lower-class values. As a result, lower-class students fare worse in the classroom, where certain values are predominantly judged in accordance with middle-class values, or the middle-class measuring rod. At this stage, the lower class join gangs where they can develop more positive self-concepts and nurture antisocial values, an analysis that is similar to Cloward and Ohlin’s. The key aspect of Cohen’s theory is a fundamental difference between middle- and lower-class socialisation and child rearing. After failing in the school system, a lower-class child is likely to reject middle-class values as a whole. In fact, Cohen argues that the rejection leads to a malicious and hostile attitude to those values leading to wilful violation of those standards later in life and increased likelihood of prison sentences.

Other lower-class theories include those, like Cohen’s, that posit a different “lower class culture”. Whereas Cohen sees delinquency as the result of a conflict between middle-class and lower-class values, some assert that lower-class culture is itself a contributing factor towards delinquency. For example, Miller (1958) sees female-dominated households as contributing to a “street corner” society among young lower-class males, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Glazer and Moynihan 1963) famously targeted households led by single black mothers as more likely to produce future criminals and criminal behaviour.

Labeling Theory (Becker 1963)

Another attempted explanation of the preponderant number of lower-class males in the criminal justice system is labeling theory. Labeling theorists emphasise the impact of official labels in creating delinquent behaviour (Becker 1963; Lemert 1967). If children are told that they are delinquent, then the likelihood of future delinquent behaviour is increased with the repetition of the label. Deviance is furthermore understood as a category created by rule enforcers. The imposition of the label creates a self-image that these young individuals begin to mimic. Critics of labeling theory note that it may be of some use in explaining what it defines as “secondary delinquency” but that it fails to understand the causes of the “primary delinquency” which often sparks the official tendency to label.
Environmental and Situational Theories (e.g. Matza 1969)
Not surprisingly, some theorists of delinquency examine its immediate or local environmental causes. Two main trends can be identified within this rubric: social disorganisation theories, which purport to explain delinquency based on urbanisation and local cultures; and “anomie” theories, which also link into strain theory and lower-class theories.

Social disorganisation theories postulate that urbanisation can lead to a breakdown in conventional institutions and the informal social controls local communities and neighbourhoods usually provide. As a result, these informal controls are unable to solve common problems collectively, including dealing with youth crime and delinquency. Such weakened factors are often linked to particular areas in a city. For example, Shaw and McKay examined crime rates in different Chicago neighbourhoods from 1900 to 1933 and concluded that the same areas saw the highest crime rates, even though migration patterns had altered the demographics of these areas quite considerably (Shaw and McKay 1929 et seq).

One of the more influential theories in criminology is anomie, originally advanced by Merton in the 1950s. Merton saw anomie as being caused by disadvantage, particularly in the opportunity structure, making legitimate work difficult to gain and causing considerable frustration and alienation. Like other theorists, he saw this as leading to illegitimate and delinquent acts. The discrepancy between the goals of society and access to the legitimate means of achieving such goals was particularly resonant in the United States, where the social goal is economic success.

Interpersonal and situational theories understand all behaviour as learned, meaning that even delinquent behaviour must have its origins in interpersonal social settings. Theorists such as Sutherland (1939) assert that we all behave on the basis of drives and goals, meaning that the difference between delinquent and non-delinquent behaviour requires other sources. Matza (1964, 1969) takes up a similar theme in asserting that individuals drift in and out of delinquency, with little deep commitment to criminal behaviour in most circumstances. Instead, delinquent acts are situational and occasional, and the mind of the “delinquent” does not reveal any deep difference from non-delinquents. Unfortunately, it is difficult to measure such theories, a problem for other psychological and some cognitive theories, though this should not mean that the value of their insights is to be ignored.
Control Theory (Hirschi 1969)

An insistent critic of strain and lower-class based theories was Travis Hirschi, whose 1969 publication *Causes of Delinquency* established one of the major trends in academic research in the area. He classified his work as “social control theory”, and pointed out that standard control theory saw deviance and delinquency as given, with conformity to be explained. Hirschi described delinquents as individuals “free of the intimate attachments, the aspirations, and the moral beliefs that bind most people to a life within the law.” This establishes a key aspect of delinquency, particularly for Hirschi, the bond.

Hirschi identified four main elements of the bond:

1. attachment, measuring attachment to society and family. Opposed to internalisation, which is incapable of explaining opinion shifts in accord with and against the norms of society.
2. commitment, specifically the level and depth of engagement with social activities, including especially work
3. involvement, alluding to the assumption that a busy and active individual will be too preoccupied to commit crimes or deviate from society’s norms and
4. belief, including not simply religious sentiments but also faith in the values, customs and laws of society.

One of Hirschi’s most important insights was his emphasis that there is no reason to assume that only those that commit crime have the impulse to do so. More of us don’t commit crime only because we don’t dare. However, it is clear that looking at official crime and prison rates will not serve to highlight the full range of sources for delinquent behaviour. He sees no direct causation from the other factors and asserts that criminal classes are probably no more likely to commit crime than middle classes, who are less likely to be “picked up” or caught. There is thus no reason to use social class as a starting point in explaining delinquency, a point that many of Hirschi’s critics would agree with even if they find his theory of the bond unsatisfactory.

Self-reported Data (Graham and Bowling 1995)

A number of other observers are deeply sceptical of lower-class theories. Many felt that it did not adequately explain the sources or reasons for lower-class
overrepresentation at all levels of the criminal justice system. This scepticism was spurred on by the data collected by Hirschi, as well as by other contemporary researchers, which suggested a large discrepancy between officially recorded crime and self-reported crime, a discrepancy that continues today as evidenced in Graham and Bowling’s Home Office study of youth crime (1995). Self-reported data asks individuals, usually schoolchildren, about a number of possible crimes and often compares the responses with arrest records for the same sample. Significantly, the results diverge considerably.

Various explanations are offered for the divergence between the level of official crime and self-reported crime. Home Office research estimated that only 2-3% of criminal behaviour is dealt with by the criminal justice system, a sobering statistic when considering appropriate responses to any offenders, especially with regard to racial harassment where evidence for the perpetrator is often lacking. Most commentators, however, explain the discrepancy between self-reported and official crime as betraying the foci and biases of the criminal justice system.

In Great Britain, there is solid evidence to support the notion that bias exists in the criminal justice system. Roger Hood in Race and Sentencing (1992) points out that the overrepresentation of African-Caribbeans in the criminal justice system is a product of their overrepresentation among those convicted of crime and sentenced in Crown Courts. From the level of policing in various neighbourhoods, to the likelihood of being cautioned by police, to the type of plea (guilty or not), to the offering of bail, to the place of trial, to the length of sentencing, to the proportion of sentences actually served, African-Caribbeans are fundamentally treated in a different way by the criminal justice system. Given that only 2-3% of all crimes are ever dealt with by the criminal justice system, the size of this sample and probability of intervening factors strongly suggest a bias in the criminal justice system, in this case against African-Caribbeans, but also against other populations living in highly policed areas with poor socio-economic conditions and less acquaintance with the peculiarity of the law.

Cognitive Approaches (Beck 1999)
Some of the issues involved in cognitive models have already been explored in the previous chapter. For the purposes of this report, it may be helpful to consider the case of criminology or violence as a means of conflict resolution. A recent publication by Beck (Prisoners of Hate 1999) summarises some of the issues
in cognitive research and extends some of these arguments to violent offenders. First, the beliefs and values of such individuals provide an important background for their future behaviour, with rigid beliefs and anti-social concepts a key aspect. These beliefs provide future offenders with mechanisms to “avoid guilt, anxiety or shame when committing anti-social or violent acts” (quoted from the National Probation Directorate 2001). In support of other findings, Beck also sees aggressive behaviour as a response to real or perceived confrontation. In many cases the aggression is committed against a weaker and more accessible target, an evaluation that is particularly resonant for attacks against minority ethnic communities.

One of the key aspects of cognitive emphases is that the cognitive processes of offenders are somehow different from the non-offending population. Some theorists see “cognitive distortions” in those individuals who accept violence as a means of conflict resolution. Violence is a key symptom of cognitive defects, and those that seek to use it are usually perceived as holding a host of misperceptions about the role of violence, themselves, the victim and society in general. The rigid thinking of Adorno et al.’s Authoritarian Personality (1950) is also invoked as being an inferior cognitive style in interpersonal relationships. In general, research such as Beck’s tends to support the general cognitive profile of the offender population as a whole, meaning that at present cognitive approaches do not isolate particular defects of racist offenders.

**Radical Criminological Theory**
*(Taylor, Walton and Young 1973 and 1998)*

Most versions of radical criminology are affected by the writings of Marx, even if he had almost nothing to say specifically about crime and criminality. Marxist theories posit that the category of crime is simply another method by which the ruling class is able to repress the lower class. This is why criminal statistics are higher among the proletariat; crimes committed by the capitalist class in the exploitation of labour and apparatuses of the law and government, as well as white collar crime such as environmental pollution and organised crime are not even defined as criminal acts. By contrast, the crimes committed by the working class, principally committed to survive repressive regimes, bring harsh sentences.

In 1973, publication of *The New Criminology* (by Taylor, Walton and Young) sought to realign the dominant debates in criminology and also redirected radical and marxist-based theories. Controversially, it also advocated the
possibility of abolishing crime while at the same time underscoring its “realist” tendencies. Writing 25 years later in a volume considering the trajectories of new criminology (Walton and Young 1998), Pat Carlen identifies the type of criminology that these theorists are calling into question, as well as distinguishing what is the focus of the new criminology. In a succinct phrase, Carlen states that previous theories “ignored the institutionalised illegalities of the powerful”. Another contributor in the same volume, John Lea (1998), uses postmodernism as a way of understanding the current status of criminological research: “Criminology and penology were central pillars of the postwar ‘grand narratives’ of social engineering and welfare reformism, the blueprints for the good society that are now so discredited”. Radical or “new” criminology now sees “crime” as defined by a system, rather than by victims or society, or as a way of constructing social reality.

Other radical criminologists, such as Russell Hogg, use Foucauldian insights such as governmentality to place criminology within the role of modern organisations of government as bodies that pursue a “general tightening and refinement of disciplinary and regulatory controls over the individual and social body”. Young (Walton and Young 1998) offers a more concrete list of conceptual differences coinciding with the shift in late modernity, with more varied notions of crime and its control (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Conceptual Differences in Definitions of Crime pre- and post-1963**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conception</th>
<th>Before 1963</th>
<th>Late modernity (post-1963)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of crime</td>
<td>Obvious</td>
<td>Problematic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of offenders</td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidence of victimization</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes of crime</td>
<td>Distant, determined, exceptional</td>
<td>Present, rationally chosen, widespread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to “normality”</td>
<td>Separate</td>
<td>Normal/continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to wider society</td>
<td>Leakage</td>
<td>Integral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of offence</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Public/private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of offender to victim</td>
<td>Stranger/outsider</td>
<td>Stranger/intimate; outsider/in-group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of social control</td>
<td>Criminal Justice System</td>
<td>Informal/multi-agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of social intervention</td>
<td>Taken for granted</td>
<td>Problematic; “nothing works”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public reaction</td>
<td>Obvious and rational</td>
<td>Problematic: irrational “fear of crime” and moral panics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Dimension</td>
<td>Segregated</td>
<td>Contested space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After Young in Walton and Young (1998: 278)

Perpetrators of Racist Violence and Harassment
Conclusions on Criminological Theory
Taking stock of these shifts, it is clear that criminological theory is more destabilised than it was at its origins. The notion that hard facts and data would be able to support psychological and socio-economic theories has been undermined by the diversity of data and serious discrepancies between various studies. Nevertheless, there seems to be some agreement about factors contributing to criminal behaviour, even if it is impossible to isolate one particular variable or elicit agreement about the causes of these factors. Young’s chart further suggests that the effectiveness of social intervention has become problematic, meaning that future work dealing with offenders, including those that commit racial violence and harassment, will have few concrete guidelines and many possible paths to achieve the aim of less crime.
Youth Culture and Masculinities

The category “youth” has constituted perhaps the prime anxiety in post-war moral panics in Britain... In particular, the intersection between youth, race and gender has been the focus of a variety of public forms of disquiet that produced a line of youthful urban villains. (Back and Keith 1999: 133)

The literature on youth and youth cultures offers additional explanations as to how and why young males in particular offend and what sorts of cultures of violence are embedded in certain communities. Spurred by the development of women’s studies, academics and researchers have also turned their eyes towards conceptions of “maleness” or “masculinities”. The evidence on perpetrators suggests that young males do commit a significant proportion of racist crimes, though it is unclear if the statistics amount to a relevant difference, particularly where the overall profile of offenders follows a similar pattern. Nevertheless, a short examination of both of these areas will round out the theoretical section of this report, and also point to some of the “practical” issues that will need to be confronted in dealing with perpetrators.

Youth Cultures

The research interest in youth and youth cultures and countercultures has been pronounced and continuous for a very long time. One of the undoubted

3 Rae Sibbitt has suggested that perpetrators of racial violence and harassment are in fact more likely to be female and from different age groups than the average offender population. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of these issues.
interests of some writers has been the concern that youth attitudes and beliefs are changing the culture beyond recognition and that aspects of a given society are disappearing due to the young’s ignorance of traditional ways of doing things. However, many other researchers see in youth the cause of great creativity and a great deal of optimism and hope is attached to the youngest generation. In any case, it is clear that there are aspects of youth culture and society that are indeed different from the form, values and beliefs of their parents and grandparents. While some of these forms can be quite volatile, and in examining violent racism this chapter explores some of the more counterproductive aspects of youth culture, it is important to remember that the youngest generation often contains the most progressive opinions and are more likely to change their beliefs, meaning that our best hope of eradicating prejudice and racism lies with the young (see, e.g., Muncie 1984, 1999; Pearson 1983; Pitts 1988).

Gang Research
As evidenced in the previous chapter, much of the research on deviance and delinquency has focused on the young. This is because they are more likely to commit crimes, and also because as they become older, all individuals, even those with “criminal” pasts, are far less likely to commit delinquent acts. Socialisation among the youngest generation is always incomplete, at least when measured by the standards of the older generations. As a consequence, they are of course more likely to commit acts which are deemed “delinquent” by the authorities, who represent the values of older generations. However, the young do have alternative forms of socialisation, including norms and values, even where delinquent behaviour seems prevalent.

The criminological focus on gangs underlines society’s discomfort with alternative forms of socialisation. However, gang research has also uncovered clear standards and norms, with most gangs conforming to a small number of patterns. Gangs typically have a leader or small group of leaders who dominate the interests and concerns of the whole. While some are more “democratic”, these leaders tend to exercise a fair deal of control over other members. In the case of racist views, it is often apparent that such views are found in gangs where the leaders or older members exhibit these views. Junior gang members thus mimic these opinions, and in confronting racist viewpoints different strategies will be called for depending on the manner in which such opinions were originally transmitted and displayed.
Education System (O'Donnell and Sharpe 2000)

Much research on the attitudes of the young examine the experience of the education system and its impact on the beliefs of its charges. A recent study by O’Donnell and Sharpe found that anti-racism and anti-sexism in the school system was impacting on the beliefs of schoolchildren, who seemed more egalitarian than the previous generation. Yet young people only spend a part of their time in the education system and are clearly socialised in other settings as well, which can in fact be as influential, if not more so, in the formation of values and beliefs. The formation of gangs was mentioned above, but there are other important factors in the out-of-school social formation of the young.

Schools are by definition more diverse than a child’s neighbourhood and home, which tend to be more homogeneous. It has been observed that young people are more apt to have interracial friendships before leaving school, after which their social interactions become less diverse. A young person’s behaviour in neighbourhood social settings can see a falling-off of anti-racist and anti-sexist attitudes, explaining what many observers view as contradictory or illogical behaviour. In addressing racist views, any policies that fail to address the influence of family members and neighbours will find their efforts making less headway than anticipated.

Research has also revealed other concerns arising out of the school system. Labeling theory mentioned earlier suggested the impact of identifying individuals as deviant, and similar evidence is clear in the school system. If children are considered to be underachievers at a young age then their life prospects diminish considerably. Certain classes and ethnicities also demonstrate poor results, though the reasons for such performance are disputed. Nevertheless, it is clear that the education system is an intrinsic institution in society and as such replicates the dominant power imbalances seen in the society as a whole. As long as racist views are held by individuals, including those wielding power, its institutions can be expected to exhibit similar tendencies.

Masculinities (Willis 1977)

It is a well-observed fact that males commit the vast amount of violence in society. Not only are they more likely to commit violent offences, but they are more likely to use physical aggression as a way of dealing with dilemmas or difficult situations. How “maleness” is defined by a society, and how young men negotiate their own gender can have important consequences for the level of...
violence displayed by a society. Recent research has examined the link between masculinity and violence and found that the relationship is more complex than first realised. While it is evident that males commit more violent acts, the tendency and frequency of such violence is influenced and mitigated by a host of social factors as well as by the earlier negotiation of masculinity.

Conceptions of masculinity are clearly defined by class. Early research found that working-class men were more straightforwardly marked by a perception and evocation of masculinity that was macho. This machismo demonstrates toughness and posturing and is linked to working-class industrial labour, which required strength and was often dangerous. In his 1977 study of working-class boys, Willis identified six ways in which they defined their masculinity:

- physicality/practicality
- territoriality/exclusion
- toughness
- hedonism/‘having fun’
- collectivism
- opposition to authority

All of these were evidenced in O’Donnell and Sharpe’s (2000) research, but they note a major shift in the background to working-class masculinity. The industrial labour that such conceptions were based upon has deteriorated irrevocably, which they see as bringing about a “crisis” in working-class masculinity. This crisis does not overshadow the patriarchy of society and the disadvantages of women within such a system, but the declining ability of a man to head a family economically through the exertion of his labour has had significant and long-lasting repercussions on his sense of gender.

For young males, this scenario has thrown their identities into flux and sometimes inconsistency. While the job market still holds better prospects for males overall, and A-level and university specification leads to a noticeable gender gap in favour of males, girls now significantly outperform boys in GCSE results and are far less likely to be “troublemakers” in class. This has been noted by a large section of the British public, including Jack Straw (then Home Secretary) and the press, with great concern that boys are “falling behind”. The “crisis” in working-class masculinity is compounded by the fact that its macho values can seriously harm a child’s success in the educational system and in later employment.

**Concluding Remarks**

This final chapter of Section I has briefly charted the literature and issues arising out of studies of youth and masculinities. Both of these areas have large
bibliographies, and are also increasingly intertwined when studying issues of violence and race. This survey has demonstrated that youth cultures can be highly creative and it is important to allow these innovative forces to develop in positive directions. However, it is also important that institutions and research projects take responsibility for the potential difficulties faced by the young and how they can be compounded by the decisions made by their elders. If there is a “crisis” in young white working-class masculinities, then we can expect decentred gender identities to yield explosive and unstable behaviour. How such actions are managed by young people will provide an indication of the success of societal institutions in dealing with the shift in the social structure and perhaps limit the extent and degree of the crisis.

Any projects dealing with young people will have to take into account the issues raised in this chapter. Strategies for reducing crime and dealing with perpetrators will of course be mindful of criminological theory, but also that on masculinities and violence, since so much of criminal conduct is perpetrated by men. Prejudice in society quite clearly contributes to specifically racist attacks, and theories such as Allport’s provide important touchstones for any project dealing with racists. Research into similar concerns in Europe and North America might reveal additional points of contact, but these have been beyond the scope of this publication. However, it should be clear that international comparisons can often yield positive results, though the specifics of each case must always be emphasised.

The first section of this report has covered those theories that will be relevant to projects working with perpetrators of racist violence and harassment. Countering societal inequalities will clearly be beyond the scope of most of these projects, but it must be remembered that inequality and disadvantage are the breeding ground of many of the causes of prejudice and criminal conduct, as well as the crisis in masculinities and counterproductive forms of youth culture. These social realities ought not to constrain projects, but they should ensure that aims and methods are appropriate and realistic.
In this chapter we look at the survey literature, specific to the historical background of the UK, which is also a core “practical” application of the preceding theoretical frame. The research output presents the picture of racial violence and harassment in Britain, including the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report and a significant output of Home Office research reports since 1981, in particular the reports of the Interdepartmental Racial Attacks Group from 1989 onwards (e.g. Home Office 1991, 1996).

**Historical Background: 1190–1981**

Race and Racism in Britain: 1190-1900

Revisionist histories of race in Britain emphasise the presence of African and Asian people in Britain during the time of the Roman garrisons, the period of Elizabeth I (who infamously proclaimed that “blackamoors” be expelled from the realm) and throughout the history of colonisation. In fact, the entire history of the island can be told in terms of waves of settlement of “non-Britons”. Sadly,

**Overview of Racist Violence in the UK, and Government Responses**

The distinctive feature of racist crime is that a person or household is attacked not as an individual, as in most other crimes, but as the representative of a community. (MEB Commission, The Parekh Report 2000: 128)
there is also a long history of racial harassment and violence against perceived outsiders. Antisemitism in particular was a fairly prominent feature of society from at least 1189 when 30 Jews were massacred in a riot following the coronation of Richard I and there are documented cases of violence against the Jewish community in York, Bury St Edmunds, Norwich and Lincoln until they were expelled in 1290 (see Klug 1982). C. Nicholson documented much of the earlier history in Strangers to England, Immigration to England 1100-1945 (1974) while Panayi (1996) has produced a history cataloguing racial violence in the 18th and 19th centuries.

1900–1945
Although there have been cases of violence against outsiders in Britain for nearly 1000 years, it is in the 20th century that increasing populations of non-white people faced a largely documented increase in racial violence and harassment. Following World War I, a number of black people mainly employed in the war effort, including shipbuilding, were resident in London, Bristol, Cardiff and Liverpool. During a period of post-war unemployment, these groups were attacked, with one man, Charles Wootton, drowning in the Liverpool docks. As Francesca Klug explained in a 1982 Runnymede publication Racist Attacks, the “main response of the government was to encourage the black population to ‘go home’ by offering them cheap berths in ships”.

The period between the wars saw a growth in fascist activities and organisations, particularly in the east end of London. Jewish self-defence groups emerged to combat this threat, with the battle of Cable Street in 1936 seeing thousands of protesters prevent the fascists from marching. These events are described in more detail in Holmes (1978).

1945–1968
Black immigration from the Commonwealth increased following the Second World War, and the story of this experience has been told in a variety of publications, most recently by Michael Dummett (2001). However, it is important to underscore the prevalence of fascist and racist hostility to the new immigrants, with “racial preservation” groups contributing to an atmosphere where “racist attacks had become a regular part of life in Britain” (Klug 1982; see also Sivanandan 1982). There is a great deal of evidence charting the specific aspects of racial attacks in this period. The political responses to the issue of racial
violence initiated a pattern that would find its most venomous spokesman in Enoch Powell, and continues in milder form today. For example, rioting in Notting Hill in 1958 prompted local Labour MP George Rogers to issue the statement that: “The government must introduce legislation quickly to end this tremendous influx of coloured people from the Commonwealth... Overcrowding has fostered vice, drugs, prostitution and the use of knives. For years the white people have been tolerant. Now their tempers are up.”

Benjamin Bowling has judged that the decade between 1959 and 1968 saw the emergence of “race” and racism as politicised issues. Although there are documented cases of violent racism during this period, it is in immigration policy that the shift in the political consensus is most clearly evidenced. During the 1959 General Election and in the 1960 Conservative Party Conference, no mention was made of immigration or immigration policy. However, in 1961 the Tory government passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill, fiercely opposed by Gaitskell and the shadow Labour cabinet, during which the debate focused on “the dangers of unrestricted migration and the problems associated with the presence in Britain of black people” (Bowling 1999). Thereafter Conservative Party opinion swung sharply towards tighter immigration controls, with the Labour Party abandoning its principled opposition to anti-immigration legislation especially when the new leader Harold Wilson said that Labour did not contest the need for controls in 1963, though he did think that such policies should be negotiated with Commonwealth countries.

Bowling (1998) points out the significance of the 1964 General Election in the future course of race relations in Britain. The Conservative candidate, Peter Griffiths, was able spectacularly to unseat the Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary, Patrick Gordon-Walker, in the West Midlands town of Smethwick, mainly by stressing his intention to defend the local white majority against the “influx of immigrants.” Griffiths refused to condemn supporters who promoted the slogan “If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour”, blandly commenting that “it is a manifestation of popular feeling. I should not condemn anyone who said that.” The result of this contest clearly demonstrated the potential for playing the race card, and the small majority of Labour’s government made them nervous and apparently vulnerable on the issue of immigration, a stance only reinforced by the result in Smethwick.

During the 1960s, racial violence was a prevalent fact of life for ordinary black and Asian Britons. Two political developments contributed to a sense that these
citizens were somehow outsiders. First, Enoch Powell’s espousal of these issues gave a “respectable” overtone to verbal attacks on the presence of non-white British citizens. The effect of his “rivers of blood” speech in 1968 is well documented in the history of race and racism in Britain. Second, and perhaps less clearly understood, was the increased tightening of immigration controls and procedures. In the words of Ben Bowling (1998: 35), the Labour Government of 1964-1970 “worked hard to establish a ‘bipartisan consensus’ on the issue of ‘race’ and immigration. This policy consensus consisted of a dual policy of strict immigration controls, on the one hand, and positive measures to assist the integration of those immigrants already settled in Britain, on the other” (see also Layton-Henry 1984). The contradictory posture of this policy can be evidenced in two pieces of legislation: one, the Race Relations Act, outlawing racial discrimination and creating the offence of incitement to racial hatred; and two, the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill, passed to limit the numbers of East African Asians coming to Britain and clearly influenced by the storm of public opinion aroused by Enoch Powell, now sacked from the shadow Cabinet but drawing support from marchers in London.

1970s
The 1970s portended worsening race relations, with press antipathy to the position of South Asian East Africans, particularly in Uganda and Malawi. The impact of Peter Griffiths and Enoch Powell had shifted the tenor of debate in British politics, and all politicians and parties were influenced by a new rhetoric on race and immigration. Although Edward Heath had sacked Powell in 1968, the 1970 Conservative Manifesto called for tighter immigration controls and Heath was seen to make a number of speeches emphasising the strict future intentions of the Conservative Government. In 1971, a new immigration bill was duly passed, creating a clear distinction between “patrials” and “non-patrials”. This represented a degeneration of citizenship rights to notions of “blood” and by extension race. By accident of Idi Amin’s intemperate decision to expel Ugandan Asians, Heath was forced to backtrack, and he resisted considerable pressure from Powellites. Though Heath did maintain some resolve in the crisis, the event saw a further shift in opinion on the issue and during the 1970s far right organisations gained support and the Conservative Party was infiltrated by such activists.

In the 1970s, the National Front gained a great deal of notoriety, though they
were unable to score any significant success in the General Elections. A long-term decline in the British manufacturing sector was by now clearly evident and NF penetration of the labour movement was noted by trades unions and the Labour Party. However, the Anti Nazi League and other anti-fascist organisations gained even greater levels of public support, demonstrating that antiracism had a strong level of support across British society.

By the 1970s, a number of race relations organisations had been founded, with the 1976 Race Relations Act setting up the Commission for Racial Equality. Such organisations were extremely aware of the growing problem of racial violence and harassment, and often published their findings as well as good practice manuals to assist communities under attack, particularly in regards to local housing. From the pages of the Runnymede Bulletin in the 1970s, a clear pattern of racial violence and harassment emerges, even if these rarely found their way into the national press. At this stage, the Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council published Blood on the Streets (1978), documenting the degree and extent of racial violence and harassment in east London. Publicising names of the victims of racial attacks and their experience now provided an alternative and public means to counter the police line that treated most attacks as simply normal violence associated with inner city youth and drunkenness.

Public Recognition and the Official Response
1981 to the present
Margaret Thatcher's victory in the 1979 General Election and her reign as Prime Minister until 1990 helped to define the official response to racism, including the attitude towards racial attacks. A good sense of the opinion of the time can be gleaned from press reaction. As an earlier Runnymede research report emphasised, press coverage of race relations from the 1970s is dominated by “media images of black people [that] invariably stressed ideas that black people caused trouble and took white people's jobs and homes” (Gordon and Rosenberg 1989). Gordon and Rosenberg took stock of these stereotypes during the 1980s, and found that treating and portraying black people as problems was a common tactic, especially in the more widely read tabloids but also in some broadsheets.

Growing evidence of brutal racist murders unsolved by the police and frequently denying any racial motive was now being published by a number of organisations. Black and Asian people began demonstrating against their
treatment and a number of self-protection groups emerged. In 1981, the Brixton riots and other civil unrest in urban areas throughout Britain led to the publication of the Scarman Report, which condemned the poor socioeconomic condition of non-white Britons but denied widespread or institutionalised racism in the police or criminal justice system more generally. Events had become so serious, with an estimated 26 racist murders in 1981, that the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, ordered his department to publish a report on the issue. This paper provides an insight into the minds of the politicians and police at that time.

1981 Home Office Report

When Home Secretary Whitelaw ordered the publication of the Home Office 1981 report, a host of non-governmental responses had already addressed the issue and compiled lists. The Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council report, Blood on the Streets (1978), was the first in a number of reports, including that of the Joint Committee Against Racialism (1981), and by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Union of Pakistani Organizations (also 1981). However, the Home Office Report was important in that it was the first official recognition of the issue, and established precedents that would mark official responses, especially in the police. As Bowling puts it:

Until then, as the problem did not exist, there was no publicly stated police or government policy to deal with it. Within two years, this situation had changed fundamentally. A range of governmental agencies, among them the House of Commons, Home Office, Metropolitan Police, Association of Chief Police Officers, and Greater London Council, each elevated violent racism to the status of urgent priority (1998: 58).

The Home Office report itself was a survey of reported incidents in certain selected areas around the country, including “interviews with informants from local authorities, the police and ethnic minority communities”. At this stage, the biggest source of contention was the definition of a “racial incident”. Perhaps not surprisingly, police definitions were used as the source of the Home Office definition, which has only been slightly modified today after the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report. Even the survey on which the report was fundamentally based defined reported incidents as “interracial”. This meant that any incident between people of different races, including some incidents
between police officers and the public, were classified in the survey. Nonetheless, Asian and black people were 50 times and 36 times more likely to report such incidents than white people.

In the 1981 Home Office publication, a racial incident was defined as “an incident, or alleged offence by a person or persons of one racial group against a person, persons or property of another racial group, where there are indications of a racial motive”. One of the most significant aspects of such a definition is that it ignores differences in the incidence and form of such attacks between white and non-white Britons, despite the overwhelming evidence cited above. Interracial incidents of a criminal nature, including petty theft and crime, were included in police statistics, since both the police and victims deemed such occurrences as having a “racial motive”. As Bowling points out:

> When comparing different forms of crime committed between ‘racial’ groups, it is important to note that racist attacks against ethnic minorities closely parallel the propaganda of the far-right and popular racist ideologies, while no evidence of such a relationship has ever been cited in the case of crime committed by ethnic minorities people against whites. (1998: 75)

1982–1999
The period between the first Home Office research survey and the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report saw an increasing official response as well as public recognition of violent racism. In 1982, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee considered both the Racial Attacks and Scarman Reports, and requested evidence from the Metropolitan Police and the Association of Chief Police Officers. It is clear from the conclusion of the Metropolitan Police submission that they still failed to recognise the significance and extent of violent racism committed on black and Asian Britons and were more keen to emphasise the problematic presence of black residents in particular as creating “racial” crimes:

> Although the [Home Office] report highlights the impact of racial attacks on the ethnic minority communities, it should be remembered that racial attacks affect all parts of the community and the impact of street crime committed by black youths on elderly white women cannot be passed over lightly [quoted in Bowling (1998)]

Police–Community Relations
One of the things that emerged out of the 1981 Home Office report was the
level of distrust of the police by the black and Asian communities. This was well known within the communities themselves, but was now made public in official documents. As a result, there was some focus on improving “police-community” relations, for example by hiring more police officers and introducing more community outreach programmes. The police cited the experience of the Jewish community as one that could be replicated in time among blacks and Asians, but as Bowling has observed, they offered no evidence of positive steps taken in this regard or how such steps might be applied to other minority ethnic groups in Britain.

In this period, local authorities, including the Greater London Council, turned their attention to the issue of racial violence and harassment. For some time, local authorities had been concerned about racial incidents, specifically in housing, where Asian families in particular seemed to receive a great deal of abuse at the hands of racist offenders. It was often argued that such families needed to be moved for their protection, but many objected to this response, seeing it as caving in to racist pressure. At the same time, local authorities and the GLC began investigating claims of racial harassment at the hands of the police. This could take many forms, from inactivity to claims to suspicion that deaths in police custody carried a racial motivation. This issue was not investigated by the police and official bodies, but was one of the major factors contributing to the distrust of the police and criminal justice system by black and Asian Britons. In order to alleviate the situation, the police promoted the multi-agency approach, a strategy analysed in greater depth in the next chapter.

By the mid-1980s it was common to hear of police statements emphasising their commitment to preventing racial attacks, a tactic also employed by politicians of all political hues. However, it did not seem that police procedures were changing and the views of rank and file police officers as published in Police Review during this period reveal a very different perspective. Here editorials blamed left-wing ideologues for foisting upon them a new fad called racism and claimed that most attacks were clearly not racist at all; rather, the black and Asian communities were being stirred up by left-wing politicians and activists. Individuals holding these sentiments could still be working in the force 15–20 years on, though hopefully with modified views.

Home Affairs Committee
At this stage in 1986 an interdepartmental working party, the Racial Attacks Perpetrators of Racist Violence and Harassment
Group (RAG), was established by the Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention in response to a recommendation of the Race Relations and Immigration Sub-Committee of the Home Affairs Committee (House of Commons 1986). The RAG soon commissioned new research in the area, looking specifically at a multi-agency approach. In 1989 it published its first report (Home Office 1989), followed by others in 1991 and 1996. Earlier reports by the GLC and CRE had established the prevalence of racial violence and harassment, and Paul Gordon’s study Racial Violence and Harassment was published by Runnymede in 1986 and reprinted in 1990. By now there seemed to be a general consensus on the degree and extent of racial violence and harassment but some divergence on the appropriate reaction and the responsibilities of government and official bodies to combat its occurrence. The 1989 RAG report did offer a number of suggestions and compiled a number of possible responses that had proved to be effective. The 1991 and 1996 reports, as well as some of the recommendations of similar Home Office sponsored research, are reviewed in the next chapter.

Labour since 1997

As is often noted, the Labour Government adopted a slogan of “tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime”, first enunciated by Tony Blair when he was still Shadow Home Secretary. As a means to implement this policy, the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 was passed. Significantly, it includes for the first time a definition of “racially aggravated offending” as follows:

An offence is racially aggravated... if
(a) At the time of committing the offence, or immediately before or after doing so, the offender demonstrates towards the victim of the offence hostility based on the victim’s membership of, or association with members of, a racial group; or
(b) The offence is motivated (wholly or partly) by hostility towards members of a racial group based on their membership of that group.

This represents the first time that racially aggravated offending becomes criminally prosecutable in itself, though there are outstanding concerns about the subjective nature of interpreting hostility against any racial group.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report

The murder of Stephen Lawrence and the incompetence of the police in handling the case brought the issue of racial violence and harassment
prominently into the public's gaze. Without reviewing the background to the case and the resultant reaction to the final report, some important lessons can be gleaned from the entire experience.

One of the most significant is the length of time and expenditure needed to get to the heart of the issue of racial violence and harassment, even in the case of murder. The criminal justice system is often incapable of dealing with these issues because of the legal definitions employed, and as Wood's research has shown, exhibits strong bias against African-Caribbeans. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report represented a key official recognition of the extent of the problem of racism in the criminal justice system. Its role in shifting official perception ought not to be underestimated, despite the criticisms that appear below. The Lawrence Inquiry has established standard definitions for subjects such as institutional racism, and has drawn fire from many parts of the British press.

Its real and potential effects are extensive, and many of the issues raised in the Inquiry report remain pertinent in other societies as well, where it is held in high regard. Perhaps most significantly, police officers at the highest level have taken on board the interpretation and recommendations found in the report, giving some cause for optimism. There is little doubt that police attitudes have changed in part, and that public officials have a new obligation to combat institutional racism and as a consequence racist discrimination.

The electronic journal Sociological Research Online, in an essay symposium, raises questions about the background and assumptions of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report and finds a number of possible concerns. Some of these relate to the fact that the Inquiry was by definition only examining the murder of Stephen Lawrence. However, the report was charged to look into other related matters, and as such offered definitions of institutional racism and a racist incident. It has been criticised for only examining the police and failing to come to grips with the broader historical and sociological background of institutionalised racism in Britain. As Solomos puts it:

[T]he Report is in many ways not concerned with defining the meaning of institutionalised racism in any depth, but instead with arguing that the failure of the police as an institution to respond professionally to the murder of Stephen Lawrence was largely the product of 'discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people'.... But the Macpherson Report has little
to say about the actual mechanisms that may help us to understand both the historical processes and the contemporary realities that shape relations between the police and black minority communities. (Solomos: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/4/Lawrence/solomos>)

As stated above, the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report was primarily a murder investigation, and can in some ways be cleared for not taking the responsibilities that Solomos demands. Nevertheless, in seeking to deal with perpetrators of violent racism, trying to understand such “historical processes and contemporary realities” will be a prerequisite to developing meaningful strategies.

Conclusions
Before concluding, it is perhaps worthwhile to examine the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report definition of a racist incident: “a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”. While the tabloid press fears that such a definition could lead to a “blank cheque” for Britain’s black and minority ethnic people, Kusminder Chahal feels that the de-racialised nature of the definition represents a severe misapprehension, particularly as it also ignores the role of power in racism. He asks the question, “Why are white people afraid of being harassed or worse by black people – is it from experience of black racism or is it their own racism or paranoia fuelled by stereotypes?” Simon Holdaway similarly worries about situations where “any other person” might purport a crime to be racist, but “in muted or uncertain terms” (Holdaway 1998). Unfortunately, police officers do not have a reputation for taking such incidents seriously, and they “may well underestimate the nature and extent of racial attacks, which is a view related to their colour-blind approach to policing.”

Therefore, Holdaway argues, “[f]ormal definitions of racial attack, then, are important but not necessarily the primary, guiding principle for rank and file officers dealing with an allegation of racial attacks. There may be a gap between police policy and practice” (1998). Since there remains a difficulty in the recording of racist incidents, there is also a strong likelihood that in dealing with known perpetrators a project is only confronting a small proportion of actual offenders. These considerations are further examined in both the next and concluding chapters.
Who Are the Perpetrators?  
Working with Offenders

Hate crime in general, and racist crime in particular, has a character that distinguishes it from other kinds of crime. The difference lies not only, and not primarily, in the offender’s motivation, but in the greater harm done. (MEB Commission, The Parekh Report 2000: 127)

Not until this point has this report focused on the perpetrators themselves. Although the prime focus of this project is on working with offenders, there has not been a great deal of research in the area. As a result, previous chapters sought to ground some of the theories that offer insights into the identity of racist offenders, helping to answer the question, “who are the perpetrators?”

The first chapter, examining the literature on prejudice, suggested where and how prejudice is produced, from early childhood onwards. If racist ideas motivate these crimes, then it is clear that an understanding of the sources of prejudice will help identify perpetrators and potential perpetrators. Similarly, the second chapter presented theories as to why individuals commit crime in general and what are the causes of delinquent behaviour. Since even the most virulently racist of individuals do not always commit crimes, and given that the perpetrators of racist offences have often committed other crimes, criminological theory offers another way to unearth the identity of perpetrators of racial violence and harassment. Youth cultures and cultures of masculinities,
though examined in much less depth, brought the theoretical investigations of Section I to an end.

Section II started with a survey of the history of racial violence and harassment and government responses to it, and this chapter will continue to examine government responses and further research, particularly that which targets offenders. In order to frame the context of these approaches, and to help further identify the perpetrators themselves, it is worth considering the following analysis of Ræ Sibbitt’s Home Office study (Sibbitt 1997) as an initial point of departure.

**Sibbitt’s Home Office Research Study No. 176**

Sibbitt’s (1997) study contains two major sections, the first looking at the background evidence and the second consisting of case study research in two London boroughs, whose names are not identified. Eight main findings of the research are presented in the summary. In order to present the current understanding on perpetrators of racial violence and harassment, it is helpful to examine each of these findings in further detail. Sibbitt’s analysis of each point will also be counterposed with or supported by other approaches and research where significant disagreement arises. The first five are more general, while the last three address specific successes or failings in existent projects.

1. The perpetrators of racist harassment and violence are of all ages
   Most perpetrators of crime tend to be young and male. This is also the case for racist crimes, with perhaps half of all perpetrators between the ages of 16 and 25. However, as Sibbitt rightfully points out, “[t]he value of this kind of information lies in comparisons with similar crimes which were not perceived to have been racially motivated”. Sibbitt finds that people outside the 16–25 age bracket are more likely to be involved, as are females and of course white people. The varied makeup of perpetrators will help to inform potential work with these offenders.

   While many commentators agree with Sibbitt in seeing perpetrators as coming from all backgrounds, it is difficult to disentangle the various forms of racist violence and harassment. Thus, while females and the very young and very old deliver racist abuse and harassment, there is also evidence to suggest that young males remain more likely to commit the more physically violent acts and it is often unclear who commits the frequent attacks on the property, residential and business, of black and minority ethnic people. For example, Christine
Barter’s (1999) research for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children found that violent racism committed against children was overwhelmingly committed by adolescents and young adults.

2. The views held by all kinds of perpetrators towards ethnic minorities are shared by the wider communities to which they belong. This observation is clearly meant to indicate that perpetrators do not operate in a social vacuum. They need not be members of neo-Nazi organisations and can in fact be socialised within a culture where such views are common, an understanding that links with both the literature on prejudice and that on delinquency. Sibbitt goes on to explain: “[p]erpetrators see this as legitimising their actions. In turn, the wider community not only spawns such perpetrators, but fails to condemn them and actively reinforces their behaviour. The reciprocal relationship between the two suggests that the views of the ‘perpetrator community’ also need to be addressed in efforts to reduce racial harassment”. Sibbitt’s opinion that the perpetrator community needs to be confronted suggests further areas of development, areas that will have to be explored as the project develops.

3. Expressions of racism often serve the function of distracting attention away from real, underlying, concerns which they feel impotent to deal with. Sibbitt sees the logic of distracting attention operative for “perpetrators, potential perpetrators and other individuals within the perpetrator community” and including ideas such as “a lack of identity, insecurity about the future and physical and/or mental health problems”. As Young-Bruehl (1996) further emphasised, these expressions can also serve as a way for groups that have lost a degree of power to reassert it. Though these issues can clearly create disillusionment and alienation, the question of why such despair results specifically in racism remains to be explained. For example, while there may be a widespread belief among white people that “what blacks suffer from is publicised and acted upon by the police, while what happens to whites is ignored” (Back 1996, quoted in Barter 1999), the possible actions arising from such beliefs still need to be differentiated and explained.

Besides the factors of deprivation and youth inactivity (see Hewitt 1996), the reasons for a specifically racist response to disadvantage and disappointment include entrenched local racism and backlash against anti-racist policies.
Interestingly, these two features point to a discrepancy in how racist violence is currently explored. Because violent racism is recorded mainly in certain areas, these have been the areas of investigation and testing of various policy approaches. Additionally, such areas are considered to contain “entrenched local racism”. This of course means that other areas, specifically rural areas or areas with fewer black and minority ethnic residents have not been examined in the same detail. The invocation of backlash against anti-racist policies, on the other hand, presumably extends to a larger community, especially if British tabloids and broadsheets are surveyed for such evidence. There thus remains a need to explain precisely how backlash against anti-racist policies takes its different forms, from violent to non-violent, and how conceptions of identity are constructed and perceived.

4. Two main sets of factors:
(a) those which facilitate stress and delinquency; (b) those which facilitate racial prejudice

As Sibbitt argues, “An individual’s tendency towards stress, delinquency or criminality does not automatically cause him or her to carry out racist assaults; nor does racial prejudice, on its own”. This paper has already investigated these two sets of factors in chapters 2 and 1, respectively. Sibbitt emphasises that policies that attack either set of factors are “likely to have an impact on racial harassment and violence”. The development of such policies may, however, be constrained by official will and governmental inaction. The form and level of racial prejudice in particular will be affected by government policies at the highest level, and failure by central decision makers to recognise its prevalence and define appropriate responses will restrict the potential for other more local policies to achieve their intended effect to the full.

Furthermore, attitudes towards “crime”, by both the government and the public, actively impact on the understanding of delinquency in society and here too unawareness or partial awareness of the “causes of crime” can lead to instances of stress leading to even greater levels of offending. Again, it is not simply central government that can determine the form of these developments, but local cultures and the values of the society as a whole. Sibbitt cites research from the University of Trier that emphasises the government’s responsibility to make clear that violence is unacceptable. Other recommendations concern education, where moral constraint, coping strategies and job training are advocated, employment, stressing the importance in improving job prospects,
youth activities, where community based activities can provide alternatives to violent groups, and individual/family support, including support from the state for those with problems and the unemployed as well as family intervention.

5. There is a need for a holistic approach to dealing with the perpetrators

Sibbitt identifies three concentric circles, all of which need to be addressed in order to realise effective action in dealing with offenders:

(a) identification and effective action against perpetrators;

(b) identification of potential perpetrators and the development of strategies to divert them from actually becoming perpetrators;

(c) development of a range of strategies for consistently addressing the perpetrator community's general attitudes towards ethnic minorities.

This is perhaps Sibbitt's most important argument, and a proper understanding of the differences of each group will result in a more effective adoption of potential strategies. The first group, the perpetrators themselves are those individuals in a community that have committed racist crimes and may still be doing so. A major difficulty in proposing strategies for such individuals is that they cannot always be easily identified. Those that have been identified are often merely the ones that have been caught. In order to target actual perpetrators, a particular approach will undoubtedly need the support of the local community.

Even if perpetrators are known and identified, there remain a number of difficulties in knowing how to deal with them. This is as true for perpetrators as for potential perpetrators. Some of the most commonly adopted approaches are broadly psychological or educational in nature. Many of these assume that cognitive errors, emotional trauma, unresolved psychological issues or poor educational achievement are the causes of offender activity. There are a number of handbooks that address the concerns of practitioners attempting to alter cognitive processes in offenders and a number of psychoanalytic schools that suggest different solutions (see the Case Studies section of this paper). The potential benefits of such approaches are considerable, though results are somewhat patchy and these methods ought to be practised only by acknowledged experts.

Individual approaches like those advocated above might work on perpetrators, but it is unclear if they are able to best tackle the category of potential perpetrators. The one-on-one approach explained above is also unable to deal with the larger perpetrator community that Sibbitt rightly sees as “sanctioning” racist activity.
through its own beliefs. Sibbitt suggests that since it would be impossible to devote enough resources to combating the racist psychology of every potential perpetrator, it is perhaps more effective to begin by addressing prejudice and delinquency in the community, keeping in mind the role of government to address social disadvantage and inequality on the broader canvas.

There are already a number of agencies dealing with the issue at a local level, including schools, housing authorities and associations, social services, race equality councils and all aspects of the criminal justice system. The emergence of the multi-agency approach in the late 1980s is addressed below, and projects attempting to work with perpetrators will often have to work within such frameworks. It is important to remember, however, that multi-agency approaches currently focus more on the victims of racial violence and harassment, with increased resources probably necessary to expand the scope of these projects.

6. The possibility of identifying perpetrators has not been undertaken
Sibbitt here identifies a specific and significant gap in the subject matter. The identification of perpetrators is a clear necessity in order to attempt to prevent violent racism in the future, and the fact that Sibbitt finds such a gap in 1997 demonstrates not only the difficulties in positively making identification, but also a certain lack of will on the part of certain agencies. This is compounded, Sibbitt asserts, because information on perpetrators is not collected systematically or collated, nor is it shared between agencies. Bowling and Saulsbury (1992) found a similar situation and noted some difficulties in the multi-agency approach as explained below.

7. Individual professionals within each agency provide examples of good practice
Although the amount of research in the area of working with racist offenders seems quite limited, Sibbitt was able to find professionals who were achieving some success despite the absence of a specific approach. Further projects will of course need to interact with such professionals and investigate the applicability of these insights to other circumstances. Sibbitt sees examples of good practice as recognising “the functionality of the perpetrator’s behaviour” and attempting to address “the underlying causes, rather than adopting a simplistic approach based on moral opprobrium”. Thus it will be important to attempt to interact meaningfully with perpetrators, as harsh judgements, no matter how rational, will prevent rehabilitative efforts from achieving their desired aims.
8. One particularly effective piece of work was a detached youth work project here Sibbitt identifies a specific project deserving of mention, as it “appeared successfully to reduce young people’s involvement in racial harassment and to divert them from becoming involved in crime more generally”. Its aim was “to make contact with young people on one estate who were involved in harassment and violence and other young people at risk of becoming involved in such behaviour. It was thought that the project could change their behaviour by challenging their underlying attitudes to both crime and ethnic minorities.” Through the course of the project, which had been running for two and a half years when Sibbitt investigated it, youth workers were able to build up trust among the young people.

Over time, the intervention of youth workers was able to break bonds within groups where older members served as the leaders and source of racist opinions. Some young people were seen to grow tired and lose satisfaction in ‘egging’ black people, with the result that they began to break away from the group on the estate that was a source of racist violence. Interestingly, Sibbitt was able to uncover two factors that the youth workers felt would have enhanced the project’s success:

1. the work needed to continue to have long-lasting impact [it was only funded for three years], particularly since some young people lived in families where daily racism was common; and
2. the project could have been even more successful if victims had taken part, especially if perpetrators had met some of the victims to hear their views of what racist harassment felt like.

Significantly, Sibbitt found that a local PC was very impressed with the work of the project and everyone in the community seemed disappointed when it was time to wind up. (See the Case Note on p.59 in the Appendix.)

**Some Potential Problems**

The research explained above has already suggested where problems remain, particularly in identifying perpetrators. Much of Sibbitt’s study looks at the case studies in two London boroughs, describing the areas, views of its inhabitants, and responses of various agencies, including the police, housing authorities, educational bodies, youth agencies and clubs, the probation service, race equality councils and other local groups dealing with racism or community-based organisations more generally. In all cases there arose the dilemma of perpetrator
identification and sharing what information did exist. Policies to address the rehabilitation of perpetrators were also not clearly developed, meaning that there is a gap for good practice advice as long as it is holistic in its approach and takes into account existing expertise and failings as well.

**The Multi-Agency Approach**

Although multi-agency approaches have been advocated for some time, it is with the advent of the publication of the Home Affairs Racial Attacks Group reports that such practices were adopted in research projects. Benjamin Bowling has been involved in these projects for over a decade and has written extensively on his experience of them. The first was the pilot project in Newham, the North Plaistow Racial Harassment Project, which reported its findings in 1991 at the time of the second RAG report, in which some of the findings are also described. By the time of the third RAG report in 1996, the emphasis on multi-agency approaches was such that the subtitle of the report was “multi-agency responses to racial attacks and harassment”.

Bowling identifies the appointment of Kenneth Newman as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police as a key spur in developing the multi-agency approach. Indeed, soon after taking his post, Newman emphasised precisely this approach, in which “[p]roblems identified locally will be tackled systematically by co-ordinating the contributions of police, public and local agencies. The concept of a corporate strategy is vital” (Gordon 1986). Though some researchers, such as Rein, questioned the efficacy of this approach, multi-agency options were now being tabled in the police. Interestingly, at the same time local authorities and community organisations also became proponents of a multi-agency approach, though the benefits expected, possibility of influence and even the structure and aims of the policy varied quite widely. Nevertheless, by 1987, following the encouragement of the Interdepartmental Racial Attacks Group, which had just met for the first time and would publish its first report in 1989, the North Plaistow project was initiated. (See Study 1 in the Case Studies Appendix for further details.)

**Specific vs. General**

As these benefits and concerns demonstrate, multi-agency approaches primarily concern victims. Even where good practice exists on racial harassment and violence, it is often concerned with aiding victims, though general preventative
strategies are also presented. For example, Tackling Racial Harassment: A Guide to Multi-Agency Working in Birmingham does not really approach the issue of the perpetrators. In identifying these perpetrators, one final issue must be explored. Sibbitt (1997) found that existing evidence suggests that most perpetrators of racist violence are not members of far-right groups or indeed politically motivated. Such considerations must remain at the forefront when developing appropriate strategies for dealing with perpetrators. (See Study 2 in the Case Studies Appendix for further details.)

The most straightforward concept for explaining the non-political motivation of most offenders is a specific/generalist dichotomy. These are the two broadest types of perpetrators of violent racism, with the second normally understood to commit the vast majority of racist violence and harassment. Specific perpetrators are those for whom racist attacks form part of a political ideology. However, they are unlikely to commit other crimes unless they involve racial motivation. Individuals such as the nail bomber and members of far-right and fascist political organisations belong to this category. However, while “neo-Nazi” youths may be the subject matter of newspaper headlines that terrorise their readers, most researchers posit that far more perpetrators are generalist offenders. These individuals often commit a number of crimes, and have strong anti-social tendencies in general. When interviewing criminals who commit non-racialised crime, it is often evident that they also hold racist views. Since these individuals seem to constitute the majority of perpetrators, project proposals should target policies that will affect these “generalist” individuals.

Conclusions
This chapter has emphasised the importance of identifying actual perpetrators and, following Sibbitt (1997), proposed a holistic approach, dealing with perpetrators, potential perpetrators and the perpetrator community. It seems likely that the most profitable area of development is within the larger perpetrator community. Where probation officers and psychoanalysts require good practice guidance, experts in the area will be the most appropriate collaters of such information. However, direct one-to-one intervention only impacts upon a small fraction of perpetrators, particularly when we consider that so few of them are caught. In seeking out potential partners for developing strategies for working in and among perpetrator communities, local organisations must be consulted. Furthermore, structural inequalities must not be forgotten and official
agencies should be reminded of their responsibility to combat disadvantage, inequality and undue stress and delinquency. Even if policy shifts seem unlikely, the impact of governmental action and inaction must be properly interrogated. Finally, the focus on perpetrators should not make us forget the victims, who in any case remain highly traumatised by the circumstances of violent racism. A policy that attempts to foster meaningful contact between these communities and target common issues among them will surely yield fruits of success.
Summary of Initial Findings

It is a serious error to ascribe prejudice to any single taproot, reaching into economic exploitation, social structure, fear, aggression, sex conflict, or any other favored soil. Prejudice and discrimination, as we shall see, may draw nourishment from all these conditions, and many others. (Allport 1954: xviii)

This report has explored the background issues relating to working with racist offenders in some depth. The first section delineated the theoretical background, including sociological and social psychological literature on prejudice, criminological literature (including related sociological studies of deviance and delinquency), and finally the relatively newer but growing literature on youth cultures and cultures of masculinities. Understanding this background will of necessity serve as an initial step in identifying the perpetrators, an issue emphasised by all writers and practitioners.

The second section turned to the particular case of the United Kingdom, including the history of violent racism and the government response to it. Here the literature on specific programmes was reviewed, with a number of case studies underlining the point that perpetrators have significant links with wider communities and indeed the society in which they live. Rae Sibbitt's typology of perpetrators, potential perpetrators and the perpetrator community offers a helpful way of understanding the various areas of intervention, as does Hollin...
and Palmer's (2000) similar typology. (See Study 3 in the Case Studies Appendix for more details.)

In general, this report found that most work is targeted at the perpetrators themselves, though much of the research was commissioned by probation services, who are most concerned with this aspect of the issue, namely known offenders. While the case studies discovered a distinct lack of literature even in dealing with known perpetrators, work focusing on potential perpetrators, the perpetrator community and society as a whole is even more difficult to unearth.

The structure of this report has underlined the importance of working with the larger community. Chapter 1 demonstrated the complexity of prejudice and its sources in society, and the second chapter demonstrated a similarly elaborate understanding of criminal behaviour. Individual programmes of action will be unable to fully confront or change these social realities, although they do provide a means for working with specific offenders. The extent of violent racism charted in Chapter 4, and the insistent emphasis on the sanctions of the perpetrator community, suggest that further work in the area will be strongly supported by existing agencies, including the probation service, who produce the most extensive practice on working with offenders.

In this context, it is helpful to turn to a statement made in the National Probation Directorate's Theory Manual. In identifying the target group of the proposed programme, the authors noted:

Although there may be a necessity for probation services to target racist attitudes this will not be the target of the programme. (March 2001: 38)

The development of such a programme would surely be an important step in seeking to minimise the incidence of violent racism. (See Study 4 in the Case Studies Appendix for more details.) Working with individual perpetrators is an important response to raising the level of social stability in Britain, and links with these programmes might even help to limit the level of racism in society more generally. However, to significantly limit the level of violent racism, racist attitudes in society must be addressed at their source.

In considering programmes for working for offenders, it is vital that they do not feel demonised by their interviewers. However, it is equally important to remember that violent acts can cause deep scars in a community, scars that are often very difficult to heal. In this context, communities can become insular and any interactions can become tense and even hostile. In addition, it is tragic that
the victims and perpetrators of violent racism so often share similar levels of socio-economic and educational disadvantage. Inequality continues to mar both of these communities, and any programme of action must be cognisant of the structural conditions of both perpetrator and victim.

If cognitive defects are invoked as an explanation for why perpetrators use violence as a means of resolving conflict, it may also be that their social experiences have left them with little faith in their life chances or in action programmes to alter their cognitive processes. When such individuals are returned to the areas of their crime, where social conditions remain as woeful as before, it is difficult to imagine that even the most systematic and extensive cognitive retraining will be able to overcome local frustration.

At this stage it may seem distressingly unlikely that programmes will be able to reduce the level of violent racism. However, a number of programmes already running have proved highly successful. In particular, Sibbitt's evaluation of an outreach programme in a particular London borough seems to suggest some cause for optimism. Additionally, there are now a number of experts in the field, some of whom have developed excellent records of good practice. Working together with these individuals and learning from the successes and failures of previous programmes will be an important step in making sure that working with racist offenders can deliver positive results.
C

ombating racist violence and harassment in our communities requires sustained and multi-pronged approaches. As noted in earlier chapters, much effort has focused on the experiences and needs of victims of racist violence and harassment – understandably so. As a consequence, however, there is a shortage of knowledge and evidence on dealing with the perpetrators of violence.

Rae Sibbitt’s three-part typology of individual perpetrators, potential perpetrators and the wider perpetrator community suggests at least three target groups for future action. Indeed, adding to Sibbitt’s typology a fourth category, in which wider society and the role of government become the focus of attention, would make the picture even more precise.

Most of the research and practice-orientated work already in existence deals with known perpetrators. Developed to a large extent from the probation perspective, this work offers a basis for good practice. Future projects dealing with known, alleged or potential perpetrators can effectively use and develop existing guidelines, such as From Murmur to Murder (Kay et al. 1999) and the National Probation Directorate’s Theory Manual (2001).

But if, as is widely accepted, only 2–3 % of perpetrators are ever caught by the criminal justice system, most of them remain unknown. And with much less focus on primary prevention – that is, preventing racist violence before it happens – communities are short of guidance on how to make effective interventions in dealing with potential perpetrators and the wider community of offenders. Lack of practical experience in this area also leaves government
without the necessary evidence and perhaps even the impetus to create policy for local and national action against potential racist violence.

Dealing with potential perpetrators and the wider perpetrator community, therefore, demands urgent attention. A clear need exists for in-depth research at an academic level to shed new light on a number of key or related questions, for example:

- How does the issue (or lack) of identity intersect with or lead to violence directed at black and minority ethnic individuals and communities?
- What links the victims and the perpetrators, especially given their similar socio-economic and educational conditions and that they live in similar neighbourhoods?
- When criminogenic and racist factors offer different explanations, what are the different research approaches required to help define policy and propose new practices?

Action research is required too. Already several community-based projects have taken a primary prevention perspective and attempted to address the problem of potentially racist violence and harassment as well as working with known perpetrators. But these seem to be isolated projects, without the kind of sustained funding necessary to continue and develop their work over time. Yet, these voluntary organisations and actions have a most important role to play. Mapping recent and current local projects can form the basis of guidance for future action and government policy to support local initiatives. Information exchange and sharing will prove vital to the success of future projects and work.

Addressing the needs of victims of racist violence must remain paramount. But the prevention of such violence ought to begin to drive strategy and policy-making over the next decade. We - academic researchers, research organisations, voluntary and community organisations, and local and central government - should begin to systematically explore and examine the causes of racist violence, its permutations, its current and potential perpetrators, and assemble the evidence of interventions which have been successful in preventing it from taking hold. Of course, different strategies will be required to assemble evidence from the range of groups and areas involved. But any methodology that fails to capture the importance of addressing the communities that surround the perpetrators will miss a crucial opportunity to prevent potential perpetrator groups from forming amongst the next generation.
These approaches are based on the following distinctions of attitude and behaviour between those who are prejudiced against those they perceive as belonging to other ethnic groups (who exhibit closed views) and those who are unprejudiced (open views):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closed Views</th>
<th>Open Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monolithic attitude with little ability to respond to new realities</td>
<td>Diverse attitudes, positive approach to difference and to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values and attitudes separate from those of people of other cultures</td>
<td>Attitudes interacting with those of people of other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convinced of the inferiority superior of all other cultures</td>
<td>Different from but not inferior or superior to any other culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference as an enemy in work and relationships</td>
<td>Difference as the key to potential new partners and partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative nature of everything unfamiliar</td>
<td>Sincerity taken as a given unless proved otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticisms of own attitudes rejected out of hand</td>
<td>Criticisms of own attitudes always considered and debated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discriminatory practices criticized always defended and justified</td>
<td>Discrimination and exclusion criticized and combated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice seen as natural and ‘normal’</td>
<td>Prejudice seen as problematic, to be subjected to critique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CASE STUDY 1
North Plaistow (1988–91)
Benjamin Bowling was appointed as an “action researcher” on the North Plaistow Project, for which he carried out three years of fieldwork between 1988 and 1991. Initial questioning led to the emergence of a consensus view that it was Asian people, particularly Asian women, who were likely to be victimised. Bowling charts the dates, numbers and types of offences for the period and how processes of victimisation can easily penetrate assaulted communities. Most of the project’s focus looked at the experiences of the victims and spent relatively little time on examining perpetrators. Bowling’s figures relating to perpetrators confirm Sibbitt’s assumptions regarding age, gender, ethnicity and number of attackers, but do not examine motivations too closely. Instead, his work provides important insights about the policing of such incidents and his analysis of police views on racial incidents is penetrating, sympathetic, original and critical.

Before turning away from the multi-agency approach, it may be helpful to summarise the second RAG report’s opinion of the findings of the North Plaistow Project. It listed four notable benefits:

1. increased co-operation and co-ordination among the participating organisations;
2. improved working relationships;
3. the development of promising practice in increasing public knowledge of services available to victims;
4. improvements in monitoring the quality of service delivery with regard to racially motivated crime.

The “important lessons” of the project were more extensive and emphasised the following points. Multi-agency approaches should not replace the need for individual agencies, but only augment existing responses. Specific aims also need to be co-ordinated and agreed; if the definition of the problem is not agreed to, further co-operation will be difficult. The variations in occupational practices and cultures also threatened co-operation at the time, with clarification of the roles of each agency fundamental to the project’s success. If organisations do not accept that established practices can be improved or if staff are unwilling to gain
experience, the project will come under further threat. Careful planning for the implementation of the action plan and community involvement are both crucial to the project’s success.

**CASE STUDY 2**

The From Murmur to Murder Handbook (Kay et al. 1999)

At present there are only a few handbooks dealing with the topic of working with racist offenders, though there are many dealing with working with offenders in general. The first specific research in the area was conducted by Gill and Marshall in the early 1990s, but the most widely used handbook is currently From Murmur to Murder, produced by the Midlands Probation Training Consortium in 1999. This resource guide begins by citing an increase of racist offending across the country, and also notes increased “political and extrapolitical activity” by groups like the National Front and BNP. Again, the decline of “local heavy industries, particularly coal mining, with the consequent creation of high levels of unemployment amongst young men” is emphasised, and in this case seen as a “fertile recruiting ground for the extreme political organisations.”

The handbook is divided into sections, offering a broad strategy for identifying and working with offenders and endorsing a number of appropriate tactics. It first attempts to place racist offending in context, underlining why it is important to initiate specific programmes for working with racist offenders, perhaps mindful of research and criticism suggesting that in the past the police have not responded to such crimes in an appropriate manner. The section on “knowledge and values” is an important guide for anyone interested in designing “anti-racist” policies without alienating the service providers, in this case the police. The “knowledge” section provides evidence of the extent and form of racist violence while the “values” section provides ethical and professional rationale for the specificity of projects dealing with racist offenders. The resource pack does not shy away from exposing the level of racism in Britain and quotes Bandana Ahmad to point out that probation officers “do not operate in a vacuum”, but are influenced by their personal values, including “their own socio-economic, education and cultural experiences”.

From Murmur to Murder offers a number of quizzes, questionnaires, forms, etc., that can either be adopted or adapted by specific probation officers. These are employed to help bring into focus the opinions of young people, perpetrators and probation officers, and to ground the knowledge and values charted earlier.
For example, a “Black in Britain Quiz” asks true/false questions about the presence, form and societal disadvantage of black and minority ethnic Britons. Each question is in fact true, with the evidence provided from the census and government documents and statistics, including Labour Force Surveys.

Before the pack turns to programme development and supervision issues, it again points out the level of racial violence in the UK for a long period of time and summarises 20th-century accounts, including attacks in 1919, 1948, 1958 and 1961 as well as the numbers of racist murders between 1976 and 1981 (31) and naming cases between 1991 and 1996. It also focuses on under-reporting by victims and under-recording by police officers and offers a few suggestions for ameliorating this situation. Where the police service “has not yet succeeded in achieving satisfactory levels of recording”, the language is often “unfamiliar to police officers pre-occupied with information which is verifiable and capable of being put into evidence”.

Rae Sibbitt’s elaboration of the identity of racist perpetrators is quoted at length and in full, with a concluding point that since Sibbitt’s research was undertaken on two London housing estates, it strongly suggests that “racially motivated offending is a working class phenomenon”. While the handbook agrees that the majority of a probation service’s caseload will fall into this generalisation, it emphasises that “the service needs to be aware that racism and racially motivated offending transcends the traditional offender population, and may bring new offending groups to the attention of the service”.

This resource guide also offers guidelines for risk assessment and pre-sentence reports. These have undoubtedly proved helpful to case workers, and will continue to do so in the future. Section 9, Supervision, is the largest section and outlines programme development, programme content, specimen programmes and strategies for working with racially motivated and racist offenders. The “PCS” model (P for personal, C for Cultural and S for Structural) is cited as a useful model for developing anti-racist practice, but also “as a framework for structured interventions with racist and racially motivated offenders”. Some of the issues involved in programme development will be cognitions and belief systems, feeling and emotions and of course observable behaviour. It emphasises that probation officers need to understand HOW the offender thinks as much as WHY. The “anti-social logic” is explored as is the need for “value enhancement” among such offenders. Finally, “programme integrity” is emphasised, so that “planning for the possibility of lapse and relapse” are a part of any programme.
The specimen programme offers a concrete example for projects in working with racist offending. It first charts the aims and various issues involved, followed by over 10 exercises and 5 case studies. These strategies range from psychological evaluations of denial and blame to autobiographical exercises to language and work association exercises to victim perceptions and statements to considering difficult dilemmas. The final section presents some possible outstanding or resultant issues and concerns for service providers.

From Murmur to Murder offers a specific strategy for working with racist offenders. It is directed at probation officers and as such specifically deals with offenders caught by the criminal justice system. In Sibbitt’s typology, this probably represents the most effective platform for working with the actual perpetrators and perhaps could be adapted in working with potential perpetrators. Probation officers and perhaps clinical psychologists may well be the best able to deal with these issues. The handbook is clear about the level of racism in society and is not directed at the larger issue of reducing racism in Britain as a whole or even among what Sibbitt has classified as the “perpetrator community”. While some of the strategies proposed here can undoubtedly be modified for community-level projects, other tactics may have to be employed as well.

**SIBBITT - case note**

The text of this publication has already explored Rae Sibbitt’s Home Office research in some detail, concentrating on her conclusions and typologies. This is because although she provides case studies, her research in two London boroughs gives pseudonyms to all the agencies involved. Since Sibbitt mentions a number of professionals engaged in good practice, it might prove useful to researchers to request access to the details of some such programmes, ensuring that confidentiality is strictly maintained. If this were to prove difficult, it might be possible to develop similar programmes based on the number and type of agencies studied by Sibbitt and perhaps compare and contrast the research findings.

**CASE STUDY 3**

Clive Hollin and Emma Palmer, both based at the Centre for Applied Psychology at the University of Leicester, were commissioned to write a literature review of the existing evidence on reducing reoffending by racially motivated
offenders. Many issues raised in chapters 1 and 2 above are also explored in their review. The decision to examine the more wide-ranging research evidence stemmed partly from their finding that there was an “absence of a literature exactly suited to the original aims of the review”. In particular, they found very few evaluations of existing programmes and therefore considered studies that focused “on the characteristics of the perpetrators of racially motivated offending”. The conceptual distinction between “generalist” and “specialist” offenders was also a key finding of their research review. Another key distinction made by Hollin and Palmer concerns the area of intervention and prevention, a differentiation that will be crucial to programme development. They define:

- **Primary prevention** as seeking to “change the social and cultural factors across the whole of society that produce racially motivated crimes”.
- **Secondary prevention** would seek to “identify those members of society who have the potential to commit racially motivated offences and target preventive strategies accordingly”.
- **Tertiary prevention** would be “aimed at known perpetrators of racially motivated offences with a view to preventing further offending by those individuals”.

Like other case studies summarised in this paper, Hollin and Palmer’s review concentrates on the third form of prevention. The inclination to concentrate on the individual known offenders is perhaps because most of the work dealing with racially motivated offenders is conducted by probation officers and also by housing associations. Community programmes have either not produced best practice literature or their programmes have not received as much investigation. That both of the major recent reviews have found so little evidence even for the tertiary form of prevention demonstrates that further programme development is needed, especially at the community level where voluntary organisations can play a leading role. Furthermore, there is a need for a stronger commitment to combat inequality and discrimination at the highest levels, given that the sources of racist offending and offending more generally are consistently linked to economic disadvantage and other social conditions.

**CASE STUDY 4**

**NPD’s Proposed Theory Manual**

In March 2001, the National Probation Directorate drafted a theory manual for working with racially motivated offenders. Here again, it is noted that “little
evidence or research has been conducted on these offenders”, despite the fact that “there is a growing realisation of the need to direct attention towards the perpetrators of such attacks”. The manual clearly states its purpose: “to propose a series of criminogenic factors for racially aggravated offending based upon the limited literature and research available”. Its goal is to specify “a defined target group for which these factors are considered relevant and... [to give] an outline for a programme aiming to address them.”

Like other theory manuals, it first offers definitions of some of the background issues for its topic area, in this case racism and racist incident. Both of these are taken from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report, again elucidating the impact of the Inquiry. Furthermore, it defines “racially aggravated offending”. The manual takes on board the definition cited above from the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The next section illuminates why a programme is needed, demonstrating the police figures for racist incidents and the large increases in recent years. Citing evidence from the 1999 British Crime Survey, it notes that “only 5.8% of incidents are reported to the police and of the total incidents occurring 0.5% are actually convicted”. Therefore, while the issue of racist attacks and harassment is increasingly being given a higher profile, “the extent to which it is being tackled by the Criminal Justice system is still very limited.” This confirms the position of this report and suggests that project development is needed in the perpetrator communities directly, an arena where local agencies and voluntary organisations are indeed best placed to contribute.

In considering existing evidence, the draft of the theory manual (Version 5 May 2001) mentions a number of sources. It notes that a recent review by Hollin and Palmer (2001) reported that: “there was no published literature specifically establishing the dynamic criminogenic factors associated with racially motivated offending; nor are there any controlled outcome studies of the effects of work with racially motivated offenders.” Instead, the main sources of research are pinpointed as: (1) British Crime Surveys and similar data on crime and victims; (2) studies on the local culture of racism, such as Hewitt’s survey of attitudes and beliefs in Greenwich; (3) Sibbitt’s Home Office research; and (4) recent ESRC-funded research by Ray, Smith and Wastell (2000/1) in Greater Manchester (see below).

After pointing out the types of crime, its incidence and victims, the manual turns to the identity of the perpetrators. Previous research has always emphasised that racist offenders are not highly politicised neo-Nazi youths. Instead they are often “ordinary people”, especially when incidents of racial
harassment, often not recorded officially as evidence, are considered. The social factors cited by Sibbitt and others, including unemployment, housing, and rapid demographic and structural changes in Britain's economy are mentioned alongside the growing importance attached to local cultures of entrenched racism. Hewitt's study of Greenwich is again cited, and the manual draws extensively on his research, which opposes passive racism to active racism. Manifestations of passive racism are defined as “graffiti, harassment, jokes, name calling” and other forms of verbal hostility. This “common currency” of racist communication was very prevalent in Greenwich, forming a kind of entertainment that not only gave tacit support to the BNP, but also relayed a “culture of racism” across generations.

Hewitt's explanations of active racism were traced to wider social factors, including the cultural ones cited above, but also socio-economic and criminogenic ones. The issue of a “lack of identity” was again emphasised. Given the frequency of this explanation, further research into how these perceptions are shaped, and indeed why such perceptions can lead to violent acts need to be further explored. Ray, Smith and Wastell supported these views and examined offender views in more detail. Not only did they find that such perpetrators felt overlooked and ignored, but they saw “white English” culture as devalued at the expense of ethnic minority cultures, of which they seemed to have idealised stereotypical views. Multi-cultural and anti-racist education was deemed ineffective, either because of school truancy and/or exclusion or because the education system “reinforced a sense of resentment and defiance.” How these issues can be alleviated remains relatively unexplored and in need of further consideration and development.

The National Probation Directorate's proposal for a theory manual explores “proposed risk factors” in some detail. This serves to provide a potential perpetrator profile, and the main factors cited were:

1. racist attitudes
2. pro-criminal attitudes
3. acceptance of violence as a means of conflict resolution
4. cognitive deficits
5. lack of self identity
6. distorted victim perspective and
7. poor emotional management

Most of these have already been explored in this report. The second issue
refocuses our attention on the “generalist”/ “specific” division, which is also identified as a key issue by Ray, Smith and Wastell. Both pieces of research see the “generalist” offenders as the preponderant majority of racist offenders, with the suggestion that their “behaviour has the same causes as any of those identified criminological explanations of crime” including “high levels of adult criminality linked with wider criminal networks.” The third, fourth and sixth issues are all related to cognitive explanations, which have also been examined in chapters one and two above. The outline for the theory manual concludes as follows:

In committing a racially motivated offence the offender is seeking to resolve a problem. At the core of their problem is a lack of identity. Traditional gender and cultural identities have been eroded and have not been replaced by new identities... In attempting to resolve these problems they use strategies that are well rehearsed in their behavioural repertoire. Their own antisocial and racist attitudes are supported, reinforced and rehearsed by their peers and the wider community. (2001: 37)

The final sections of the manual consider specific target groups and propose a programme outline. The specific target group is racially aggravated offenders as opposed to specialist, or politically motivated offenders or offenders with racist attitudes. This is proposed because the specialist offenders form “a very small percentage of offenders committing racially aggravated offences. A programme specifically for this group will be proposed at a later date.”

The proposed programme outline is divided into four separate stages. The first, a cognitive skills programme, will include a cognitive skills course, with the above dynamic factors targeted. The second stage will involve individual work, concentrating on assessment issues. “It will aim to identify some of the core attitudes that the offenders process and look at patterns of offending”. The third stage will concentrate on teaching advanced cognitive skills in group or individual settings. The issue of identity and citizenship will be explored, and ‘cognitive restructuring’ will be taught as a new skill. The final stage will link the other stages together, developing a range of coping mechanisms, including those that help offenders deal with the “obvious dissonance between their own changing attitudes and those of the society which they will go back to”. Finally, the manual mentions some “supporting conditions”, which it lists as:

8. Identification of racially aggravated offenders
9. Staff training and support
10. Working with other agencies
Perpetrators of Racist Violence and Harassment


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