RACE & RACISM

ESSAYS IN SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

EDITED BY
PETER JACKSON

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Preface

In September 1985 the Social Geography Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers held a three-day conference at Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic on the subject of 'Race and Racism'. It was a lively and stimulating meeting with geographers joining a range of other social scientists in vigorous but unacrimonious debate. The conference itself has been reported elsewhere (*Immigrants and Minorities* **4** (3), November 1985, pp. 85–9).

   The present volume is a selection of essays derived from some of the papers that were given at the conference, together with one newly commissioned paper (by Susan Smith) and an introductory essay (by myself). Each of the papers has been revised in the light of issues raised at the conference and in response to editorial comments on successive drafts. The introduction attempts to place the essays in the disciplinary context of social geography and in terms of the wider social-science literature on 'race' and racism. The essays are then divided into a number of parts, each of which begins with a short introductory section, highlighting salient points and drawing out general themes.

   Editorial work on this volume has been made much less onerous by the generous co-operation of numerous people to whom I would like to extend my thanks. Hugh Matthews gave invaluable local support in organizing the original conference. All of the contributors kept remarkably well to schedule in preparing their manuscripts for publication, responding positively and with good humour to my various requests and suggestions. Most of the maps were redrawn for publication by Lauren McClue in the Drawing Office at UCL. And finally, the following people deserve my special thanks for taking the time to comment helpfully on an earlier draft of the introduction: Guido Ambroso, Marian Mair, Bob Miles and Susan Smith.

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Introduction

The idea of 'race' and the geography of racism

PETER JACKSON

Racism is not confined to the beliefs of a few bigoted individuals who simply do not know any better. It is a set of interrelated ideologies and practices that have grave material effects, severely affecting black people's life-chances and threatening their present and future wellbeing. [1] Racism is deeply rooted in British society's unequal power structure and is perpetuated from day to day by the intended and unintended consequences of institutional policies and practices. Institutional racism is in turn sustained by the false representations of 'common-sense' racism and media stereotypes. Challenging racism, as this book seeks to do, therefore involves a range of complex and interacting issues. We should begin, though, as Kevin Brown argued in an earlier collection of essays on the social geography of ethnic segregation (Jackson & Smith 1981), by recognizing that:

> White academics with an interest in race must relinquish their self-appointed role as the 'translators' of black cultures, in favour of analyses of white society, i.e. of racism. (Brown 1981, p. 198)

A positive response to Kevin Brown's challenge involves a reappraisal of the academic and political significance of the concept of 'race' and of the 'race relations' industry in general. It suggests that geographers have paid too little attention to work in other branches of the social sciences, particularly concerning the radical critique of 'race relations' research. But, conversely, it suggests also that there are important territorial dimensions to the study of 'race' that make the geography of racism an important and relatively neglected field. In keeping with debates in other areas of human geography and social theory (e.g. Gregory & Urry 1985), this suggests that we need both to broaden our intellectual horizons to encompass a wider range of social-science perspectives while at the same time injecting a more adequately theorized conception of space and place into the general social-science literature on 'race' and racism.

The structure of this introduction follows the pattern suggested by these initial remarks, including both a commentary on recent debates over the social construction of 'race' and a discussion of the territorial expression of various forms of racism. For spatial structures are implicated in the production and reproduction of social relations in the sense that particular territorial forms both produce and reflect particular social processes. In order to substantiate these theoretical assertions and to explain the choice of sub-title, 'Essays in social geography', it is appropriate to begin with a short review of the disciplinary context in which this book has arisen.

Social geography and spatial sociology

This volume is intended to mark a firm departure from the established tradition of studies into the geography of racial and ethnic minorities that dates back at least to Emrys Jones' pioneering work, *A social geography of Belfast* (1960). That seminal work, together with parallel research in urban sociology in the United States, gave rise to a series of empirical studies of residential segregation that has been celebrated as one of the most successful examples of cumulative social science (Peach 1983, p. 124). Characterized as 'spatial sociology' by both supporters and critics of the genre, this work raised few questions about the meaning or significance of segregation but concentrated instead on describing the spatial pattern of minority-group concentration, with gestures towards an explanation in terms of the opposing forces of 'choice' and 'constraint' (see, for example, the essays in Peach 1975, Peach *et al.* 1981, Jackson & Smith 1981). Not surprisingly, this tradition of research drew often angry criticism from more radical scholars and from those involved in black political struggles who found this work guilty of 'narrow empiricism' at best and 'socio-cultural apologism for racial segregation' at worst (Bridges 1982, pp. 83–4).

The strength of such exercises in 'spatial sociology' has always been their relative sophistication concerning the quantitative measurement of segregation and of other patterns of social interaction, such as ethnic inter-marriage. Their weakness is a relative lack of theoretical sophistication, despite recent attempts to develop a theory around the notion of ethnic pluralism (Clarke *et al.* 1984). Alternatively, some authors followed the Weberian lines of regarding access to scarce housing resources as the crucial structural underpinning of minority-group segregation and deprivation, as in Rex and Moore's influential study of Sparkbrook (Rex & Moore 1967). Rather fewer followed the marxian logic of David Harvey's explanation of the process of ghetto formation (Harvey 1973), now elaborated further as part of his broader argument about the urbanization of capital (Harvey 1985).

Despite the significance of this critique, many geographers have continued to adhere to an outdated and problematic concept of ethnic 'assimilation' (e.g. Robinson 1982, Walter 1984), despite fundamental criticisms of the concept on political and theoretical grounds (e.g. Blaut 1983, Yinger 1981). 'Assimilation' is simplistically defined as the socially desirable converse of 'segregation', an historically inevitable outcome of a unilinear process of ethnic competition and upward social mobility. The advocates of minority-group 'assimilation' rarely pause to consider precisely whose interests such a process would serve, casually assuming it to be a universally desirable goal of social policy. It is particularly ironic that geographers have continued to adhere to such a view, as one of the most significant findings of the spatial sociologists was their revelation of the lack of empirical support for the assimilation thesis in terms of a consistent decline in ethnic segregation over time, corresponding with the development of the 'new ethnicity' in the United States (cf. Glazer & Moynihan 1975, Steinberg 1981). Rather belatedly, geographers have begun to realize that 'ethnicity' is a much more slippery concept than they had earlier assumed, necessitating new approaches to the concept's emergent

properties and symbolic features (see, for example, Yancey *et al.* 1976, Gans 1979, Smith 1984).

There have, however, been some genuine advances within social geography in the past couple of decades. It is no longer 'unrealistic', for example, to expect geographers to leave their universities and to live with the subjects of their research as Bridget Leach once complained (Leach 1973, p. 236). There is a growing ethnographic tradition in geography which specifically aims to convey the subjective experience of different social groups, drawing on the discipline's long tradition of field research (cf. Jackson 1985). There have also been constructive moves within geography away from a unique focus on 'immigrant' groups as a problem or research topic in themselves, responding to Stuart Hall's comment that:

> Instead of thinking that confronting the questions of race is some sort of moral intellectual academic duty which white people with good feelings do for blacks, one has to remember that the issue of race provides one of the most important ways of understanding how this society actually works and how it has arrived where it is. (Hall 1981, p. 69)

This volume seeks to mark a further step in the transition from a social geography that is exclusively concerned with patterns of immigration, segregation and assimilation towards a more conscious attempt to deal with the political dimension of ethnic and racial studies, challenging the racism that is endemic in British society and in British academia. To this extent, social geography is lagging behind other branches of the social sciences where the study of 'race relations' has undergone a more searching radical critique. It is to this critique that we now turn.

The social construction of 'race'

Recent criticisms of the 'race relations' industry in Britain include the charge that academics have been guilty of abstracting and distorting black people's experience, and of complicity with successive governments in perpetuating the view that black people themselves are the 'problem', rather than the racism of a dominant white society. The case against the conventional sociology of 'race relations' is most succinctly put by two authors from the radical Institute of Race Relations:

> It was not black people who should be examined, but white society; it was not a question of educating blacks and whites for integration, but of fighting institutional racism; it was not race relations that was the field for study, but racism. (Bourne & Sivanandan 1980, p. 339)

To pursue the implications of this assertion within the social sciences requires that we recognize the problematic status of many of the concepts that have become familiar within the tradition of 'race relations' research. This includes not only such commonplace terms as 'assimilation', 'succession', 'pluralism' and so forth but also, more fundamentally, the concept of 'race' itself. If we are to advance an analysis that goes

beyond the categories of common-sense understanding (cf. Lawrence 1982a), we must recognize that 'race' has no explanatory value and serves little, if any, analytical purpose. While it might perhaps be argued that 'race' is a valid concept in contemporary political debate, where black people's struggles cannot be reduced to simple class terms, its analytical value in the discourse of academic social science is much less certain. Instead, following Miles (1984), we shall speak of the idea of 'race', distancing ourselves from those who accord the concept explanatory status and focusing instead on its ideological effects in various domains (scientific, political, common-sense, etc.).

We begin by recognizing that 'race' is fundamentally a social construction rather than a natural division of humankind. With this in mind, Pierre van den Berghe defines 'race' as a group that is socially defined on the basis of physical criteria (van den Berghe 1967, p. 9), although as we shall argue below there are good grounds for recogniz ing some forms of racism that are couched in cultural rather than in purely physical terms. Van den Berghe defines racism similarly as any set of beliefs that organic, genetically transmitted differences (whether real or imagined) between human groups are intrinsically associated with the presence or absence of certain socially relevant characteristics (ibid., p. 11). He concludes that 'race' has no objective reality independent of its social definition (ibid., p. 148). Having quoted van den Berghe approvingly in this context it is disappointing to note his subsequent flirtation with sociobiology (e.g. van den Berghe 1978) which it is not possible to endorse here.

Although the urge to classify people into a finite number of 'races' has been widespread, it should not be understood as having its roots in an unalterable 'human nature'. The existence of so-called 'natural antipathies' between groups of people is a racist belief for which there is no secure scientific basis. The classification of people based on physical differences such as skin colour is even less 'natural', arising not from some innate human instinct but from specific historical circumstances. The process by which racist distinctions have been 'naturalized' is, in fact, one of the similarities between racism and sexism. For, as Stuart Hall has argued, both ideologies attempt to ground themselves in the evidence of nature:

> It is this transposition from historically and culturally created differences to fixed natural or biological or genetic differences which gives those two ideologies their deep-seated structure. (Hall 1981, p. 64)

Elsewhere, Hall has amplified this point, arguing that it is not helpful to define racism as a 'natural' and permanent feature of all societies, arising out of a universal 'human nature':

> It's not a permanent human or social deposit which is simply waiting there to be triggered off when the circumstances are right. It has no natural and universal law of development. It does not always assume the same shape. There have been many significantly different *racisms*—each historically specific and articulated in a different way with the societies in which they appear. Racism is always historically specific in this way, whatever common features it may appear to share with similar social phenomena. (Hall 1978, p. 26)

In order to counter arguments about the 'natural' origins of racist distinctions, the social construction of 'race' must therefore be understood historically. In Britain, this involves an examination of the colonial context, the legacy of slavery and the growth of the black population (cf. Fryer 1984). Yet, as recent research has shown, British attitudes to 'race' are more closely associated with domestic issues than has previously been assumed. Thus, Greta Jones has demonstrated how variations in British attitudes towards the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica reflected social tensions *within Britain itself* (Jones 1980, pp. 140–1). Similarly, Douglas Lorimer's work pays close attention to the overlap between 'race' and 'class' in the analysis of Victorian society (Lorimer 1979), an emphasis which Marian Mair has significantly extended in her recent dissertation on representations of black musicality in Britain since 1750 (Mair 1986).

The racism of previous generations may now appear self-evident. But one should beware of complacency in assuming that our own ideas are so much more enlightened. For, as several essays in the present volume argue (Chs 4, 12 & 13), contemporary social science can play a similar rôle to that of 19th-century natural science in providing academic legitimation for popular racist beliefs, to say nothing of the highly dubious rôle of sociobiology in this respect. More generally, though with specific reference to the evolution of American attitudes towards 'race', Jeffrey Prager has argued against our own smugness in accounting for the structural roots of contemporary inequality. He argues that current explanations that stress socio-economic or cultural reasons for the continued subordination of black people are no less ideological than previous biological or psychological explanations, as both prevent us from perceiving an appropriately individuated and differentiated black community (Prager 1982).

An historical perspective on 'race' also prevents the common misconception that Britain's 'race relations' problem began with the arrival of large numbers of black immigrants from the New Commonwealth in the post-war period. This attitude is frequently associated with the view that Britain has an enviable record of tolerance and fair play towards minority groups that faltered only with the 'flood' of immigrants who began to arrive after 1945. Colin Holmes demonstrates that this view is as historically unfounded as the idea that racism is a peculiarly working-class phenomenon: 'every major immigrant group since 1870 has been the target of some hostility and all sections of the receiving society have at times expressed opposition towards some immigrant group' (Holmes 1982, p. 13).

There are, though, two interrelated strands to the ideology of British tolerance and fair play. The first concerns the implication that there is some theoretical ceiling beyond which any further immigration will inevitably lead to conflict. Immigration can then be restricted on the allegedly humanitarian grounds of ensuring 'good race relations', a feature that was common to both Labour and Conservative party policies during the 1960s (cf. Ben-Tovim & Gabriel 1979, Reeves 1983). The argument is objectionable on the grounds that it ignores the human rights of prospective immigrants who may be perfectly entitled to live in Britain and on the grounds that it legitimizes racist attitudes. (The question of how to determine the magic number is also rarely confronted by those who advocate this 'theory' of immigration control.)

The second ideological strand concerns the use of sensationalist language about the 'flood' or 'tidal wave' of immigrants who are supposedly in danger of 'swamping'

British culture. This view, which conveniently ignores the diversity that has always characterized 'British culture', is now so commonplace and apparently unexceptional that even the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher can be quoted using its unmistakable vocabulary:

> The British character has done so much for democracy, for law, and done so much throughout the world, that if there is a fear that it might be swamped, people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in. (quoted in Miles & Phizacklea 1984, p. 5)

All these examples are guilty of the 'foreshortened historical vision' that Lawrence describes as fashionable in 'ethnicity studies' circles (Lawrence 1982b, p. 113). Lawrence goes on to provide a devastating critique of orthodox 'race relations' sociology, notwithstanding the impeccable liberalism of many of its central practitioners. The 'pathological' black family and the problems of 'black youth', allegedly 'torn between two cultures' or vulnerable to other forms of 'identity crisis' (cf. Cashmore & Troyna 1982) are all subjected to Lawrence's analytical probing, guided by the central idea that 'there are *power relations* in operation here which limit the range of choices black people can make' (Lawrence 1982b, p. 116).

Forms of contemporary racism

An historical approach is also capable of identifying the interplay between various forms of racism, contradicting the assumption that Victorian racism was exclusively 'scientific', for example, or that present-day racism is an entirely working-class phenomenon. One of the most important lessons of recent writings about 'race' is, in fact, the need to recognize the multiple forms that racism can take. For racism is not a unitary or static phenomenon:

> Racism does not stay still; it changes shape, size, contours, purpose, function— with changes in the economy, the social structure, the system and, above all, the challenges, the resistances to that system. (Sivanadan 1983, p. 2)

As Sivanandan goes on to argue, most forms of racism, unlike racialism or 'race prejudice', are *structured* (in the sense that they occur in the context of deeply entrenched, asymmetrical power relations) and *institutionalized* (in the sense that they are perpetuated, often unintentionally, through the policies and practices of public and private bodies). Thus, even so-called 'personal' racism is reinforced by institutionalized racism in housing, education and employment, and by the racist stereotypes that are regularly conveyed in the media. Measuring prejudice, as Vaughan Robinson sets out to do below (Ch. 7), therefore becomes a complex, multi-variate exercise that is not really amenable to empirical investigation.

  The reproduction of racist ideologies similarly involves a range of social practices from overt aspects of public policy to more mundane features of everyday life. For even such an apparently inoffensive action as telling a racist or 'ethnic' joke serves to reinforce

existing prejudices and actively reproduces the unequal social relations upon which more instrumental forms of racism are based. No better example could be found of the mutual interaction between agency and structure that characterizes contemporary structuration theory where 'the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems' (Giddens 1979, p. 69). In this case, racism is a structural property of the British social system and racist jokes are one type of social practice that is both a medium for the reproduction of racist structures and an outcome of the structural racism that characterizes our society.

Institutional racism is perhaps the most invidious form of racism because it operates with the imprimatur of the state. It is, though, a form of racism that is often officially denied. Lord Scarman, for example, was willing to admit that 'police attitudes and methods have not yet sufficiently responded to the problem of policing our multi-racial society' (Scarman 1981, section 4.70), yet he was unwilling to see this as evidence of a deeper structural problem. Racial prejudice was interpreted as characteristic of a few (younger) police officers, while 'the direction and policies of the Metropolitan Police are not racist' (ibid., 8.20). More categorically still, Scarman insisted that 'institutional racism' does not exist in Britain (ibid., 9.1).

Not surprisingly, Scarman's remarks have become the focus of intense debate (Mason 1982, Williams 1985). The core of the debate concerns the issue of whether the charge of institutional racism can only be applied to policies and practices that are *intentionally* racist ('knowingly, as a matter of policy', in Scarman's words), or whether it can be extended also to those institutions that have racist *consequences* ('unwittingly discriminatory', in Scarman's terms), irrespective of the intentions of those who carry out the institution's policies. The debate has its roots in Weber's classic analysis of bureaucracy but the concept was forged in its contemporary sense in the course of the American civil rights movement. In this context:

> institutional racism can be defined as those established laws, customs and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities in American society. If racist consequences accrue to institutional laws, customs or practices the institution is racist whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have racist intentions. (Jones 1972, p. 131)

A recent British example of the nature of institutional racism is provided by the Commission for Racial Equality's formal investigation of council-house provision in the London Borough of Hackney, which led to a non-discrimination notice being served under the Race Relations Act 1976. The CRE found that black people were being discriminated against by not being provided with housing of the same quality as that given to white people in similar circumstances (Commission for Racial Equality 1984). Hackney was not thought to be exceptional in this respect and a range of studies now exist that amply confirm the existence of racial discrimination in housing allocation policies in London and throughout Britain, as several papers in the present volume bear witness (Chs 3, 8 & 9). These studies show how discrimination has resulted from the normal policies and practices of local authorities which, irrespective of the intentions of particular officials, had given rise to systematic differences between similarly qualified

black and white applicants.

Despite these comments on the irrelevance of official intentions concerning institutional racism, it is not difficult to provide other examples where the state and its agencies have been anything but innocent of the racist effects of their policies. Arnold Hirsch's research on Chicago housing, for example, shows the extent of the state's compliance in the making and remaking of racially segregated housing (Hirsch 1983). The construction of municipal housing ghettos is shown here to be an active process involving deliberate policy initiatives on the part of the Chicago Housing Authority, under the control of Mayor Richard J. Daley's Democratic 'machine'. Opposition by Chicago's white ethnic groups to what they politely term 'neighbourhood change' was given consistent government support and official sanction through the operation of the city's urban renewal and public housing agencies.

The effects of institutional racism are not, of course, limited to the housing market. Other aspects of social welfare provision show similar tendencies. Mark Johnson's essay (Ch. 10), for example, shows how public expenditure cutbacks have had particularly severe consequences for ethnic minorities, a factor that has increased the trend towards the 'privatization' of welfare services through the voluntary sector, as discussed below by Waterman and Kosmin for the case of London's Jewish community (Ch. 11).

While some forms of racism involve the assumption that social groups differ according to recognizable physical criteria, with at least an implication that these differences are innate (biologically inherited or otherwise passively received), there are also more 'modern' forms of racism that have an apparently cultural basis. These 'cultural' theories do not require traits to be inborn but do generally impute the existence of inescapable social differences which legitimize the assignment of inferiority and superiority. One such example is Oscar Lewis's 'culture of poverty' concept which ostensibly refers to the realm of 'culture' while actually involving the transmission of particular 'cultural' traits from generation to generation through its effects on children:

> By the time slum children are age six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities which may occur in their lifetime. (Lewis 1965, p xlv)

Martin Barker suggests that the 'new racism' of the Tory right has a similar cultural basis, fusing the perspectives of ethology and sociobiology with a virulent strain of nationalism and xenophobia. According to Barker, the 'new racism' is being articulated through 'common-sense' political understanding in a particularly pernicious blend of 'pseudobiological culturalism' (Barker 1981, p. 23). Studies that report the innate 'cultural disadvantage' of black children or the 'pathological' weaknesses of the black family are similarly guilty of cultural racism, ignoring the specific historical conditions that have given rise to such inequalities and the contemporary social forces that are responsible for perpetuating them.

Having considered the multiple forms that racism can assume and the need to develop a fully contextualized historical approach to the social construction of 'race' (cf. Banton, 1977, who treats 'race' more as an exercise in the history of ideas), it is now more

feasible to attempt some definitions of this hydra-headed and intractable concept. Racism, as here conceived, involves the attempt by a dominant group to exclude a subordinate group from the material and symbolic rewards of status and power. It differs from other modes of exclusion in terms of the distinguishing features by which groups are identified for exclusion. However, racism need not have recourse to purely physical distinctions but can rest on the recognition of certain 'cultural' traits where these are thought to be an inherent and inviolable characteristic of particular social groups.

In this respect, racism shares many of the characteristics of nationalism. Both assert the existence of an essentially 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983). Indeed, in the course of exploring the particular history of different patterns of racialization in different parts of Britain, Miles has argued that 'English nationalism encapsulates racism': 'racism is the lining of the cloak of nationalism which surrounds and defines the boundaries of England as an imagined community' (Miles 1987, p. 38). Such distinctions are rarely clear-cut, however, and racism frequently parallels or intersects with other axes of discrimination such as those that operate along gender and class lines. Where several dimensions coincide, as with working-class Asians for example, it may be possible to talk about the double oppression of 'race' and class; Asian women may even be considered the subjects of a triple oppression (cf. Parmar 1982).

Rather than prioritizing either 'race' or 'class' in a reductive way, therefore, one must endeavour to find a more subtle means of exploring the complex relationship between the two dimensions. In his critique of *The Empire strikes back,* for example, Robert Miles argues that the 'black masses' are not a 'race' which has to be related to class, but, rather are 'persons whose forms of political struggle can be understood in terms of racialization within a particular set of production (class) relations' (Miles 1984, p. 230). Stuart Hall's position is not dissimilar. Arguing that black people's actions are *negotiated* under conditions of structural subordination, he claims that 'race' is the medium through which working-class blacks '…"live", experience, makes sense of and thus come to a consciousness of their structural subordination' (Hall *et al.* 1978, p. 347).

While some authors (such as Miles 1982) continue to restrict the term 'racism' to the ideological sphere, it is convenient here to extend its use to include a range of social practices that derive from racist beliefs. Some forms of racism involve direct *exclusionary practices,* either thinly disguised as in the case of residential zoning in the United States (Johnston 1984) or totally blatant as in the case of apartheid in South Africa (Smith 1982, 1983). The *ideological effects* of racism are, on the other hand, more insidious and even more pervasive. Racism is an ideology both in the general sense of a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group (Williams 1977) and in the more restricted sense of a system of beliefs that serve to conceal the interests of a particular class or group (Urry 1981). Several of the essays in the present volume address this issue, revealing the mythical nature of Asian business success (Ch. 8), Irish stupidity (Ch. 6), Puerto Rican docility (Ch. 13) and the indolence of Southern blacks (Ch. 14).

As Gramsci's work demonstrates, however, dominant ideologies never achieve a position of unquestioned authority; they are always contested. Opposition to racism takes as many forms as racism itself, ranging from episodic violence and open confrontation to long-term symbolic forms of resistance such as those that have been documented by members of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham (Hall &

Jefferson 1976). The extent to which such 'rituals of resistance' remain confined to the symbolic level and the conditions under which they may achieve genuine political gains remains an open question (cf. Moore 1975; Sivanandan 1982, 1983).

The geography of racism

Many forms of racism have an explicitly territorial dimension that requires us to examine the complex interweaving of social relations and spatial structures. This is not to say that we should restrict our analyses of 'race' and racism to a single 'spatial dimension' (cf. Saunders 1985) but that we should be sensitive to the reciprocal relationship between society and space, recognizing both the spatial expression of social processes and the spatial constitution of society.

The geography of racism is discernible at a variety of scales. At the national scale, for example, it is clear that Britain is not a homogeneous political and ideological formation. Thus Susan Smith, below, writes of a specifically *English* racism in terms of the effects of successive government policies on particular geographical forms (Ch. 1), while Robert Miles and Anne Dunlop describe the way that Scottish politics has followed a very different pattern of racialization north of the border (Ch. 5). Similarly, in North America, as Alisdair Rogers and Rika Uto discuss from their work in southern California (Ch. 2), the changing map of residential segregation can be interpreted as a record of the changing relationship between home and work which in turn bears witness to changes in the spatial division of labour.

At the urban scale, Christopher Husbands' research in London's East End has revealed the consistent territorial basis of white working-class support for a succession of extreme right-wing political groups from Mosley's blackshirts to the contemporary National Front (Husbands 1982, 1983). This is not to say that racism is a peculiarly working-class phenomenon; evidence from the United States amply confirms the existence of similar exclusionary practices on the part of middle-class suburbanites who in this case have the additional power of the law and the courts on their side (Johnston 1984). Clearly, though, social relations are rather different in London's East End from the situation in other parts of the city where the local structure of housing and job markets, coupled with what Gerald Suttles has described as 'the cumulative texture of local urban culture' (Suttles 1984), have combined to produce quite different patterns of community life. Sandra Wallman's research in Battersea in South London would certainly support such an interpretation; here, 'the local area is the prime focus of identity and loyalty and there is a tolerance of political and social minorities such that racist or extreme political movements tend to be ignored or actively rejected' (Wallman 1982, p. 16). The implications of 'local style' and the interplay between different strands of personal identity clearly vary between neighbourhoods and have to be explored at the detailed level of ethnographic research, even down to individual households (Wallman 1984).

Other forms of racism have more obviously territorial foundations. The basis of present-day apartheid in the Group Areas Act of 1950 is a particularly extreme case and one that allowed a former South African prime minister to say that if he were to wake up one morning and find himself a black man 'the only major difference would be

geographical' (B.J.Vorster, *Johannesburg Star,* 3 April 1973, quoted in Smith 1983). The geographical significance of other, less extreme forms of residential segregation has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves. Richard Harris, for example, has posed some challenging questions about the sociological significance of residential segregation, particularly in terms of whether it serves to promote class consciousness within a particular residential community or whether it lowers the potential for conflict by reducing the possibility of interaction between different groups (Harris 1984).

Finally, research has only just begun to scratch the surface of the geography of racist violence and of organized resistance by black people. Despite the fact that racist attacks have a long history in Britain (Hiro 1971, Fryer 1984), public attention has been diverted by the media's preoccupation with the idea that black people are disproportionately involved as the perpetrators rather than the victims of violent crime. Recent examples of such 'moral panics' include the press's hysteria about mugging during the 1970s (Hall *et al.* 1978) and about the 'riots' during the early 1980s (Benyon 1984; Burgess 1985; Keith, Ch. 12 below).

Much less well documented are the incidents of racially motivated violence directed against black people that amount to an almost continuous and unrelenting battery of black (particularly Asian) people and their property (Doherty 1983). The police have been slow to respond to these attacks, often calling into doubt the evidence for a 'racial' motive, most notoriously in the case of the 'New Cross Massacre' (*Race Today* 1984). Even accepting official estimates, however, the level of racist violence is appalling. A Home Office survey in 1981, for example, found that Asians are 50 times and West Indians 36 times more likely to be the victims of racist attacks than whites. Only recently has the spatial incidence of such attacks been investigated and the evidence makes chilling reading. Although racial harassment is certainly a London-wide phenomenon, it has been most closely monitored in Tower Hamlets where particularly acute problems have been identified. Local MP Ian Mikardo complained to the Home Secretary in February 1983 of a 'catalogue of violence' by white people, mainly against Bangladeshis, that was met by the police with 'indifference, and sometimes even with hostility' (GLC 1984, p. 14). There is ample scope here for geographers to make a truly significant contribution towards the resolution of a pressing social problem.

The history of black people's resistance is as complex as racism itself. Nonetheless, there are good grounds to suspect that the movement has been geographically as well as historically varied. While there is little point in charting the geography of resistance for its own sake, there are good reasons for trying to relate the spatial incidence of resistance to the changing national and local circumstances in which black people's experience has been moulded. For example, Stuart Hall has hypothesized that the theory of 'assimilation' has to be tested against the real environment of the jobs and localities where black and white workers meet and live (Hall 1978, p. 27). He proceeds to relate the early phase of New Commonwealth immigration to the emergence of an open form of racism in the 'race riots' of Notting Hill and Nottingham in 1958. The Smethwick by-election of 1964 marks a second turning point in the history of British 'race relations', with Peter Griffiths' scurrilous use of the slogan 'If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour'. Powellism, too, had specific local roots albeit articulated within the context of a national debate on immigration.

Finally, it can be argued that the sites of black people's struggles have changed over time, focusing at some points on the workplace, at other times around the question of immigration, in the schools or, most recently, on the streets. None of these conflicts can be understood in isolation from the wider struggle of black people to gain a secure place within British society and within the historical context of their role as the suppliers of migrant labour (Miles 1982). It is vital that these conflicts be seen not as a response to a few people's irrational prejudices but as a reflection of a deeply entrenched pattern of racism that has its roots in real material conditions. Social geographers have their part to play in accounting for the present-day manifestations of racism and in understanding how the specific features of contemporary British racism have emerged.

Conclusion

Writing under the same title as the present volume in 1967, Pierre van den Berghe attempted to characterize what he then regarded as the dominant trends in the study of 'race relations' (van den Berghe 1967, pp. 2–8). First, he detected a 'new orthodoxy' concerning the influence of the social environment on perceived racial differences, as opposed to the influence of heredity and the physical environment. He noted the lack of a cross-cultural perspective and of an historical dimension. He criticized the isolation of 'race' from its social context, seeking a greater theoretical integration between 'race relations' and mainstream sociology. And finally, he pointed to the general complacency and optimism of liberal attitudes towards 'race', coupled with a tendency to see racism as a matter of individual prejudice that was amenable to ameliorative policies rather than as a matter of institutionalized practices that were deeply rooted in society's fundamentally unequal power structure.

While it is possible to record some progress during the past two decades, van den Berghe's critique remains apposite for the 1980s. To regard 'race' as a social construction rather than as a biological given may now be widely accepted in the social sciences but it has yet to penetrate the public consciousness and to influence the realm of common-sense understanding. The need for cross-cultural research remains strong, yet most of the essays in the present volume comprise studies of a single society, leaving comparisons largely unstated. Similarly, the historical dimension is generally implicit rather than explicit, although in this case the present collection of essays fares rather better. The argument for integrating the study of 'race relations' within a more broadly conceived social science is also now quite generally accepted. The present volume attempts to extend this argument by injecting a more rigorously theorized conception of space and place into sociological theories about 'race' and racism. And finally, the complacency of liberal attitudes towards the issues of 'race' and racism is now definitely under attack. Several of the essays in this collection address this issue by providing a critique of the role of academic social science itself or by reviewing the problems that even well-intentioned anti-racialist policies face in counteracting the pervasive effects of institutional racism, whether in housing allocation or other aspects of welfare provision.

There is much that remains to be done, however, if future research is to combine the insights of a broadly structuralist critique of the roots of racism with a fully

contextualized understanding of the experience of racism in particular localities at certain times (cf. Harvey 1984). The challenge then remains of carrying forward the critical sense of these essays into our own communities and professions, where racism remains pervasive and deeply entrenched.

Note

1 The term 'black' is used here to refer to all people of ethnic minority origin from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, It refers as much to a state of consciousness as to physical appearance or skin colour.

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