

The Borders and Boundaries of Community: Social Cohesion and Responses to Domestic and Racial Violence

Jacqueline Mary Haq M.B.E, B.A. (Hons.)

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

205 36544 3

Thesis L8311

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Geography, Politics and Sociology

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

March 2006

ABSTRACT

Following the 2001 disturbances in Northern England, New Labour initiated a social cohesion agenda aimed, primarily, at urban, working class communities. For the government, the 'cohesive community' is one with a 'common vision' and 'sense of belonging', where 'diversity...of circumstances...is valued' (Home Office, 2004). Though positively framed, this 'vision' is problematic. Despite emerging in response to violent public confrontations, the cohesion agenda obscures the power conflicts inherent in the construction of communities. Specifically, it de-racialises 'race', omits to mention gender or a 'sense of injustice', and often presents one-dimensional and static models of cohesion.

Drawing on Cohen's (1998) model of 'community' as relational and fluid, this study argues that the social cohesion agenda can be far from benign, given that communities are constructed and enacted on a number of grounds, including 'race' and gender. Both these social divisions are heavily imbued with hierarchical power differentials that can potentially sustain inequality and fuel injustice. This thesis deconstructs 'social cohesion' by exploring the, at times, blurred boundaries of community and cohesion, arguing that these borders are brought into sharp focus by community responses to racialised and gendered violence.

The study is ethnographic, utilising qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews, and participant and non-participant observation. Fieldwork was conducted in North East England, in predominantly working class, ethnically diverse areas with histories of strong, 'community' identities premised on long-term residence in specific geographical neighbourhoods.

It is shown that the borders of community are racialised and gendered, inculcated with notions of identity and belonging, justice and entitlement. These dynamics can, potentially, transform borders into boundaries between communities, yet paradoxically appear to be 'hidden in full sight' (Hill Collins, 1998) from some of the social actors involved, as well as those involved in wider debates on social cohesion. This project widens the parameters of the debate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	11
Chapter 3: Methodology	36
Chapter 4: Social Cohesion and Community	69
Chapter 5: Responding to Racial Violence: The Construction of Community Through the Lens of ‘Race’	134
Chapter 6: Responding to Domestic Violence: The Construction of Community Through the Lens of Gender	186
Chapter 7: Intersections of ‘Race’, Gender and Community	238
Chapter 8: Conclusion	270
Bibliography	288

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people I wish to thank for their support and encouragement shown to me during the course of writing this thesis. First of all, I extend my gratitude to all the people who gave freely of their time to participate in this research. Without them none of this would be possible.

Thank you to the University of Newcastle for the Departmental Studentship, which funded my first year as a postgraduate student and enabled me to develop the research proposal for this study, and for subsequent support and resources throughout the years. I would also like to thank the ESRC for funding the research through the ESRC Student Award Scheme (R42200124407).

Throughout this research, two people have provided outstanding guidance, support, encouragement and optimism. My warmest thanks and gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Ruth Lewis and Dr. Colin Clark, for staying with me throughout this journey.

I would also like to thank my long-suffering family and friends who have supported me through the highs and lows of being a PhD student. To my husband Paul, for your support and care, to children Dean and Amy, sister Helen and father Jack, and to friends Sue and Lorraine, thank you for believing in me.

Finally, thank you to my mother, Sheila Mary Oliver, who gifted me with a love of words and of reading. She made this possible too.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Setting the scene

This chapter will set the intellectual, political and personal scene for my empirical, ethnographic study of *The Borders and Boundaries of Community*. I begin by outlining what the study set out to investigate and why it is a contribution to the social cohesion debate. I then outline some of the key concepts on which the study turns, and identify the research questions. I move on to discuss the motivation behind this study and why I chose to adopt an ethnographic approach. Lastly I present an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Outline of study and contribution the cohesion debate

This thesis sets out to examine the concept of ‘community’ and its relation to the interconnected term, ‘cohesion’. The aim of the study is to widen the parameters of the social cohesion debate, by moving from the, at times, one-dimensional or static model of the cohesive community identified in the government’s (2004) vision statement. Influenced by Cohen’s (1998) work on the symbolic construction of community, and particularly the relational dynamics of community, I set out to explore the borders and boundaries of community as interpreted, understood and recounted by the social actors involved, with particular attention being paid to the impact of social divisions of ‘race’¹ and gender.

This study, therefore, investigates the social construction, interpretation and enactment of community, specifically as seen through the lens of ‘race’ and gender. It presents a picture, a ‘snapshot in time and place’, of the richness and complexity of ‘community’ as it is lived and experienced at the neighbourhood and sub-

¹ I gave a lot of thought about the term ‘race’ and whether or not to use parenthesis. I appreciated the validity of Nayak’s (1999:4) argument that “the frequency with which this had been done has tended to make the practice meaningless”. In the end I decided to go with the convention, not so much to signify that ‘race’ is a social construct *per se*, but because the persistence of that ideological construct and its *impact* is so profound that I wanted to mark it, to highlight the impostor wherever it occurred. The decision, finally, was as much a personal act, as it was an academic one.

neighbourhood level. It also considers the implications of the findings for the social cohesion agenda. In doing so, it presents an important and critical contribution to widening the parameters of the community cohesion agenda by introducing the 'community voices' into the on-going debates on cohesion.

Key Concepts and Research Questions

This study is concerned with what could be thought of as border explorations. A *border* is a marker of difference but it may also be a signal for opportunity. A border may be fluid and dynamic. It is potentially permeable, a crossing point, if conditions are conducive, but a border is also a place of risk, and potential danger. It is potentially both a departure point and a place of arrival and entry. Borders may be premised, superficially, on a notion of commonality for those within the parameters, but they are brought into focus by the view of the 'other' across the border line. A *boundary* is a line of demarcation.² That line may be physical as in a river, road, a mountain or a wall; it may be political, administrative, national, enshrined by law; racial, linguistic or religious (Anderson, 1983; Cohen, 1998). Boundaries are also symbolic; as such they may signify difference, and dispute. Boundaries are imbued with hierarchy/ies, and, as noted by Anthias and Yuval Davis (1992), interconnected. They describe gender as:

...the social construction, representation and organisation of sexual difference and biological reproduction but (it) cannot be reduced to biology (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992: 112).

They note that certain assumptions are made in society about the role and aptitude of women, from undertaking both paid and unpaid labour to concepts of nurturing and motherhood. They then describe ethnic or racial categorisation as:

...community or collectivity in terms of some point of origin that can be historically, geographically, culturally or physiognomically based and is either internally identified or externally imposed or both" (Ibid.)

² See Lamont et al (2002) for a detailed interrogation of the study of boundaries in the social sciences.

They go on to connect the concepts of gender and ‘race’ as sites of subordination and exploitation, grounded in social relations, whereas ethnic categorisation need not incorporate either of these, although they state that this too is the ‘positing of an immutable communal difference’ (Ibid). The social divisions are then connected, when used as justifications for inequalities both within and external to class position (Ibid). This study considers throughout some of those intersections of ‘race’ and gender in the exploration of community borders and boundaries.

The concept of community, although disputed,³ also posits notions of collectivity and commonality. As will be discussed in this work, the ‘cohesive community’, as presented in the government’s vision statement (2004), is one where difference appears to be relegated in favour of a loosely-defined togetherness based on an amalgamation of diversity that will result in a ‘common sense of belonging’. At times, the borders of ‘community’ and ‘cohesion’ may become blurred in as much as the terms become almost synonymous and are used interchangeably. Because these concepts are inter-related there *is* a degree of cross-over, but this study’s focus on the lived experience and interpretation of community *at the borders and the boundaries* contributes to problematising, rather than reifying, ‘cohesion’. *This study tests the hypothesis that social cohesion is not always a benign concept.*

In order to access evidence of the role of ‘race’ and gender in the process of community construction and maintenance, I enquired about community responses to two areas of intense, racialised and gendered ‘relations’, namely racial and domestic violence. A mixture of methodologies and approaches were employed in terms of gathering fieldwork data that reflected such responses. For example, I presented the interviewees with a series of vignettes of both forms of violence and asked, “What would you do?” or “What would most people do in these circumstances?”⁴ These questions acted as a catalyst for detailed, at times moving, sometimes funny and always enlightening, responses, not only on the forms of violence, but on the nature of community itself.

³ See Chapter 2 page 20.

⁴ See Chapter 3 for a discussion on the use of vignettes in research.

This study examines and relates four substantive subject areas, namely social cohesion, community, racial violence and domestic violence, each supported by bodies of literature in their own right. In varying degrees, the interconnections between some of the areas have been examined. For example, the relationship between 'race', or more accurately its product racism, and community, has long exercised practitioners, politicians, academics and communities, giving rise to what has been disparagingly labelled by some as the 'race relations industry'. To a lesser extent the relationship between domestic violence and community has been examined, particularly in the field of community responses to domestic violence (see for example Dobash et al (2000); Pence (1990); Shepard, (1999) for work situating domestic violence, and challenges to the violence, in the community context). This study is innovative in that it presents a *fusion* of all four substantive areas of cohesion community, racial and domestic violence. As such it is informed by a range of literature across those subject fields. In adopting an integrative approach to the themes, I noted that domestic and racial violence are most frequently regarded as two discrete areas of research and policy interest. This study offers a unique approach to the exploration of the place of 'race' and gender in the construction of community, as illustrated by responses to both forms of violence.

Motivation and Approach

This study is perhaps best contextualised against the backdrop of a personal journey that has taken two decades to date. My background, before going to university, was as a community activist involved in urban regeneration, at first at the local, then at the regional and national levels. During this time, especially in the early years, I was part of a group of local residents who worked collectively to address the social problems that we faced on a daily basis in our neighbourhood. It became clear during this time that the local perspective on presenting issues of concern did *not* necessarily tally with the analysis of local authority members and officers or the police.

One example of this was during the mid to late 1980's, when significantly high numbers of residents left the estate, and a third of the properties became void. These boarded-up, vacant properties were frequently vandalised and set on fire, adding to

the general air of decline in the neighbourhood. Local authority officers and councillors claimed that the rapid exodus was due to a history of high, rapid turnover of tenancies, coupled with changes in the allocation of housing benefits. This, it was claimed, resulted in tenants abandoning properties 'to do moonlight flits' and escape from accumulating rent arrears. The *local* perspective of remaining residents and activists was that tenants, including long-term residents, were leaving because of crime, fear of crime and harassment.

The significance of this was that the same problem was deemed to have quite dissimilar causes. Consequently, potential *solutions* to the presenting concerns would be markedly different, too. The local residents 'encouraged' a working relationship with the local authorities and other organisations and developed innovative, effective, locally-led strategies to halt the social decline and improve the estate. This and many other experiences during that time emphasised the necessity for 'community voices' to be heard (and to be acted on) to ensure that a richer, more nuanced, and sometimes unique analysis was brought to bear on social problems. It is partly then, for that reason, that it was appropriate for this study on social cohesion to seek the views of those people whose *lived experiences* of community would open up the cohesion debate.

In 1999, as an undergraduate, I was awarded a vocational studentship from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. During that summer, I worked with Dr. Ruth Lewis of Newcastle University and Dr. Kate Cavanagh of Glasgow University to collect information for their research into men's programme work being undertaken at that time with domestic violence perpetrators in Great Britain. The resulting report⁵ was then disseminated across Europe to partners working with violent men, to inform both policy and practice in that still at times controversial area of work. This was my first experience of being involved in research, as it were, 'from the other side of the desk'. Previously, as a community activist, I and my friends had been interviewed not only by the media when we sought to highlight our various campaigns and initiatives, but also by a succession of academics who were interested in writing on our activism, our approach to urban regeneration, the gender relations between activists on estates

⁵ Cavanagh et al (1999).

(predominantly women) and local authority and police officers (predominantly men), and so on. For many years, I was never the researcher, always the researched.⁶ The studentship gave me my first 10 week opportunity to engage in, albeit the early stages, the research process, in a working relationship that was supportive, encouraging and informative. Personally, and then latterly from an academic perspective, I had knowledge of, and engagement with, issues of domestic violence. Being involved in that research project represented, for me, a border crossing on a number of levels.

More recently, in 2002, I became an active member of an organisation providing training, education and policy development on domestic violence. During my years with this organisation, we⁷ have observed and battled with persistent racism, evidenced by the continued marginalisation from the mainstream, in terms of policy development and service provision on domestic violence, of issues affecting black and other minority ethnic women and communities. An example of racist policy-making nationally was the OYR (One Year Rule) and 'no recourse to public funds', introduced in the early 1980s by the then Conservative Government's changes to immigration rules, in order to prevent people from abroad from being able to enter the UK and stay here permanently through marriage:

The one-year rule introduced the requirement that people coming here to join their spouse must remain in the marriage for at least one year before they can apply to stay here permanently. The application for leave to remain must be supported by both parties. A person from abroad who does not apply at the end of the probationary period automatically becomes an overstayer liable to being removed from the UK even if the marriage is continuing. A person whose marriage breaks down for whatever reason before obtaining settlement is equally vulnerable to removal.⁸

Southall Black Sisters, a UK leader in considering the interconnections between gender violence and ethnicity, point out the discriminatory nature of this legislation:

The no recourse to public funds requirement dictated that persons coming to the UK must be financially supported by their spouses or must support themselves by working. They are not entitled to

⁶ I think this should be researched.

⁷ 'We' refers to the paid workers in the organisation, and the voluntary management committee.

⁸ This quotation, and the one below are taken from Southall Blacks Sisters website at http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/campaign_oneyearrrule.html. Accessed March 20th 2006, where more on the two year rule, and other campaigns, are available.

welfare benefits, council housing or to use publicly funded facilities such as refuges unless they are able to pay rent. The OYR [one year rule, now the two year rule] made no concession to those in genuine marriages whose marriages had then broken down, particularly due to violence from the UK based spouse. Women whose marriages broke down due to domestic violence had only two options in order to avoid deportation: to apply for refugee status on the grounds of gender persecution; or apply for leave to remain on compassionate grounds. These cases were rarely successful even where women had remained in marriages for a number of years and had children unless a co-ordinated and long-term public campaign was fought on an individual basis.

We can see from this that policy in practice may have effects on women's lives in ways that *may* not have been originally intended. Experience of working on domestic violence and other issues over the years served to confirm repeatedly the impact of racialised or 'gender-blind' perspectives, in policy, in practice and in lived experience, on the lives of those who are viewed through the lens of 'race' and gender, as illustrated above. Yet despite the very real consequences of these perspectives, the outcomes were not observed by all. When presenting issues are interpreted from a different perspective, the underlying divisions of 'race' and gender can be rendered, and for some remain, '*invisible*'. Again, this honed my research interest in the social construction of community, particularly at the borders, as illustrated by responses to both racial and domestic violence. This study will show that issues of 'visibility' are still current. A further influence on my interest in the research focus of this study was other personal experiences, some of which are utilised as illustrative devices in the body of this work.

This study, then, is an interpretive one. Its primary focus is not, for example, on social capital or social networks (Bridges, 2002; Kearns, 2004; Putnam, 2000) or social movements (Byrne, 1997; Tarrow, 1998), which present a more structural approach to the analysis of community. It is concerned with interpretation as a social process, which involves symbols, stories, emotional states and folk stories (Cohen, 1992; 1998; Geertz, 1975; 2000; Jenkins, 1992; 1996). For this reason, the ethnographic approach was most likely to tap into those rich, qualitative accounts and interpretations in order to interrogate the social cohesion agenda. This enabled me to meet respondents 'on their territory', both literally and figuratively. Data collection by

means of the semi-structured interviews was augmented and enriched by opportunities for participant and non-participant observations. During the research, I also kept a fieldwork diary, in which I recorded events, observations and reflections. This reflexive approach was a further source of data, both on the research focus, and on the research process. Evidence of this is presented in the main body of this thesis, the structure of which I will now introduce.

The structure of the thesis

Chapter 1: The *Introduction* sets the scene for the project and ‘signposts’ the following chapters and the areas to be covered. It explains the intellectual, political and personal reasons and thinking that has informed this project, as well as identifying some of the key concerns and concepts.

Chapter 2: The *Literature Review* sets the context for the subsequent data chapters by drawing on a diverse range of literature to highlight some theoretical and policy considerations on the substantive themes of the research. This chapter critiques social cohesion policy and rhetoric in the aftermath of the disturbances in Northern England in the summer of 2001 and in the context of 9/11. The chapter then interrogates the concept of community, and problematises the conceptualising and operationalising of ‘community’ in relation to government policy linked to cohesion. This is followed by some theoretical and limited policy considerations on both domestic and racial violence, succeeded by an argument for an integrated view of the intersections of both forms of violence. The final section examines the broader presence of violence, as a context for the subsequent discussions on community responses to domestic and racial violence.

Chapter 3: The discussion around methodology begins with the background context of the research, moving on to discuss the methodological approach to the study and the methods used for data collection. This is followed by reflections on making contact with respondents and on conducting the fieldwork. The chapter also raises some personal and ethical issues about the role of the researcher in the field.

Chapter 4: *Social Cohesion and Community* is the first of the four data chapters. This chapter begins with definitions of social cohesion and connects these to respondents' understandings and interpretations of the relational concept 'community'.

Throughout this chapter, the borders and boundaries of community are highlighted and contested. This leads into analysis of data on the concept of justice. The chapter then offers a data-led (tentative) typology of cohesion, followed by respondents' views on the possibility of encouraging cohesion.

Chapter 5: *Responding to Racial Violence: The Construction of Community Through the Lens of 'Race'* explores the construction, interpretation and enactment of community as viewed through the lens of 'race' by examining responses to racial violence. It begins with a consideration of risk in relation to interventions in racial violence and examines the place of community in those responses. The chapter then explores the related themes of 'visibility' and 'invisibility', notions of 'public' and 'private' concerns and issues of justice and entitlement. These themes are highlighted again in the following chapter on domestic violence. Throughout, connections are made between the analysis of the community responses to racial violence, the social construction of community and the related concept of social cohesion.

Chapter 6: *Responding to Domestic Violence: The Construction of Community Through the Lens of Gender* opens with references to some forms of domestic violence identified during the research, and continues by identifying recurrent themes to emerge from the data, including visibility, gender and community. The chapter continues with an exploration of notions of proximity and distance, and gender relations, as highlighted by the data on responses to domestic violence. This leads into a discussion on claims of the 'invisibility' of domestic violence and its relevance to the construction of community. The notion of the 'appropriate victim' is then raised, in a consideration of risk and intervention. This is followed by data on the 'public/private' tension identified by community responses to this form of violence. The chapter then considers the place and presence of 'community' in violent situations. Throughout, comparisons are drawn with responses to racial violence.

Chapter 7: *Intersections of 'Race', Gender and Community* draws together the two themes of 'race' and gender and focuses on the intersections of these two social

divisions to examine how the two concepts may be said to influence the construction, interpretation and enactment of community. In this final, data-led chapter, the themes of visibility and invisibility, entitlement, border construction and boundary maintenance are again identified, brought into sharp focus at the intersections of 'race', gender and community. This chapter reinforces the importance of an intersectional view of 'race', gender and community as a contribution to a more nuanced examination of social cohesion. In doing so, it prepares the way for the concluding chapter.

Chapter 8: Conclusion. The final chapter in this study consolidates the various strands and themes identified by the research, as outlined above. Here I identify why this work was needed, referring to the identified gaps in the social cohesion agenda, and indicate why this research is unique. The thematic conclusion draws together the interwoven themes of 'race', gender, community and social cohesion, as revealed in community responses to domestic and racial violence. It brings the borders and boundaries of community into sharp focus, and, in doing so, widens the parameters of the social cohesion debate.

This study, then, is an ethnographic examination of four concepts and their interconnections: community, cohesion, domestic violence and racial violence. It breaks new ground by examining those concepts together, and thus makes a unique contribution to the academic and policy debates.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I indicated how this work came into being, and gave a broad outline of the course it would take. In this chapter, I draw on a range of literature, including books, journal articles and policy documents, and other sources, to examine some theoretical and policy positions on the four main themes of social cohesion, community, racial violence and domestic violence. In doing so, I present a fusion of these four substantive areas.

Social Cohesion: Theoretical and Policy Considerations

In the spring and early summer of 2001, a number of social disturbances broke out on the streets of Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, resulting in damage to property, attacks on the police and violent confrontations between members of diverse communities. Locally, nationally and internationally, the events attracted wide media coverage, frequently being portrayed simplistically as ‘race’ riots.⁹ As with other riots and disturbances elsewhere in the country, both recent and historical,¹⁰ local and central Government reacted by setting up various inquiries and review panels to examine the circumstances underpinning and leading up to the conflict.

In Bradford, the council had commissioned a report by Lord Ousley into the causes and context of local tensions, while in Oldham and Burnley, independent local inquiries were conducted into the incidents, chaired by David Ritchie and Lord Clark respectively. The Government responded by setting up an inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion, chaired by Home Office Minister John Denham, to “examine and consider how national policies might

⁹ For example, in Burnley, there was evidence of a turf war between rival drugs dealers; some property damage was committed when it was reported that far right extremists of the British National Party were meeting in a pub to plan attacks on Asian residents (Clarke, 2002); in Oldham, some anger focused on policing (Denham, 2002).

¹⁰ See for example Scarman, 1981; Campbell, 1993.

be used to promote better community cohesion, based upon shared values and a celebration of diversity”, and a Community Cohesion Review Team, led by Ted Cante, consulted local residents and community leaders across England on their views on community cohesion, with the aim of identifying good practice in addressing the issues locally, and building up to a national overview (Denham, 2002).¹¹

The Ministerial Group published its report *Building Cohesive Communities* (2001) alongside those of Cante, Ritchie and Clarke. Many of the resulting recommendations from the gathered data were targeted at local authorities, which were seen to be of central importance in supporting initiatives aimed at developing more cohesive communities. The government continued to promote work on community cohesion, and the Community Cohesion Unit nationally was tasked with moving away from gathering anecdotal evidence, after specific events, to developing guidelines based on monitoring and evaluation of existing and new programmes. Yet, although ‘community cohesion’ as a concept was now firmly on the public policy agenda, few practitioners, policy makers or politicians claimed to know exactly what constituted ‘cohesion’.

Community cohesion goes beyond the ideas of race equality and social inclusion with which we are all familiar. Community cohesion is about the dynamic relationships between and within communities. Ironically, it is easier to identify cases where community cohesion is not apparent...than it is to produce a detailed definition of the term (Beecham, Denham et al, 2002:6).

The ambiguity, in definition and purpose, was to be on-going and telling. Inherent in the political discussions, definitions or vision statements on community cohesion appeared to be the core premise that cohesion is positive and benign; lack of cohesion is negative and dangerous. For example, a recent Home Office definition continues to refer to a ‘common vision and sense of belonging for all communities’¹², where diversity is valued; where similar (but not equal) life opportunities will be available for all and peaceful co-existence will be the norm in public and personal interactions.

¹¹ See report on <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/comm-cohesion.html~chapter1> accessed September 2004

¹² This begs the question what is a community (see page 20 below for further discussion).

A cohesive community is one where:

there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities

the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued

those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities

strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

(Home Office definition of Community Cohesion, 2004)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/index.html>

This statement had echoes of an earlier statement by the current Prime Minister laying out his related vision of neighbourhood renewal.

My vision is of a nation where no-one is seriously disadvantaged by where they live, where power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few. This Action Plan is a crucial step in creating one nation, not separated by class, race or where people live.

(Foreword to A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan, by Tony Blair, 2001:5]

www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/action_plan/foreword.htm

Both of the above statements from recent policy documents, while superficially positive, are problematic. On one level, they appear to promote a harmonious society, incorporating a respect for diversity; on another they disguise some of the persistent, underlying tensions in communal life and civil society. The earlier statement refers to inequalities of power, wealth and opportunity: the renewal strategy focused primarily on tangible and structural areas of regeneration, including economic, physical and environmental improvements. The later statement shows evidence of a more nebulous aim of attitudinal change, looking for 'appreciation' and 'being valued'. Gender is not named: 'race' and class as a sources of division become even more invisible; mentioned explicitly by the Prime Minister in his vision statement in 2001, they are, at best, alluded to vaguely in the cohesion statement of 2004.

The new cohesion vision (2004) appeared to have lost sight of unequal power and disadvantage, yet the power differentials inherent in the social divisions of 'race', gender and class become apparent when cohesion is absent and violence erupts: violence fuelled by abstract notions of power, justice and control as well as by structural disadvantages. The power struggles of 'race' and gender are clearly enacted in manifestations of racial and domestic violence, yet there is no specific reference in cohesion policy documents to the position of women in communities, or to the violence of men to known women. The government's position on violence and cohesion remains under-developed and unclear.

The lack of conceptual coherence in the government's stated objectives and in definitions of 'cohesion' gives rise to uncertainty about the rationale behind the community cohesion agenda. Was the primary objective that of social order, social inclusion or social justice?¹³ This ambiguity in government social policy was not new. The same vagueness had been identified by Levitas (1998) in her critique of New Labour policy development aimed at 'delivering inclusion'. The political emphasis was on a communitarian stance of 'common values and civic commitment' to 'accepted values and institutions'. Levitas (1998) notes that social cohesion then was framed in terms of economic inclusion, not equality, and that the cohesion agenda was built upon a masculine model of society and community that disadvantaged and further marginalised women.

The problem of exclusion is, in the end, construed in terms of male unemployment, and social integration effected by paid work...Unpaid work is invisible here. There is a failure to address caring, parenting and the interrupted employment careers – and lower pay – of women...Such activities belong firmly in the private sphere, which is perceived not as an alternative site of economic activity, but as a qualitatively different social space from either the market or the public domain, all being defined by the different values which dominate them. The private sphere is built on love, friendship, kindness; the market on incentive; the public domain, where active citizenship is practised, on service to the community. Activity in the private sphere is, therefore not economic activity, and not subject to an economic

¹³ In 2002, the government allocated a small budget to regional government offices, lasting for 3 months, to encourage cohesion locally. The initiative was titled "Public Order, Community Cohesion" [POCC] indicating that, initially at least, the government focus was on law and order and controlling public demonstrations of unrest, rather than challenging social divisions.

calculus....[This] is a discourse about the interdependence of social cohesion and economic growth, in which paid employment...especially for men... is the central means of social integration and social control, and unemployment the overriding element in social exclusion (Levitas, 1998:46-8).

While 'race' and, to a lesser extent, class, were raised later as sites of potential disadvantage or conflict within communities, the continued absence of a gendered perspective in the cohesion debate was a significant omission, given that the government prioritised social cohesion following the riots in 2001, in which groups of mainly young men fought with each other and with the police.¹⁴ Was the social cohesion agenda focused on counteracting the potential for young men to commit acts of violence in public, in communities, whether against the status quo or against the state? (See Burnett, 2004; Kalra, 2002). If so, then why was the gendered nature of the violence not overtly acknowledged? And why was the focus not widened to include the commonest form of gendered violence, domestic violence, as an equally valid threat to social cohesion, not least in respect of 'strong and positive relationships'? Why did policy on social cohesion abstain again from a women-orientated focus? Is it possible, as raised in subsequent chapters, that the omission was one of 'partial gender-visibility'?

Disorderly or anti-social behaviour by young people *per se* had been an issue of concern for policy makers and for communities for some time, as evidenced by recent initiatives and legislation to prevent youth offending, including provision under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.¹⁵ The Mill Town disturbances and subsequent government responses confirmed the censorious gaze upon young men, but the cohesion problematic, with an overt agenda (at least initially) of 'race' relations, suggests a further dimension is present. Could it be that perceptions of difference and distance based on 'age' relations, that is to say generational tensions and interactions, are augmented when they intersect with the other three 'fault lines' or 'race', gender and class, mentioned above? Certainly, the behaviour of some young men in communities was an issue of concern for some older adult respondents, as seen in the

¹⁴ See Campbell, 1993 for earlier accounts of the stand-off between police and young male rioters at the height of the 1991 riots, a phenomenon I witnessed personally.

¹⁵ Details of recent and current legislation can be found on the Home Office website at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/sentencing/youthjustice/>

following chapter. In public policy on cohesion and, to some extent, in discussions with communities, young people were identified by adults as one section of society that was outside of or on the margins of community. Much more rarely are young people seen as a positive component of community and political life, as active citizens (Shukra et al, 2004), with the potential to educate adults away from a narrow identity premised on oppositional monocultures (Nayak, 2003).

The reports on the disturbances in the north of England had purposefully concentrated on relationships between 'majority and minority' communities, with a particular spotlight on young Asian, working class men. This focus too has been criticised. Burnett (2004:9) reflects that the cohesion agenda created a representation of 'white' violence as "representative only of frustration and instability, whereas the violence of angry and desperate Asian youths is representative of inherent Asian criminality...Thus, the very concept of community cohesion became incorporated within a political circle of exclusion, segregation and control". This reflects the work of Alexander (2000; 2004) in which she notes the construction of the 'young Asian folk devil', an image that also signalled a gendered, as well as a religio-ethnicised, conceptual shift.

[T]he term 'Asian' in relation to negative images and stereotypes has become synonymous with Muslim communities, again drawing on the notion of an emergent Pakistani and Bangladeshi underclass. Through the lens of the media...resistance has become increasingly synonymous with criminality and upheaval, with the breakdown of perceived traditional values and the growth of a pathologized culture of alienation and confusion. As part of this, representations of 'the Asian community' have moved from a concern with a uniformly victim status to that of perpetrator - a reinvention of passive recipient to active combatant which has simultaneously and significantly, transformed the gendered markers of imagined Asian identities. Concerns have thus increasingly focused on the public activities of young men - the youth in the streets (Keith, 1995) - rather than the more domestic, 'private' concerns of young women (Alexander, 2006:7).

Clearly then, generational differences and 'youth disorder' were not the only or main factors to be considered important to cohesion. A focus on social order alone is restrictive, leaving many questions about the substance, dynamics and enactment of

‘cohesion’ unexplored. Burnett (2004) points to the tensions between the state and media trying to create a common nationality while holding to a perception of self-segregating communities, referred to in the Cattle (Home Office, 2001) report. Back et al (2002) point to the disturbances in the north as a possible marker of a significant shift away from the previous emphasis on celebrating ‘multicultural diversity’. In the wake of the disturbances, the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, made a series of controversial comments, including those on issues of forced marriages, and on female circumcision. In doing so, he failed to acknowledge existing and on-going work, including that of Southall Black Sisters, to campaign for appropriate legislative responses to those specific forms of woman abuse as a matter of human rights and therefore of concern for all communities.¹⁶ Whatever his intent, the timing of his pronouncements and his focus on specific black and minority ethnic communities fed into a continuation of the ‘us and them’ scenario, re-constructing and re-affirming an image of self-segregating, barbaric ‘others’.

The starting point for an active concept of citizenship must be a set of basic rights and duties. Respect for cultural difference has limits, marked out by fundamental human rights and duties. Some of these boundaries are very clear, such as in the examples of forced marriage or female circumcision (more accurately described as female genital mutilation, for that is what it is). These practices are *clearly incompatible with our basic values*.¹⁷ [my italics] (Brown quoting Blunkett in *The Independent* on Sunday 9th December 2001)

This mono-ethnocentric bias is still evident in the recent government document, *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society*, which continues to link cohesion with an undefined yet troubling reference to Britishness, begging the questions *On whose terms is inclusiveness to be determined? Is the cohesion agenda concerned with addressing social and economic disparities?* Or does New Labour rhetoric spin, ‘Janus-like’, between ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘assimilation’? (Back et al, 2002).

Fundamentally, national cohesion rests on an inclusive sense of Britishness which couples the offer of fair, mutual support – from security to health to education- with the expectation

¹⁶ See section on Domestic Violence below.

¹⁷ This has echoes of an earlier statement by Blunkett on the Radio 4 *Today* programme in May 2000 on which he stated, “I have made it clear several times that as well as teaching about religions across the world, *we* should be teaching about *our own culture* [my emphasis].” It is unclear to whom the ‘we’ or ‘our’ refers, or how inclusive this terminology is.

that people will play their part in society and will respect others (Home Office, 2005:42).¹⁸

Burnett and Whyte (2004) refer to the cohesion dichotomy as a 'double edged sword' which on one hand proposes an agenda for revitalising community and "improving socio-economic opportunities for all... [while]...explicitly seeking to rid the country of difference", a project that they equate with a new expression of British Imperialism.¹⁹

Blunkett's obsession with English language classes as a means of coercive assimilation for those who do not 'integrate' makes Norman Tebbit's racist cricket test seem rather quaint and benign. Citizenship ceremonies, those most bizarre and archaic of rituals imposed from above, require prospective citizens to pledge allegiance to the Queen, the national anthem and the Union flag. Even Tebbit couldn't have dreamt that one up. And much of the community-cohesion agenda is not optional, but compulsory. Witness the recent pledge by the government that imams who fail to project a positive image of Britain will be removed from mosques. We should, therefore, not lose sight of the umbilical link between New Labour's nationalism and good old-fashioned British imperialism. (Burnett and Whyte, 2004)²⁰.

The term 'community cohesion' had evolved further, becoming linked to New Labour discourses on citizenship, integration and belonging, overtly related to issues of migration and asylum,²¹ and still presenting an overall an 'us and them' society

¹⁸ This passage is also cited by Worley (2005:485) who notes a further slippage in the language, from 'community to 'national' cohesion. This again signals a tension in the cohesion framework: the government appears undecided as to whether cohesion is cited within and between diverse yet similar communities, or is a project defining the one-nation state.

¹⁹ Blunkett was to respond to criticisms of his diktat, after the riots, for immigrants to speak English at home. In an article in the Observer 15th September 2002, he claimed that he had not implied that lack of fluency in English had been *directly* responsible for the riots, but continued. "However, speaking English enables parents to converse with their children in English as well as in their *historic* mother tongue, at home and to participate in wider *modern* culture [My italics]. It helps to overcome the schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships. In as many as 30% of Asian British households according to the recent citizenship survey, English is not spoken at home." Here he clearly posits the view that speaking a mother tongue other than English is incompatible with modernity, and participation. He also likens parent/ child relationships in potentially bi/multi lingual households to a form of mental illness.

²⁰ Comment, Institute of Race Relations. 6th October 2004 at <http://www.irr.org.uk/October/ak000008.html>

²¹ As Back et al (2002) note, Blunkett's preface to the 2002 White Paper on *Secure Border, Safe Haven: Integration and Diversity in Modern Britain* presents an assimilationist stance on migration and asylum that incorporates stringent restrictions and regulations as the answer to racism! "Having a clear, workable and robust nationality and asylum system is the prerequisite to building the security and trust that is needed. Without we cannot defeat those who would stir up hate, intolerance and prejudice."

premised on racialised and cultural differences; differences that had to be overcome as a prerequisite for social order and cohesion. Less visible are the gendered constructions of community, as evident in cohesion rhetoric as noted above and as discussed below and in subsequent pages.

The focus of the social cohesion agenda was to take yet another turn, as evidenced in a report published on 8th March 2006.²² In a policy shift that has echoes of positions critiqued by Levitas (1998) above, the dominant paradigm for cohesion has returned to an economic, market orientated prism, with the focus on the city and regional levels, rather than the neighbourhood or sub-neighbourhood levels. In the following extract, subtitled, “Real progress made on social cohesion”, as in the rest of the report summary, there is no reference to racism, or to gender, and scant reference to violence.

The Government’s attempt to address market failures and improve mainstream services in the poorest neighbourhoods has begun to narrow the gap between them and the rest of England in educational achievement, employment rates and teenage pregnancy. Particular urban groups such as young children, the unemployed and the most vulnerable have benefited from more joined up, cross-cutting strategies and initiatives. There have been significant improvements in terms of the quality of the worst social and private rented housing, and the incidence of burglary and vehicular crime.

However, some aspects of educational and housing policy have worked in the opposite direction. Prospects for personal enhancement amongst the least qualified and the most disadvantaged have not yet improved in relation to national norms. The incident of robbery and certain categories of violent crime and poor health remains [sic] high in more deprived areas. There are early signs that the Government’s focus on ‘liveability’ is beginning to reverse the long-term deterioration in the quality of urban *public spaces* [my italics]...[Area based interventions]...face powerful wider forces such as economic restructuring, growth in income

(Home Office, 2002:1) This tone stands in direct contrast with a previous statement by Home office Minister, Barbara Roche, who told the BBC’s Today programme on 11th September 2000. “We do live now in a global economy where skilled people are at a premium and it’s not always a buyer’s market....This country is a country full of migrants and we should celebrate the multi-cultural, multi-racial nature of our society, and the very positive benefits that migration throughout the centuries has brought.” See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/919374 accessed October 2005

²² 20006 ‘State of the English Cities’ London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

inequality and divergent regional prospects. *Further progress will hinge upon the degree to which neighbourhood interventions fit with policies to stimulate urban and regional economies and improve urban quality of life* [My italics] (Urban Research Summary 21, 2006:27).

It should be noted that the term 'neighbourhood' is sometimes used synonymously with the term 'community'. It is to a discussion of that latter concept that I now turn.

What is community?

The much used term 'community' remains a contested concept (Bauman, 2001; Bell and Newby, 1971). It has been variously defined in terms of shared space in locally based geographical locations, in neighbourhood studies including planning and environment (Stedman, 2003; Talen, 1999); as attachment to and interpretation of place (see Gieryn, 2000); as people with common interests and lifestyles, whose links may transcend location; and more recently as the more abstract 'sense of community' i.e. community spirit, often associated with locally based, collective action (Ahlbrandt, 1984; Bell and Newby, 1971; Crow and Allan, 1994; Young and Willmott, 1957).

Attached to these views of community is often an idealised notion of the positive nature of community, particularly when discussed in terms of social capital (Putnam, 2000; Roberts, 1985). Since the late 1980's-early 1990's, community involvement in local regeneration initiatives has been promoted, increasingly, as a key component in effective urban revitalisation strategies (see Burton, 2003). Less frequently mentioned, however, are the negative aspects of this engagement,²³ a standpoint that, in my view, echoes the contemporary promotion of cohesion as benign. Yet the government continues to promote the links between social capital (as in networks for participatory citizenship) and community (as some benign amorphous mass with a common vision) as prerequisites for social cohesion (see Kearns, 2004:16-19).

²³ Some negative aspects of community involvement include lack of accountability to wider community; unelected, unrepresentative residents act as gatekeepers preventing increased participation; failure to work within an equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory framework. These criticisms may be leveled equally at other partners (local government, public and private organizations) in regeneration schemes.

A further flaw in the government's conceptualising and operationalising of 'community' is that, as in the linked notion of cohesion, there is a distinct omission of an overt gender analysis. As Worley (2005) notes,

Talking about 'community' also has particular implications in relation to lived experiences of race and gender (Worley, 2005:486).

The gender-blind approach to community, and cohesion, may serve to leave unchallenged certain gendered and racialised assumptions about women's position in relation to the social construction and maintenance of community (Lewis, 2005).

Anthias and Yuval Davis (1992) describe gender as, "...the social construction, representation and organisation of sexual difference and biological reproduction but (it) cannot be reduced to biology" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992: 112). They note that certain assumptions are made in society about the role and aptitude of women, from undertaking both paid and unpaid labour to concepts of nurturing and motherhood. They then describe ethnic or racial categorisation as "community or collectivity in terms of some point of origin that can be historically, geographically, culturally or physiognomically based and is either internally identified or externally imposed or both" (Ibid.) Women then by default are "often constructed as symbolic border guards of ethnic and national collectivities" (Yuval-Davis, Anthias et al 2005:15).

Worley (2005:487) also states that "the use of the concept 'community' in the language of 'community cohesion' has specific implications for thinking about race and race relations policy". She points to her doctoral research which suggested that "talking about 'community' negates using racialised language. It enables practitioners and policy actors to avoid 'naming' which communities they are referring to, even when the reference points are clear", as in references to "those communities that continue the practice of arranged marriages" (Home Office, 2002:18 cited Worley, 2005:488)²⁴ She further notes the account of a voluntary sector respondent who told

²⁴ The quote from the Home Office (2002:18) *Secure Borders Safe Haven* document reads, "We also believe that there is a discussion to be had within those communities that continue the practice of arranged marriages as to whether more of these could be undertaken within the settled community here". This is cited in a passage about 'bogus marriages' adding to an image of irregularity or illegality in relation to arranged (note not forced) marriages. Caution should also be exercise here in that it

her that he had been told by a council officer not to mention 'race' in relation to community cohesion. "It's not about race" (cited Worley, 2005:488). This corresponded with my own experience as a member of the regional Public Order, Community Cohesion Steering Group (2002). During a visit from two members of the National Social Cohesion Unit, I became exasperated by a 'cosy' meeting in which discussions ranged from provision of leisure activities for young people to cross-community activities. I strongly urged that we should turn our attention to, as I saw it, the underlying tensions of racism in all its manifestations, in the area. I was fixed by a stern look from the government's representative and told that thinking had to move on from an old-fashioned focus on racial tensions because it was divisive.

The demise of 'community' is also predicted at regular intervals (Nancy, 1991; Young and Willmott, 1957) but, despite this, the symbolic potency of community persists. For those that still subscribe to its continued existence, community may be conceptualised in a more abstract form. Peter Hamilton, in his introduction to Cohen's (1998) work on the symbolic construction of community notes that

The core...concept of community reflects...both an undercurrent of social process and cultural meaning which is constantly present in modern societies... [and engenders] a sense of belonging to a local social context... (Hamilton's 1985 introduction in Cohen, 1998:8-9)

The interpretation of and understanding of community by the social actors involved is relevant also to the subsequent data based chapters on cohesion and community responses to domestic and racial violence. Aspects of cultural meaning attached to the term community are those of belonging, of identity (at both a local and national level), of inclusion, of safety – meanings that carry with them assumptions of positive experiences to those who are within the boundaries of community (Anderson, 1983; Bauman, 2001). However, as Cohen (1998) reminds us, the concept of community is relational, fluid and multi-faceted. He describes community as:

1) a group of people who have something in common with one another which

should not be assumed that arranged marriages are specific to South East Asian communities, as evidenced by the cultural practices of European royalty.

2) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups (Cohen, 1998:12).

‘Community’ then, implies both similarity and difference, and perceptions of difference may be a source of conflict, isolation and exclusion as well as unity. This is exemplified in the discussions on ‘the stranger’,²⁵ both in the literature and during interviews in this research, where notions of proximity and distance were a common theme in the construction of community as evidenced by community responses to domestic and racial violence.

The unity of nearness and remoteness involved in every human relation is organized, in the phenomenon of the stranger, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him, distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness, means that he, who also is far, is near (Simmel, 1950: 402).

The relational aspects of the social construction of community are reflected in respondents’ views on ‘community’, which are considered in detail in Chapter 4 on social cohesion and community, and later the associated concept of visibility, proximity and distance are discussed in chapter 5 and 6.

It is the work on the social construction of communities that is especially relevant to this thesis, that is to say the ways in which members of communities view themselves and their relationships with those who are perceived as included within any given group, and those who are perceived as out or ‘other’ (Cohen, 1986; Opatow, 1990; Simmel, 1955; Suttles, 1972). Community is much more than attachment to place or a collectivity based on common bonds. It is multifaceted and dynamic: “‘community’ is as much a narrative product as an organic achievement” (Back, 1999a:133). It is those stories and accounts, which tell of the interactions at and across the socially constructed and embedded boundaries, not least those of ‘race’, gender or class, which are especially relevant to exploring social cohesion. It is to an examination of gender, or more specifically gendered violence, that I now turn.

²⁵ See also Ahmed (2002), for a feminist perspective on the stranger and ‘strangeness’.

Domestic Violence: Theoretical and policy positions

Violence against women by known men with whom they have or have had an intimate relationship is both an historical and contemporary phenomenon (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Gelles, 1997; Hague, 2000). For many centuries the domestic abuse of women, though widespread across all backgrounds irrespective of age, class and ethnicity, was seen as a private matter, confined to the domain of the home and family in which the State and other outsiders did not interfere. Although first wave feminism highlighted the abuse of women by men, in Britain it was not until the early 1970's, when the refuge movement evolved from the feminist campaign groups of the women's movement, that domestic violence became a public issue and social problem. Practical and policy responses to domestic violence have changed as theoretical understandings moved from individualistic to societal and structural explanations.

As recently as the mid 1950's the emergence of the 'therapeutic society' interpreted men's violence to women as an individual problem that, although described in gender neutral terms such as 'marital disharmony' by health and welfare professionals, was in fact gendered by the victim-blaming theories that held women responsible, socially, by failing to conform to expected 'feminine' roles as wives and carers or psychologically, because of their masochism, claiming that battered women crave men's violence to be fulfilled (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Hague and Wilson, 2000; Storr, 1991).

With the spotlight cast on 'intimate' violence, myths and theories moved from individualistic explanations to wider cultural and socio-economic considerations. The cultural explanations conclude that inter-personal violence is learned behaviour, sanctioned by large parts of the populace, e.g. smacking children; domestic violence in communities exhibiting a culture of *machismo* (McCall and Shields, 1986; Miedzian, 1995).

Some authors suggest the societal conditioning of men towards violent behaviour can be reversed by community interventions in 'small scale societies', such as public

shaming; reconnection through public ceremonies linked to religious or spiritual traditions that regard individuals men's violence as damaging to the well-being of the whole community (Klein, Campbell, Solar and Ghez, 1997). More recently, in larger scale societies including the USA and Britain, criminal justice responses towards domestic violence have included treatment programmes for offenders as well as other legal sanctions. These responses may also be interpreted as expressions of public condemnation towards male violence. However, there must be some doubt about the effectiveness of these sanctions. If the theory of inter-generational transmission of violence, which states that children who witness or experience such violence will repeat the behaviour in what then becomes a cycle of abuse has any credibility, it would suggest that given time and repeated public opprobrium of male violence, the incidents would decrease and eventually cease.²⁶ Further, if personal violence were considered to be a reaction against the constraints of structural inequalities, in the labour market, education, housing and elsewhere, then there would be no violence by privileged men against women (Gil, 1986). Yet, the dominance of cultural and structural explanations is persistent, as discussed below.

Recurring stereotypes about the propensity for working class and black families to engage in intimate violence compared with the 'white-middle class professional' male who, unlike the aforementioned families, is not pathologically predisposed to attacking his partner or children have been refuted by feminist theorists, who point to the prevalence of male violence to women across class distinctions (Radford and Stanko, 1997). While the research indicates that middle class professional women appear less frequently as victims of domestic violence, the figures are open to interpretation when other factors are considered. Working class families may be under closer scrutiny by social services, education and health professionals, police, and other agencies in day-to-day encounters making it more likely that signs of abuse will be noted. Middle class women may have access to a wider range of avoidance and safety strategies, reducing the recourse to such interventions. This is particularly relevant when considering that a persistent aspect of domestic abuse includes controlling behaviours, involving economic control of household income, restricting

²⁶ As Saunders (1995) points out, this theory does not take into account "the gender divisions that exist in our society and the other influences on men to maintain control over women" (1995: 68) Experience of work with children who spent some time in refuges escaping domestic violence indicated that a common response was to be determined that their lives would not incorporate violence.

association with friends and family and uneven sharing of parenting responsibilities. The middle class woman may be financially and socially better placed to circumvent such restrictions, accessing larger networks of support (Gelles, 1997; Johnson, 1998; Mooney, 2000). The relationship between race, ethnicity and domestic violence may be over-emphasised by ethnocentric practice, cultural insensitivity and racist assumptions about black families, or by over-simplification, by assuming 'race' is the main correlate while minimising other factors including income differentials and 'occupational status' (Delva-Tauili'ili, 1995; Gelles, 1997). Alternatively, others discuss the need for greater understanding of the historical and social context of black male violence, citing the collective suffering of black societies from white domination and oppression and the enactment of racialised, heterosexual projections of masculinities (Connell, 1995; hooks, 1989).

Controlling behaviour is not confined to individual perpetrators. The professional gaze, on the person and their environment, is itself problematic. Ethical issues facing medical staff include whether or not to report details of an injured woman and her attacker, risking alienating trust, breaking confidentiality and further disempowering the woman from assuming control of her situation. "As urban communities become less cohesive there is a need for A&E departments to become more involved in violence prevention, through integration with community policing" (Shepherd and Rivara, 1998:43). This statement exposes the dichotomous relationship of professionals responding to the victims of violence. Urban working class communities are seen as increasingly disorganised, and are pathologised as the locus of violence.²⁷ While seeking to enhance the safety of women by involving the criminal justice system to remove the perpetrator from the vicinity of his target, the community itself is stigmatised as an unsafe place and the message is given that tackling violence is a professionalised, medicalised, and therefore specialised, domain that excludes the victim and her advocate (Gamach and Asmus, 1999). Conversely, a lack of consensus on the philosophy behind interventions aimed at supporting women experiencing domestic violence may foster divisions between those claiming to implement 'woman' focused responses (Shepard, 1999).

²⁷ Increasing reliance on surveillance via markedly visible close circuit television cameras, mounted on imposing metallic turrets in disadvantaged residential areas, signals the 'dangerousness' of such communities.

The importance of a common epistemological framework is outlined by King (1998), who advocates a more collaborative and strategic approach, including educational work within communities and between health service providers to explore the “complex dynamics of abuse”, to encourage a wider understanding of the impact of violence on victims, to counteract the myths about abusive behaviours and institute “culturally relevant interventions approaches for women” (King, 1998:187). Broadly speaking, feminist analysis locates the social context of domestic violence in the patriarchal structure that perpetuates men’s power and privilege. Violence is one of many mechanisms affording the social control of women; the family as a social institution joins the political and economic structures that are male dominated.

Male violence against women is sufficiently common and repetitive, with routinized consequences for women and routinized modes of processing by judicial agencies to constitute a social structure...Male violence is thus a form of power over women in its own right (Walby, 1990:143).

Given the structural nature of domestic violence, it is argued, not all men have to be violent to experience the relative freedom and greater opportunities afforded to men due the restrictions placed on women’s lives by the knowledge of the potential and actual threat of gendered violence. (Mooney, 2000; Mullender, 1996, Stanko, 1994; Websdale et al, 1998) The argument that men’s violence to women carries a symbolic resonance that has a very real impact on women’s lives is a premise that parallels the use of racist violence, which I shall now consider below.

Racial Violence: Theoretical and policy positions

In recent years there has been a range of legislation deigned to address racial violence. These include:

the Public Order Act, 1986, [which] prohibits incitement to racial hatred;

the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, [which] the category of racial aggravation to basic offences

the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 [which] required the institutions of the criminal justice system to actively promote racial equality in their functions (Isal, 2005:14).

Recent policy positions on racialised unrest have also been discussed above, in relation to social cohesion agenda.

Yet, despite policy and legislation, racism is endemic, persistent and routine (see Husbands, 1993; Mac an Ghail, 1999; Virdee, 1995). As with domestic violence, it is crucial to view racial violence as a continuum of violence rather than a succession of discrete, unrelated incidents. For example, Bowling (1998:285) notes that racial harassment does not occur momentarily, but is an “on-going dynamic embedded in time, space and place.” Importantly here, the centrality of community in relation to racial violence, as the site of both oppression and resistance, has been discussed by various authors, who have stressed that racist perpetrators do not act in isolation from the communities in which they live (Bowling, 1998; Chahal et al, 1999; Chessum, 2000). As Sibbett (1997) points out, perpetrators and acts of racial violence must be viewed in the context of the wider community. Referring to the people who carried out the most violent racist attacks, she reports that:

They carry out their assaults in areas in which all age groups across the community share common attitudes to ethnic minorities, where people regularly express their views to each other and where people of all ages, including very young children and older adults, regularly engage in the verbal abuse and intimidation of ethnic minorities (Sibbett, 1997:101).

Sibbett (1997) goes on to examine aspects of the almost symbiotic relationship between the individual perpetrator and the wider community, making a number of observations, including

- a) The perpetrator’s views are a product of the attitudes of the wider community, and are therefore constantly reinforced and reproduced.
- b) The more extreme manifestations of racist violence serve as a bench mark for other racially abusive perpetrators to judge their own actions as less harmful.
- c) The perpetrators act as agents of the wider community by acting on prevailing racist attitudes
- d) The mutually supportive relationship may extend to non-cooperation with authorities in identifying perpetrators, thereby reinforcing “existing cultural norms against grassing” (Ibid.)

This is a useful model in that it moves away from the construct of the racially violent abuser as deviant, exceptional and outside of the community. Attributing responsibility for racial harassment and violent racist acts to both individuals and the community, Sibbett (1997) states that, “Collectively, the perpetrator and the wider community might even be referred to as the *perpetrator community*” [italics in original] (Ibid). However, this label is problematic – not only does it stigmatise areas and communities in which racial violence takes place, through an intellectual leap of homogenisation, but it perpetuates the notion of distinct, hierarchical, racialised communities, in which all members of a dominant group are culpable and complicit. The terminology also begs the question, “Is there a victim community?”, thereby interpreting those targeted for abuse as one-dimensional. Both categorisations are in danger of ignoring the agency of individuals and groups in resisting and challenging the status quo.

Nevertheless, racial harassment and racial violence are manifestations of a persistent ideology of white identity, exclusionary practices and assumed supremacy, which are evoked to justify continued racist abuse (Bowling, 1998; Gilroy, 1987; Gordon, 1990). When ‘race’ as a site of oppression and abuse is interconnected with other forms of social division, the potential for harassment and violence may be increased. The implications of adopting an intersectional approach to domestic violence and racial violence are now considered below.

Intersections

Yuval- Davis (1992; 2005) refers to the fluidity, complexity and intersectionality of the various sites of oppression and social division. Within acts of violence there are implicit assumptions of superiority and inferiority that are used to legitimise negative acts against specific individuals or communities. These acts, including violence, prompt the need for an integrated theoretical approach to domestic and racial violence. Nor should the analysis stop there. Because the consequences of domestic and racial violence are experienced differently by divergent parts of any given community (see Bograd, 1999), the impact on social cohesion of both the violent acts themselves and the subsequent responses to those acts will vary.

At the root of the continued separate study of domestic and racial violence is the historical legacy of essentialising gender, 'race' and ethnicity, as witnessed by the successful tactic of claiming victim status, which incorporates clear distinctions between 'us and them', victim and perpetrator, to push the issues on to the political agenda. So the complexities of the interplay were, to an extent, side-tracked to achieve practical outcomes (women's refuges, change in criminal justice systems including policing). To continue this partition, however, may mean in practice that designated groups may be in competition with each other for limited resources, if funders are drawn to simplistically (i.e. essentialistically) labelled organisations, e.g. black women's group, or groups are confined to mono-issue agendas such as physical regeneration of housing stock. This has the further effect of inhibiting cross-matching of ideas, tactics and objectives, leaving the structures and conditions that perpetuate inequality intact by maintaining difference as inextricable from separation (see social cohesion above). Moreover, it has been argued that to formulate academic analysis or collective action based on theoretical frameworks grounded in a conceptualisation of 'race' is to perpetuate the old distinctions made along biological or cultural biases.

If dedicated antiracist and antifascist activists remain wedded to the most basic mythologies and morphologies of racial difference, what can the rest of us do to escape its allure? If the brutal simplicity of racial typology remains alive even in the most deliberate and assertive of antifascist gestures, then perhaps critical, avowedly "anti-essentialist" intellectuals are asking too much when we inquire about the renunciation of "race", or when we aspire to polychromatic and multiethnic utopias in which the color of skin makes no more difference than the color of eyes or skin (Gilroy, 2000a:51)

While sympathetic to this desire, however utopian, to shake off the heritage of historical and contemporary racism and its accoutrements, the questions remains, what alternative language is available to come to grips with the impact of the concept in everyday life? To use the concepts we have, creaking though they may be, does not equate to collusion with the inherent dominant/ subordinate dynamics they contain. I would also argue that there is a parallel with the concept of gender, where the struggle to challenge normative representations of male/female relations has evolved from the essentialist framework that was so functional in engaging the political arena. Until there is an egalitarian society, the old prejudices will continue to

be potent motivators and legitimisers of discrimination, each vying for centre stage in the power stakes. One way to subvert this is to utilise a theoretical framework that is flexible enough encompass an understanding of power relations as they play out, in all their forms and all their locations, in front of us.

There are pragmatic reasons why I advocate a move away from single strand theories to a more complex, if messy, integration of current paradigms (see Anthias, 1998). I would suggest that racist violence is currently on the political agenda because of campaigning (see for example Chessum (2000) on the history of campaigning in the black communities in Leicester), and because of a growing recognition by politicians of the power of the black vote, but that domestic violence, despite its prevalence and impact on groups of 70's and 80's as a social and political issue, has lost the impetus gained by the women's movement. The shift towards service provision and health care for victims and treatment programmes for offenders has reduced the concept of domestic violence from a threat to society itself to a more manageable concern that will respond to an input of resources without challenging the societal basis of male violence – the dominance of male power. I predict that racist violence will also be moved down the political agenda by the efforts of urban regeneration programmes to increase participation by black and ethnic minorities under the guise of social inclusion while marginalizing more radical black groups.

While racist violence will be still seen as a social problem because of the number of incidents, it will not be afforded the priority status it currently achieves unless there is a sustained social movement (ideally of alliances between feminists, anti-racists and others), which consistently challenges the domination of social, legal and economic institutions by white middle and upper class males. This emphasises the need for a wider, contextual perspective on violence as well than a concentration on specific manifestations of violence. The following section presents a broader reflection on violence *per se*, as a backdrop and context to this research.

Positioning violence

Rather than being classed as ‘senseless’ or ‘indiscriminate’, it may be argued that violence is symbolic, conveying messages about status and social worth, and social inclusion. Violence is socially constructed in that the meanings of the concept alter as attitudes change, e.g. attacking an elderly woman and stealing her bag, once classed as theft, is now reclassified as a violent crime (Blok, 2001). Society’s values as to the legitimacy or inevitability of violence are also variable, as in the rule of thumb legislation that allowed a level of acceptable violence towards wives as extensions of his property (Wilson, 1983).²⁸ Controlling violence is value laden, given that the use of violence is not universally condemned: the State condemns aggressive behaviour yet reserves for itself alone the right to use violence, and in some cases extreme violence leading to death (Blok, 2001).

The argument stands that individuals and groups choose whether or not to use violence in given situations and, I would claim, when doing so the majority are not motivated by a theoretical understanding of the violent behaviour. Developing community challenges to domestic and racially motivated violence may require a much more fundamental and universal understanding of discrimination, prejudice and power, drawn from existing but separate abstract and academic paradigms. The comparison of policy makers’, practitioners’ and communities’ responses to domestic and racial violence, including an examination of the relevance of hate crime legislation, will contribute this debate within the context of the current focus on both violence and social cohesion.

I would argue, therefore, that violence is embedded in society. This is not due to some innate, testosterone-fuelled outbursts or inherent human destructiveness, nor is it, as Storr (1991) is fond of claiming in the case of domestic violence because of women’s unconscious need to provoke men into violence by ‘nagging’ in order to instigate that which they really fear. There may be a spectrum of contributory factors associated with violent acts, from physical change and demographic transformation (demolition of housing stock, unemployment, loss of manufacturing industries,

²⁸ Gelles (1997) states that there is no record of the frequently referred to “Blackstone’s codification of English common law in 1768 (that) asserted that a husband has a right to “physically chastise” an errant wife provided the stick was no thicker than his thumb...” (Gelles, 1997:22)

dispersal of asylum seekers) and shifting political alliances and conflicts, as witnessed in the current brokering of new partnerships between previous enemies in the 'war against global terrorism'. There are many theoretical perspectives that assist in the analysis of the phenomena, some of which have been discussed above, and yet I feel uneasy at times about the expediency of these debates to the victims of violence and to ensuring pragmatic responses. For the woman being punched and spat on by her partner, does it matter if the assault is an enactment of hegemonic masculinities in a patriarchal society? For the young black man who is repeatedly kicked in the head by a gang of white youths screaming racist abuse, will it help to be told that this is the result of the legacy of colonialism and imperialism?

I contend that violence occurs because of the capacity of human societies to delineate, differentiate and denigrate individuals and groups as 'Other' and act on these negatively weighted distinctions (Opotow, 1990). Central to the designation of 'out' status, to the drawing up of exclusionary boundaries, is the issue of power (Jenkins, 1996, Lukes, 1986). This is evident in the 'dangerisation' of the working classes who have been seen as a (violent) threat to the middle classes (Lianos and Douglas, 2000; Pearson, 1987; Sorel, 1941); in the racialisation of violence, where black men have been pathologised as more violent than their white counterparts not least due to their over-representation in crime statistics (Delva-Taui'ili, 1995) and in the successive attempts of politicians and others to blame women, particularly single parents (who it seems are assumed to be female), for the breakdown of family life, social order and concomitant rise in crime.

The summation of these views concludes that 'out groups' behave in ways that are inherently different and contrary to the prevailing norms, and if allowed to continue unchecked, they will threaten or ultimately destroy social stability (ni Shuinear, 1997). By attributing blame, the notion of victims and perpetrators as mutually exclusive entities fuels the demarcation of excluded groups and sustains separation or social exclusion. Such simplistic explanations lend themselves to demands for social control, assimilation and retributive justice; the dominant social strata will then dispense 'justice' against the subordinate or 'out' groups, as an expression of power. Determining who is a victim and who is a perpetrator is relevant in determining the direction and subtleties of responses (see domestic and racial violence above). That

this depends on interpretation and the viewer's standpoint is evident in the frequently repeated statement that, "One man's (sic) freedom fighter is another man's terrorist". Yet the temptation to retain the academic and political separatism that served the victims well in making domestic and racial violence *policy* issues, may ultimately be divisive at the community level. Attempts to subscribe to mutually exclusive theoretical paradigms, which delineate between the two forms of violence that are both so embedded as to be considered endemic in society, reinforce the socially exclusive boundaries between neighbourhoods and communities, between men and women and between ethnic groupings. The perpetuation of the ever present designation 'Other', in theory and in practice, must further inhibit the likelihood of community led challenges to domestic and racial violence across the divides of 'race', ethnicity, class and gender.

Summary

This chapter has raised some theoretical and policy considerations in relation to the main themes of the study, namely social cohesion, community, racial and domestic violence. This review of the literature will be augmented with further references to relevant works throughout the remaining chapters.

In the section on cohesion, I critiqued the government's social cohesion policy, finding it to be under-developed and unclear. The cohesion agenda emerged in the aftermath of the 2001 disturbances and focused in part on the public display of violence by young men. It was noted that this violence had been racialised, as was the discriminatory construction of young Asian 'rioters', compared to their violent, white counterparts. The chapter also noted the absence of another form of gendered violence, namely domestic violence, from the cohesion debate.

I then examined the related concept of 'community', and explored its connections to social cohesion. This then led into an examination of some theoretical and policy considerations concerning domestic and racial violence, identifying the place of community in responses to both forms of abuse. This was followed by a consideration of the implications of an interconnected study of both forms of violence

in a reflection on the intersections of the social division of 'race' and gender. Finally, I examined the use of violence in a broader, societal context. This chapter sets the scene for subsequent data chapters on the four substantive areas of social cohesion, community, domestic and racial violence, and the final data chapter on the intersection of 'race' gender and community. Before moving on to the analysis of the data, the following Chapter 3 will discuss the methodological approach to the study and the methods used for data collection. It will also present some reflections on the role of the researcher and some ethical considerations encountered during the research process.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined some theoretical and policy considerations relating to the four substantive areas of this study, namely social cohesion, community, domestic violence and racial violence. In this chapter, I detail the location of the fieldwork, the contact routes to participants and why they were identified and contacted, and refer to the impact of external events on the original timescale for this project. I describe the relationship between the research question and the methods used, and discuss why I employed the particular methodological framework described. This is followed by reflections on conducting the fieldwork and on the use of vignettes as a research tool. I then describe the data analysis process.

Next, I examine the issue of access to respondents. I then consider not only the role of the researcher in the research arena, but also the impact of the research process on the researcher, a discussion that raises epistemological considerations in relation to data collection and analysis and formulation of findings. In the final part of the chapter, I discuss some of the ethical concerns that emerged as the research was developed, conducted and ‘concluded’, ending with some reflections on ‘doing the research’.

Background – The Research Question and Locating the Research²⁹

The aim of the research, as outlined in Chapter 1, was to identify those factors that support or hinder community challenges to domestic and racial violence and to consider how such responses may impact on social cohesion. The fieldwork was conducted primarily in two neighbouring, predominantly working class, areas in the city of South Moor, namely Eddington and Briardene, that have reputations for a collective identity premised on residence in specific geographical areas, in which communities may be delineated by ‘outsiders’ through the political or ward

²⁹ All place names, people and organisations have been anonymised to maintain confidentiality.

boundaries and by, local residents, as their 'own' territory. This sense of belonging to an area is claimed in part by reference to intergenerational, continuous family residence, and in other instances by connections and networks formed around culture, religion, class or gender (Nicholson, 1996).³⁰ Both areas have a history of attempts to secure demographic change through urban regeneration schemes initially promoted by central government, and controlled and implemented by local government, with varied degrees of local participation.

Currently, many areas in South Moor are undergoing some wide-ranging changes in the physical environment, e.g. demolition of properties, and social infrastructures as plans to regenerate area were implemented. I chose to conduct the research in the Eddington and Briardene areas because of the opportunity to evaluate local people's perceptions of community, both historically and at the present time of change, and to explore the relationship between substantive topics of gender, racism, violence and ethnicity and the relevance of these concepts to the construction of social boundaries and alliances at the sub-neighbourhood level. The notional presence of common bonds, as referred to above, linking residents in the two case study areas, was the deciding factor in choosing the location of the research, closely followed by confidence in my ability to secure access to relevant political elites, to communities and to agencies because of my personal history of activism and residence in the South Moor area (see Role of Researcher below).

Timetable

Initially I divided the research into three stages. In the first, from September to December 2001, I planned to draft the literature analysis chapter, conduct Phase 1 of the fieldwork, in which I would identify and contact agencies through a telephone survey, and would establish contacts for phase 2 fieldwork. The second phase, timetabled from January to August 2002 would comprise an ethnographic study (see below), and the completion of the preparation and preliminary analysis of phase 2 data. From September 2002 to December 2002, I proposed to conduct phase 3 of the

³⁰ For a more detailed account of belonging and the internal and external designation of 'community status', see Chapter 4 on Social Cohesion and Community.

fieldwork interviews with civil servants and Members of Parliament. This would be followed by data preparation and initial analysis of local and national perspectives on core themes. Finally, from January –September 2003, in-depth analysis and writing up would lead (according to this optimistic proposal) to a completed thesis, ready to submit in October 2003.

This was not to be. First of all, my *original* timetable proposed that the first stage of the research process would begin in October 2001, to be completed in September 2004. In October 2000, I was awarded a departmental studentship from the University of Newcastle, potentially for 3 years, in order to carry out this study. This funding was conditional on applying to the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) to replace the University funding, if successful. From 2000 to 2001, I worked on developing my research proposal, reading around the literature to hone and refine my research focus. The original timetable was constructed on the basis of applying for 3 years ESRC funding. Unfortunately, on the eve of submitting the proposal and application for funding, I was informed that I was only expected to apply for *two* years funding, the first year of the research being deemed to have past. This was a salutary lesson for me as a nascent researcher. Always make sure that projects are realistically costed, funded and timetabled, well in advance. I adjusted my timetable accordingly. In 2001 I was delighted to learn that I had been awarded an ESRC grant (R42200124407) and I enthusiastically (and naively) entered the world of the PhD student.³¹ This chapter is a brief account of those years.

Research Context

This study was conducted in the North East of England, an area of Britain that, for over a millennium, has been a site of changing and merging populations and cultures (see Simpson, 1999). The region includes rural areas of outstanding natural beauty and agricultural enterprise, but is more usually associated with a long history of employment in heavy industry, including coal-mining, shipbuilding, and engineering. Both rural and urban economies in the region, and in particular, the demands of

³¹ There were, during the course of this research, a number of personal circumstances that also hindered my progress. The most profound of those events were the deaths, within a period of eighteen months, of my grandparents and mother.

industry for labour, have shaped the character of the landscapes and of the peoples of the North East. In the eighteenth century, for example, pit villages were built around newly sunk collieries in previously agricultural areas, and throughout the next century, as the demand for labour grew, the North East saw ‘considerable migration’ from other parts of the United Kingdom (Hudson, 1989).

At the turn of the twentieth century, the North East “had emerged as a centre of capitalist production of global significance” not least in the shipbuilding industry (Hudson, 1989:7). However, the late 1980’s and 90’s saw a massive decline in those traditional industries and the more recent manufacturing occupations in the North East, resulting in rising male and female unemployment, and serious challenges to physical, economic and social infrastructures and to the well-being of the region and its communities (Darton, et al, 2003; Tomaney et al, 2003). Regionally, recent figures from the National Office of Statistics show that in 2005, just over 30% of all adults of working age in the North East region were economically inactive, and that to be female and/ or from a minority ethnic community increased the likelihood of being unwaged (Hastings, 2006).

The salience of gender as a source of discrimination in relation to work and employment also has wider significance for the understanding of community dynamics, in that it represents one aspect of gender relations and identity that has been stereotypically associated with the North East as portrayed by the figure of Andy Capp. Although it has been suggested that the changing patterns of employment have challenged the persistent ‘male breadwinner’ and female ‘home-maker’ model (Wheelock, 1994) nevertheless there is evidence that gender hierarchy persists in both the public and private enactments of community and gender roles even when traditional employment patterns have changed irreversibly (Hall, 2004; Marshall, 2001). The statistics given above may, therefore, be considered as indicators of a more endemic culture of gendered (and similarly racialised) discriminatory practices and cultures in the North East and elsewhere (Green et al, 2004; Ridgeway et al, 2004)

This study was conducted in South Moor area, a large, urban, economic centre in the North East. The fieldwork was conducted in two nearby, adjoining sub-

neighbourhood areas, so-called peripheral estates, which were experiencing a prolonged period of changes. These included long term economic decline, and the decay and re-shaping of the physical environment, including demolition of housing stock and most recently, during the time of the research, the longer term communities had witnessed the arrival of 'newcomers', including refugee and asylums seekers from visible minority ethnic communities. This latter demographic change (accounting for less than 1% of the population in the South Moor area) was perceived to be significant by interviewees from across the ethnically diverse communities in the two areas.

In contrast to other major regions in the United Kingdom, the North East has been portrayed as a predominantly white area, and certainly the 1991 and 2001 Census' show that over 93% of the population identified themselves as white. This compares with the eighty-seven per cent of the population in England who gave their ethnic origin as White British (2001 Census). However, the image of the North East as a homogenous white enclave is challenged by the longstanding presence and contribution throughout the region of richly diverse populations, including Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Irish, Jewish, Kashmiri, Pakistani, and Polish communities (Fryer, 1984; Nayak, 2003). This diversity was, to an extent, mirrored in the two areas, Eddington and Briardene, where the fieldwork was conducted.

Eddington is an area of mixed tenure properties, almost half of these being owner occupier homes, closely followed with a sizeable number of council owned rented properties and some housing association and private sector rented homes. Much of the stock, built both pre-and post Second World War, was in need of refurbishment. Throughout the 1990's, vacated properties proved difficult to let or to sell, due in part to crime, fear of crime and harassment, and to the stigma attached to parts of the wider South Moor area. Subsequently, void properties were boarded up and vandalised until, eventually, demolition and landscaping reduced the numbers of surplus properties and opened up the urban landscape to more small communal spaces with seating and play areas. The population of Eddington is predominantly white, with around 6% of the population from black and other minority ethnic communities, most of whom are of South Asian heritage, mainly being Indian, Pakistani and Kashmiri. Most of the Asian families live in the northernmost part of the

neighbourhood, alongside long term, white residents and people more recent arrived in the community.

Briardene is an area of predominantly post-war council owned rented housing, augmented by some pre- and post-war private sector and registered social landlord rented homes, and just over twenty five per cent owner-occupier properties. In comparison with Eddington, there is evidence of more markedly segregated communities: in one part of Briardene there is a neighbourhood that is almost exclusively white, side by side with an estate that is home, almost exclusively, to Bangladeshi families. There are also gatherings of other communities, for example Iranian families, living within particular parts of the area, but in this case there was more interaction between communities living in that area.

The above (albeit brief) account of the research context points to some of the economic and spacial (placed) aspects of the fieldwork location, linked to gender, 'race' and community. The research itself focuses in on the dynamic interactions of those substantive areas, through community responses to both domestic and racial violence.

The Research Sample

In total, I conducted 32 semi-structured interviews, 30 of which were conducted with residents, local project workers and councillors who represented, worked or lived in Eddington and Briardene. Two further interviews were with civil servants with a remit for developing and delivering policy on social cohesion, at the regional and national level. Of the whole sample, 21 were individual interviews; 9 interviews comprised 2 respondents, and 2 were group interviews. One group comprised 7 respondents, 6 of whom were related, representing 3 generations of a family. On this occasion a project worker also participated in the interview. The other was a group with 6 unrelated respondents aged 11-17 and 1 project worker. The total number of interviewees in the whole sample was 53, 34 of whom were female, and 19 of whom were male.

There were 12 respondents who identified themselves as Asian; of these 2 were Hindus, 8 were Muslims and 2 were Sikhs. In the signifiers accompanying each respondent's numerical identifier, I referred to all of the above as Asian. The data records that there were times during the interviews when these respondents referred to other personal nomenclatures of identity. There also two other respondents were identified themselves as Muslim, one of whom described himself as Iranian and the other said she was Iranian but did not want to allocate a label of ethnicity to herself. There was one Romani man and one young woman of dual heritage (Asian and white). The remainder I described as white; of these 6 said they were British and two said they were 'North Easterners'.

To anonymise respondents, I allocated each interview with a four digit code, for example 1103. The first digit denotes the year in which the interview took place (2001 or 2), the second the phase of the fieldwork (1st or 2nd phase).³² The final two figures denote the chronological order in which the interviews took place.

The Ethnographic Approach

Methodologically, I adopted an interpretive, ethnographic approach to the research. I wanted to explore people's reactions to and understandings of domestic and racial violence and relate those views to the wider concept of social cohesion; qualitative methods of data collection, particularly those associated with a rich or 'thick' description (for example open-ended, semi-structured interviews and narrative accounts), were my preferred means of encouraging detailed responses, set against an observed and contextualised background (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Geertz, 1975). The advantages of an ethnographic approach were that I hoped to develop a relationship (albeit temporary) with informants, in the attempt to see the world from their perspective, rather than confining responses to a limiting set of questions and tick boxes based on my own predetermined categories. Being new to research, I was excited by the opportunity to view my 'own' world through the eyes of the 'stranger'. And although ethnographic work benefits from long-term contact,

³² My original plan was to interview 'gatekeepers' in the first phase of the fieldwork, in order to gain access to further respondents through the process of 'snowballing' contacts, for the second phase. In practice the two stages became blurred depending on the availability of interviewees.

my previous knowledge of the area equipped me with a level of background information that would have taken some time to acquire in less familiar settings. However, from the outset (including drafting the proposal), I was conscious of two of the key tensions inherent in any research, but particularly pertinent when undertaking an ethnographic study, namely validity and bias.

Much anthropological and sociological research in the past has focused on the lives of the poor or disenfranchised, with the potential for pathologising or reifying the 'researched'. In the former instance, by virtue of being under the research gaze, the observed and recorded 'participants' may be designated as 'Other', exoticised in traditional ethnographies as people outside the mainstream and for the most part, held in contrast to the researcher's own (frequently 'superior') background. In the latter, the working class, the disadvantaged or non-white 'participants' may be accorded the status of 'oracle' by uncritical recording of informants' views as representative and accurate of a distinct sub-group or sub-culture. This creative but flawed construction of ethnographic accounts, according to Barley (1983) reflecting on his work in Africa, reveals as much about the author's own social context and agenda as it does about the 'researched'.

In the days of the bland assumption of Western cultural superiority, it was intuitively obvious to all that Africans were wrong about most things and simply not too bright...The anthropologist was inevitably cast in the role of the refuter of this view of primitive man (sic), seeking to show that there was a sense or logic in his ways and possibly a wisdom in his mind that escaped the Western observer. In these days of the New Romanticism, the ethical anthropologist is surprised to find himself (sic) suddenly on the other wing. Primitive man is used by Westerners nowadays as surely as he was by Rousseau or Montaigne to prove a point about their own society and castigate those aspects of it they find unattractive. Contemporary 'thinkers' pay as little heed to fact or balanced judgment as their forebears (Barley, 1983:94).

That last criticism is not necessarily the case. My decision to conduct the research much closer (literally) to home, in a predominantly working class area with which I was familiar, also ensured the matter of balance (and 'fairness') was paramount. My previous activities in urban regeneration were premised on a personal commitment to my 'vision' of social justice. It was important to me, therefore, in this work, to

incorporate, compare and contrast the views of the ‘powerful’ and those seen as ‘powerless’, at the local, city wide and national level, to determine any commonalities and/or oppositional perceptions and perspectives on the key themes of community, cohesion, and challenges to domestic and racial violence, and by doing so aim for a more even-handed (albeit limited) ethnography that did not focus exclusively on the ‘underdog’ (Silverman, 1985:19). At the same time, because I intended to interview, observe and interact with people with whom I felt some empathy, whose life experiences may be, in some ways, similar to my own, I was aware ‘visiting’ the field would necessitate a sense of both closeness and distance, and that the worth and validity of reflexivity in these circumstances would be of central epistemological and ontological concern.

Whether or not ‘strangeness’ is thrust on the observer through an encounter with the exotic, or is achieved through imaginative bracketing of the familiar and the mundane, the confrontation of the self with the other is fundamental. In experiential terms the ethnographer is, in principle, always the ‘marginal native’. There is thus a constant tension between the position of ‘member’ and stranger’ (Atkinson, 1990: 157).

The dualled themes of inclusion and exclusion, of marginality and centrality were present throughout the research process, during the conception, execution, recording and recounting of the project. The frequently raised caution against losing a sense of distance or ‘going native’ was qualified by a number of authors who noted that closeness and ‘belonging’ was an attribute when conducting participant observation, while a more abstract and separate self was appropriate when authoring an account of the ethnography (Hastrup, 1995; Moore, 1994; Narayan, 1997; Rosaldo, 1989).

As the fieldwork progressed, it became clear that the role and social positioning of researcher was not only self-constructed and malleable, but that the *raison d’être* of the researcher is open to interpretation by those contacted. The significance of the shifting nature of identity and ‘belonging’ is discussed in more detail below, and will reoccur in subsequent chapters when exploring the substantive themes of domestic and racial violence and social cohesion.

Establishing Contact and Data Collection - First Tentative Steps

During the first stage of the research, I conducted an initial scope of literature on both forms of violence, and on work exploring the concepts of community and social cohesion. Drawing on this reading (and personal experiences detailed in Introduction), I formulated an interview structure that would facilitate an integrated focus by participants on a number of the strands identified as contributing to notions of community and cohesion, and incorporated, through the use of vignettes, a study of responses to domestic violence and racially motivated violence in the community setting (see vignettes as a research tool below).

Initial contact was made, by phone, with local councillors for the two political wards, as a courtesy to make them aware that I would be working in the area they represent (i.e. 'their area'). Past experience as an activist has shown that councillors feel territorial about their ward and it would not do to alienate them. I followed up the telephone contact with face-to-face discussions. Using semi-structured interviews, I enquired about the elected members' own views on what constitutes a community, what concerns had been prioritised within the communities facing social change, and what, in the councillors' views, were the prevailing attitudes to domestic and racial violence. I asked councillors if they could direct me to any community responses to domestic or racial violence in their ward, and ended the interview with some questions on the relevance and efficacy of hate crime legislation, as a further device to solicit comparative views on the possibility for enhanced sentencing on domestic and racial violence. The resulting data provided an insight into the relative positioning of both forms of violence as 'worthy' of augmented legal sanctions.

I then made initial contact by telephone with statutory and voluntary organisations in the South Moor area that had a remit :

- To work specifically on issues of racism ethnicity and domestic violence
- To carry out generic work with black and minority ethnic communities
- To support community development through locally-sited projects working on an area-based, neighbourhood level.

In this phase of the fieldwork, my intention was to contact those individuals and organisations that I had identified as gatekeepers, who were also in positions of decision making e.g. devising and implementing policy, or responsible for allocation of resources. This first stage had a dual purpose:

- To gain access to groups and individuals as yet unknown to me and
- To solicit the views of those in positions of relative power, to form the basis of a comparative study with the data in the second phase, gathered from meetings with community groups and individuals whose access to decision-making structures has been traditionally less than equal.

Contact with councillors was good, with all but one replying to contact, resulting in interviews with 4 of the 6 councillors and expressions of support for the research from a councillor who was unable to be interviewed due to time constraints. The response from agencies was also productive, with most contacts replying promptly and positively to the research. In some instances, contact was not followed up with an interview, due to staff on extended leave, changes in personnel or, following 3 telephone contacts and no reply being received, I moved on the next person or organisation on my list of potential interviewees.

Serendipity, or the role of chance in the research encounter

Preliminary discussions held with key workers to identify possible local participants involved a selection of potential respondents who were likely to have a range of contrasting views on the research topics. From the initial list of suggested contacts, I chose a cross section of residents and community groups in case study area, in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, class and participation in voluntary and statutory, paid and unpaid activity likely to contribute to social cohesion. As the fieldwork progressed, I met other relevant contacts just by being in certain places at the same time. The positivist researcher may frown upon capitalising on the chance meeting, on the grounds that it is unscientific (disorderly and unplanned). But the wealth of relevant information and data that resulted from the fortuitous encounters confirmed the value of the 'snowballing' technique to obtain access, while introducing an element of randomness to participant selection. This also increased the chance of meeting with

people outside of identified networks, which themselves can exclude people because of conflicting interests and power imbalances. Over the course of the fieldwork I continuously reassessed the balance of completed interviews based on individual and group characteristics. As I prepared to conclude the second phase of the research, a less timely but still useful document was given to me by a contact, via a third party. I had been provided with a comprehensive list of individuals, organisations and agencies currently working across South Moor in health, community development, service provision including housing, and of community groups based on locality and common interests. Too late now to include more interviews, or change the selection I had already made, I was gratified to confirm that I had, for the most part, successfully interviewed a wide range of both democratically and self-selected 'representative' people in the time allocated.

Conducting the Fieldwork

During the second stage of the fieldwork, I used a variety of methods – semi-structured interviews with individuals and groups; collecting auto-biographical data from participants before or after interviews, including levels of participation in associational activity; vignettes to stimulate discussion (see below for broader discussion on the use of vignettes); and participant and non-participant observation during interviews and when in attendance at public and non-public meetings to collect predominantly, though not exclusively, qualitative data. During the course of the research I also monitored media coverage of domestic and racially motivated incidents, as well as noting relevant political responses and community responses, at a local and national level. All the interviews were audio-taped with the consent of the participants, but I also kept a diary of fieldwork notes and observations which, while providing valuable detailed background to contextualise the work, posed an ethical dilemma about inclusion of specific conversations that I recorded after the event without the overt knowledge of the people present (see below).

In terms of the research process, developing a rapport with all those interviewed was a key methodological consideration. I utilised a variety of personal contacts to access 'elites' (middle ranking to senior civil servants and politicians) and prior to arranging

interviews, I held informal and at times lengthy telephone conversations with the key interviewees, mainly reminiscing about past collaboration or disagreement in the field of urban regeneration. My aim was to appear non-threatening and claim familiarity to increase the likelihood that I would be given permission to conduct an interview (Puwar, 1997). In a parallel strategy, when contacting community groups I emphasised my status as a local person who had been, for many years, in conflict with authority figures, and organisations, in the pursuit of justice for local residents.

While the opening strategy of claiming shared experiences successfully facilitated access, I now had to change my 'image' to that of the enquirer. Not only did I want to communicate my interest in the research subjects, and my keenness to listen to other's views on questions I posed, but I also wanted to encourage the people I met to volunteer information and opinions. To achieve levels of trust supportive of this approach, I adopted a level of 'socially acceptable incompetence', playing up being 'ignorant' of the details of local situations and needing to be 'taught', eliciting in-depth observations and explanations of key phenomena from respondents (Lofland and Lofland, 1984). At the same time, however, I prepared for all interviews by gathering relevant background information on projects and organisations, to inform myself of details of current and past work, and of existing organisational structures.³³ I familiarised myself with any 'jargon', abbreviations or specific terminology, in part so that I did not waste valuable interview time by asking for information that was readily available elsewhere, but also because I wanted to concentrate on the content of the discussion rather than feeling ill at ease with unfamiliar terms.

If you are to avoid being perceived as either frivolous or stupid and dismissed as such, you should have enough knowledge about the setting or persons you wish to study to appear competent to do so (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:26).

The use of vignettes as a research tool

I encouraged interviewees to participate in discussions on racial and gendered violence by introducing two sets of vignettes, which had the central themes of a)

³³ I visited corporate web sites, talked with key individuals in organisations and read relevant reports and annual reports prior to conducting (informed) interviews.

domestic violence and b) racially motivated violence. When looking at both forms of violence, the scenarios were changed by one detail each time, creating a smooth progression from one situation to the next while highlighting specific variables such as age, gender or ethnicity. This method was a useful technique for determining the potential for and perceived existence of social cohesion across a range of specific, socially constructed boundaries, by soliciting the differing reactions to incidents of domestic or racial violence, which were contextualised by reference to and discussions on abstract concepts ranging from notions of public/ private space, to a 'sense of belonging' to a community (Jackson, 2002; Mooney, 2000).

Miles and Huberman (1994) urge caution on the use of vignettes, suggesting they are self-serving, i.e. they present a simplistic story that is biased in favour of the researcher's own thoughts. They also claim that any data resulting from a vignette may be unreliable, because potentially, it portrays exceptional circumstances as typical. As previously described, I presented interviewees with a series of vignettes which portrayed incidents of domestic violence and racial violence. My intention was to encourage participants to discuss the presenting scenarios and their reactions to specific, changing details to gauge responses to violence as shaped by variables of age gender and ethnicity and place. Initially, I was concerned that reactions to the vignettes of potentially distressing situations might produce responses that were either so positively framed as to be indicative of an unrepresentative 'ideal' reaction, or so negatively construed that they may be considered caricatures or extremes that blocked out any further discussion or debate. Conversely, Barter and Renold (1999:5) warn against using stories that are too complex, claiming that making "more than three changes to a story line was often too confusing for participants to remember." This was not the case in the interviews I conducted. By using multiple vignettes, I explored a wide range of variables and circumstances, and found that respondents themselves commented on the typicality or rarity of the events set out. Also, using vignettes to ask people to visualise, as well as conceptualise, the presenting scenarios, frequently led to detailed descriptions about specific incidents, and allowed me to tap into respondents' reactions to change over a long period of time, in relation to the physical environment and to relationships with neighbours and the wider community, as they expanded on the situations given in vignette form.

The high returns from this approach were due in part, perhaps, because I linked each discrete scene by summarising the unchanged details before adding the new variable, e.g. “OK, same place, same situation, it’s a still a young man trying to hit the young woman but now they are both Bangladeshi.”³⁴ This repetition and singular addition approach established a conversational rhythm, rather than interrogational stance, to the interview, which encouraged responses to the sensitive and potentially difficult subject areas of domestic and racial violence. The first question, “What do you think most people would do?” provided an opportunity for respondents to voice their expectations of community responses to the presenting issues. The subsequent, “What would you do?” elicited a more personal reaction to the scenes. A supplementary question, “Why do you think that is?” allowed the participants to consider any differences between their response and that of the ‘community’, and to discuss in more depth those factors that support or hinder community responses to domestic and racial violence, from an individual and collective perspective. Because the scenarios given were in the form of stories in which the listener became an active participant, I found that respondents would offer anecdotes of their own, giving a deeper insight into the everyday conceptions and symbolic explanations of their ‘reality’ (Denzin, 1978; Geertz, 2000; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

In addition, when interviewing younger participants, I invited the key worker to be present, and while they, for the most part, observed, they were able to challenge some of the statements made or were able to encourage the young people to broaden their responses because of the specific knowledge the worker had developed during their longer term association and knowledge of the respondents. This meant that I was given answers to the vignettes that may not have been forthcoming if I was on my own because they may have said what they thought I wanted to hear. Also, the occasional interjection of the workers into the discussion facilitated a learning opportunity for respondents to challenge some racialised and engendered stereotypes expressed, and as one worker noted, highlighted potential areas of future work with the respondents. So the research was not all about taking on my part but hopefully

³⁴ The initial scenario would refer to a particular geographical location familiar to the interviewee. Specific details about the ‘actors’ were given, for example, young (age 16-18 years), white, one male, one, female. After noting the responses to the questions, “What would most people do” and “What would you do”, the single variable change was introduced, following a brief recap of the retained factors.

was useful after I had left the research field, a consideration as important to me as negotiating access.

The vignettes were matched with qualitative interviews with individuals about their types and frequency of participation in community organisations, including faith communities and with questions on access to and participation in training on domestic and racially motivated violence. This was more difficult when interviewing groups due to the time constraints on participants and other pressures on groups e.g. tensions in familial relationships (Briardene Women's Group) and demands for attention of babies and young children in the room. I attempted to overcome some of the epistemological difficulties inherent in adopting an interpretive stance when collecting and analysing data from groups and individuals, by methodological triangulation through participant observation, recorded in my diary (which also allowed for reflexivity) and by discussion with key workers/gatekeepers in projects about background biographical and participatory details about the individual respondents who contributed to collective discussions. By cross referencing information given by the respondents themselves, including biographical details, with the background offered by the gatekeepers who knew the interviewees, by cross checking with workers and residents about specific issues such as participation in training, and by comparing expectations of communal responses to domestic and racial violence with claims to individual responses, I aimed to construct a detailed and valid account when writing up the research.

So by all means the move to increase the general research sophistication of ethnographers should be encouraged. But at the same time, it would be tragic to lose what some converts call "soft," "unscientific," or "fuzzy" research. Much of the world we seek to understand has just these characteristics, including our own involvements in it as researchers. If we only pick up material that can be welded, we leave a lot behind (Agar, 1996:246).

Data Preparation and Analysis

When I first approached the raw data in the form of taped interviews and fieldwork diaries, I was unsure how to make sense of all the voices, the notes and the observations. I also completely underestimated the time it took to transcribe all the

interviews. After many months of painstaking typing, I assumed my task was complete. I began the analysis by selecting four interviews from the pile of transcripts and began recording detailed, analytic notes and thoughts, and identified recurrent themes. This was time consuming too, and strangely unproductive. I didn't know why, but nothing seemed to be 'coming together'. I decided to make a mind map of the main themes of cohesion, community, racial and domestic violence and turned up for my next supervision meeting with a huge piece of paper covered in multi-coloured scribbles with sub-themes and references to the literature. My supervisors then proposed a more useful approach to data analysis, suggesting that I re-code the individual interview transcripts into themed documents.

At first I could not understand why this would be beneficial, but set about picking out key themes and sub-themes from the data, using colour coding to visually distinguish each strand. I then electronically cut and pasted each piece of coded data into sections and sub-sections of the newly themed documents. Once again, I underestimated how long this would take. It was, however, a valuable process and made the process of analysis quicker and more manageable.

Gaining access, establishing trust

There were a number of factors that contributed to the levels of openness exhibited, which I put in place before the interviews. These included my preliminary visit to groups in the case study areas to introduce myself and talk about the aims and objectives of my research (at residents' meetings, board meetings); being introduced to the meeting by a key worker that the group liked, trusted and had known for some time, and by meeting with people for individual and group interviews in familiar, locally situated premises i.e. 'on their territory'. The introductory role of key workers who facilitated initial contact with group members not only eased access but also, most importantly, encouraged a level of trust that enabled respondents to contribute detailed and personal accounts of sensitive and difficult experiences relevant to the research. The presence and attitude of the trusted worker gave tacit approval to my enquiries, allaying concerns that I may be negatively judgemental. The 'gatekeepers' became guarantors that I was not an agent of the authorities (statutory agencies),

attempting to trick or catch the community out in some way (Whyte, 1943).

However, I was aware throughout the interview process that my status as researcher remained ambiguous - as a researcher /‘outsider’ I was allowed to probe for views and information in a way that would not readily be tolerated as a local resident and group member/‘insider’ (see below).

This tiered approach to contact, prior to detailed focus on the research topic, resulted in high levels of cooperation from paid workers, local residents and community activists. From this I recognised that the interview process began when I first drew attention to my ‘being there’, and positive or negative reactions to my attempts to engage potential interviewees would depend very much on how I presented myself and on how that ‘image’ I projected was perceived. From clothing to language (terminology, dialect and accent), from non-verbal communication (body language, facial expressions) to ‘luggage’ and equipment (lap top case containing pens, paper and tape recorder), the characteristics and accoutrements of an individual researcher may be used or modified to establish an acceptable persona in the field, according to the context and ‘target’ interviewee (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1997, Okely, 1996).

However, while I had anticipated and prepared for the impact of certain factors, such as those mentioned above, on developing or prohibiting trust and cooperation when conducting the fieldwork, I continued to learn, when the face to face interviews commenced, that my acceptability as ‘researcher’ was determined according to different criteria, depending on dominant social and cultural frameworks held by respondents. Just as the researcher collects ‘raw data’ from ‘the field’ and processes the information into forms expected by a target audience, the interview interaction is the site of two-way interpretation, in which the researcher is evaluated and to varying degrees permitted to witness, albeit on a temporary basis, some aspect of the interviewees’ world. Most importantly, the role and social status of the researcher is not static within the field of enquiry; rather it is a matter for on-going evaluation and review.

(A) niche within the host culture is carved for the ethnographer as the locals interpret and explain his or her presence within their own cultural frameworks. The place or role that the field-worker is given may be that of stranger, outsider, or deviant, or it may be a location of fictive kin or insider or familiar. But most commonly, it seems

that the field-worker is incorporated with a dual status of insider and outsider, a familiar deviant, the stranger within (Warren and Hackney, 2000:20).

The significance of this is illustrated and explored in the following accounts. After introductory talks with project workers in Briardene, I arranged to meet with a women's group who attended regularly at the Briardene Women's Project. The first group were almost all closely related (presenting at first a form of family cohesion), comprising four generations of women from great-grandmother (in her 60's) to great granddaughter, aged 3 weeks. There were 9 women present, 7 attendees, 1 worker and myself. Of the women who use the project, there was Mrs. Gallagher the great-grandmother, and Louise, her daughter, who is mother of three other young women in the group, who were there with their children. One of the younger mothers had a 3-week-old daughter and her older sister (now 21) had her 2-year-old son, James, in the crèche. There was also a young girl aged about 2 who was with her mother throughout the meeting. The child was looked after and interacted with a number of the young women in the room who appeared to share informal responsibility for the child during the meeting. All members of the group who were present were white, working class women. The group have met for over ten years every Wednesday, with the one extended family making up the majority of the group. Another woman called Angela, a Kosovan refugee, was not in attendance on the day of the interview because she was at college. A parallel group, the Briardene Girls project had been running for 18 years at the same venue, and many of the women present had been regular participants for much of that time. One young woman said she first attended when she was 7 and now she is 25 with children of her own.

Every week, the women come to the project to meet together, to have time together socially and they occasionally have guest speakers and discussants. The focal point of the meeting is sharing a cooked lunch. When arranging the meeting on phone with Mags [key worker] I had offered to help with preparing the food and asked if I should bring anything to share but was assured that all I had to do was turn up.

On the day, I felt nervous about interviewing the group, not least because of the logistics of recording in a busy setting, with cooking, eating and little children

playing. I was conscious also that, as a researcher, I was 'invading' the women's space and asking them to give up their time for my benefit, with no obvious reciprocal advantage for them. I decided that my contribution could be to help prepare and serve the food, a gesture that I hoped would indicate a willingness to become involved in a minor way with the group, rather than appearing to be an aloof 'outsider'. I also wanted to establish some common ground with the group, to gain credibility as a non-judgemental recorder of their views relating to my research interests. I judged the kitchen to be a 'safe' area for me to first encounter the women, partly because I would be seen to be willing to participate in the 'ritual' of food preparation and partly because I gained a sense of security and confidence by engaging in familiar tasks in an unfamiliar setting. In a practical sense, the role of 'willing helper' in a new or unknown domestic setting was familiar to me – it had served me well during infrequent visits to my in-laws or when attending social gatherings in people's homes. Theoretically, I realised that acquiring, preparing and serving food is a powerful, symbolic and gendered act, with implications for pollution (Okely, 1996), ownership of land or territory; status, linked with the well being of a community (Strathern, 1975) and agency (Harbers, et al, 2002). The simple acts of peeling, boiling and mashing potatoes represented my wish to be included, to belong, albeit on a temporary basis.

Arriving early, before the women came into the project, I talked with Mags, the project worker, in the kitchen and while we peeled and cooked vegetables for the meal, I found out background information about the group, such as when it was formed and how often it met. The meeting room next to the kitchen was informal, with a variety of upright and armchairs and adjoined the kitchen, which was separated by a wall with a large serving hatch. As each of the women arrived, I greeted them from the kitchen, vegetables in hand. While the food cooked, we all sat in the room next to the kitchen, and I helped to pass round cups of tea. The worker was busy elsewhere in the building, and I judged that it would be inappropriate to attempt to call a halt to the many simultaneous conversations taking place, so I began chatting to a woman who looked about the same age as me. I told her my name and that I hoped to be able to talk with everyone after lunch about some work I was doing, and then asked her how long she had been coming to the lunch group, which led to an introduction to one of her daughters, who sat next to me. The children also provided a

means of gaining acceptance, as I exchanged general information with the mothers in the group about how many children we had, and how they behaved at different stages in their development.

A detailed discussion on childbirth with most of the women present began with a focus on the young woman with a 3-week-old baby. We all talked about children's sleeping habits, and more specifically how the newborn slept through the night; how her mother put her in her cot and after observing her for a while, left the room. The baby now goes straight to sleep when she is placed in her crib. The group acknowledged the mother's expertise and good fortune, noting that sleep deprivation was a common difficulty experienced by mothers.³⁵ I joined in, saying that I wish I had done the same with my first child, who had not slept through the night for many years, but had cried as soon as I left the room. James's mother said that her son was the same, and that he still woke up for a bottle even though he is 2 years old. She added, nodding at her sister – "Still, she doesn't know what she has coming", referring to an earlier comment that James was being hard work (demanding attention) at the minute. I said, "Is it the terrible two's?" and a number of women nodded sympathetically.

For forty minutes while the dinner was being cooked, I sat with the women, listened to the general conversation and gradually shifted from talking to individuals to joining in with group small talk. The worker asked if I wanted to begin in the 20 minutes or so before dinner was ready, but I gauged from the looks that few of the women exchanged that they would prefer not to begin then so I asked if we could talk after we had eaten, to which the group agreed. The women knew I was coming in to meet them that day and had been told I was going to talk to them about domestic and racial violence. They knew that I was from the University and this was reiterated when Mags, the group co-ordinator, introduced me. I gave the women a bit of information about my background (as community activist in Hillside, another area of South Moor, involved in collective action rather than just one person organising; that our main purpose had been to make the area a better place to live; how this often brought us into conflict with the local authority; that I still live in Hillside; that we are affected by

³⁵ Most of the women said they had male partners, but that the men did not share the child caring role. This was particularly the case through the night when children woke up for attention.

the demolition) and that part of the discussion I would like to have with them was about ‘community’. The oldest woman, Mrs Gallagher, said, “I know you, I’ve seen you on the telly and in the papers.” I wondered if this prior knowledge of (the public) me would be a barrier, but the comment was made as statement of fact rather than in ‘resentment or awe’ and she was comfortable for me to be there.

I discovered that one woman, Louise, had lived in Hillside for many years, as had her mother, Mrs. Gallagher and the older of Louise’s daughters (James’ mother). We exchanged comments about people who had lived there that we both knew and liked, and Louise reflected that she had liked living in Reasby Gardens but that it had gone down now i.e. declined socially – it wasn’t the same as she remembered when she lived there. I began to relax – spending time with the group prior to the group discussion was clearly an important component of the interview process in that it provided the opportunity for participant observation and for background autobiographical details that informed comments made later about community, identity and sense of belonging. By establishing common ground, I was overcoming potential reticence and could claim I was no longer a stranger to the group.

I used my status as a mother of five children to claim, albeit unspoken, a degree of commonality through shared experiences, with three generations of women present (Moore, 1994; Warren and Hackney, 2000). As I did so I reflected that my gender and class were important factors in the positive way I interacted with the parents and children.³⁶ In an era of concern and anxiety about child protection issues, I was allowed to interact with the children and joined in their informal co-care in a way that may not have as readily acceptable from, for example, a man or a middle class woman (Gill and MacLean, 2002). I was also aware that my ethnicity was a dynamic relevant to the content of certain conversations and responses I heard (see ethical dilemmas below). Once again I assumed the role of the chameleon ethnographer, simultaneously revealing a willingness to mention my ‘mistakes’ or naivety in certain situations, while identifying or demonstrating shared knowledge and experience, as well as stating openly that I was a student at Newcastle University, engaged in research. By moving between roles in this and other settings, I aimed to “maintain a

³⁶ As a woman/mother, I talked with the children and commented on them with their mothers.

more or less marginal position, thereby providing access to participant perspectives but at the same time minimising the dangers of over-rapport” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1997:112).

In effect, I was mirroring or ‘playing with’ the ‘insider-outsider’ dynamic I was investigating in relation to domestic and racial violence and social cohesion, in order to gain trust and hopefully encourage genuinely held responses rather than more guarded or filtered replies that the researcher might be deemed to be expecting to hear (Atkinson, 1990). However, my growing assumption that I now in some way had a sense of shared identity or belonging was soon challenged. The following episodes highlighted that, although I had gained a certain level of acceptance by the group, I was still an ‘outsider’.

The majority of the women at the lunch club smoked, with one mother (Louise and daughter (James’ mother) sharing the cigarettes they smoked (half each). I found it very difficult at first to deal with the smoke because since quitting smoking, I have avoided cigarettes, which I now find repulsive. At times the smoke blew straight into my face, as when one woman next to me held her cigarette smouldering and burning down while she talked. However, I remembered that during my time as a community activist, smoking was a social, group activity. Offering and receiving cigarettes on a regular basis throughout a meeting or informal gathering demonstrated friendship, allegiance and welcome. Complying with this gesture was a matter of pride – despite the prohibitive cost of cigarettes, the practice of sharing was evident at all community meetings in South Moor. If an individual was perceived to be slow or hesitant in taking their turn, at least one other person would fix them with a determined gaze and shout, “Eh, howay, then. Flash the ash!” As I sat and observed the communal smoking, I was aware that, had I still smoked, the first thing I would have done on speaking to someone would have been to offer them a cigarette, to break the ice and to indicate friendship. In this instance, being omitted from the rounds of cigarette sharing indicated I was still ‘outside’ of the group. That this was a deliberate omission rather than an oversight was reinforced when two women sitting on either side of me

asked each other if they wanted a 'tab' ³⁷, and passed the cigarettes across in front of me.

Again, the danger of becoming complacent about assuming 'insider' status was reinforced when I met with a group of younger, white working class girls and women aged between 11 and 17 years. I adopted the same approach, introduced myself to individuals, and tried to initiate conversations about relatively neutral topics such as "Do you live far from here?"

I was asked where I lived and I said, "Hillside."

"What's it like down there now?" someone asked.

"Well, most people are still all right, it's only the few radgies³⁸ that spoil it for everybody", I answered, and was about to give examples of the sort of behaviour I found disturbing and upsetting. Luckily my instincts told me to pause.

"My boyfriend lives down there", said one young woman. "I don't know if you know him, he lives in Kepier Avenue".

I did know her boyfriend. He and his family had recently moved into the street where I lived and had become one of the major sources of distress to me and other long-term neighbours. His mother had a habit of dumping bin liners full of household rubbish into other people's gardens, he was a frequent visitor to the drugs dealer across the street and his younger brother (who often screamed abuse in the street at 11 o'clock at night) had a daily routine of smashing up gardens walls and houses with a hammer, leaving rapidly increasing piles of rubble in our and surrounding streets. At weekends, his little sister joined forces with two other brothers to kick and hammer at boarded up properties until they removed the wooden panels, entered the properties and entertained themselves by breaking any remaining windowpanes, after smashing up internal walls and any remaining fixtures. A vision of how my house might look, if word got back to her boyfriend that I had been 'calling' him, flashed across my mind. I looked her straight in the face.

³⁷ cigarette

³⁸ a person exhibiting anti-social behaviour, disruptive, threatening; sometimes viewed with grudging admiration as anti-authority

“No”, I lied. “I don’t think I do. Has he lived there long?”

I quickly learned that misplaced familiarity and unfounded assumptions about shared value systems could have put me in a dangerous situation, living as I did, close to the chosen research areas, where extended family networks are prevalent. Despite matching certain criteria for inclusion, I was not ‘one of them’ (Hobbs, 1993:62-63). This theme of insider / outsider was persistent throughout the research. While the previous examples highlight the ambiguity of social and group boundaries, the following situation illustrated the arbitrary and fluid nature of assigned identities that underpin socially constructed boundaries.

I had arranged to meet one interviewee, a woman who worked for Social Services, at the local social services office. I told the receptionist that I had arrived, and sat in the waiting area while she checked to see if her colleague was available. I was alone until a young woman entered the building and sat next to me. After initial chat about the weather and about waiting to be seen, she told me some quite personal details about the problems she was experiencing in her own life and with, she felt, insensitive and inappropriate interventions from professionals. Then she asked, “Are you waiting to see your social worker?” My immediate reactions were to note that she assumed I too was ‘a client’ waiting to be seen, and although I wanted to respond to her with equal openness and honesty, I did not want to say that I was a university student waiting for an interview on community cohesion, in case that was interpreted as trying to distance myself, or to falsely infer a higher status. I simultaneously struggled with my impulse, borne of many years facing similar references while living in the area, to launch into a diatribe condemning social workers. That may have provided an empathetic link, but would have been dishonest and discourteous in relation to the woman I had come to interview. I muttered that I was here to see someone and deflecting her attempts to engage in more criticism of the staff, and service in general, I changed the subject to a discussion on unreliable public transport. Soon after, the young woman was called in to an interview room for her appointment.

The receptionist then returned, and asked me to come through to the area where the staff worked. She indicated some chairs in the corridor, saying I could wait there until the worker I was due to meet became available. Smiling, she informed me that

she thought it would be better if I waited here in a non-public area, “because you will be better off. You never know what they [nodding towards the public waiting space] might say or do to you.” Once again I was attributed with the role of co-conspirator.

In the first exchange, it was assumed, not appearances (I was wearing a relatively formal outfit, of jacket, blouse, skirt and had lap top briefcase by my side), but by virtue of ‘being there’ in a certain space, that I shared common experiences and could be trusted with detailed information. I was non-threatening. In the second interaction, I was perceived as an insider along with the other professionals, and that conferred an obligation to maintain my safety and preserve my separateness by physically removing me from potentially contaminating contact with ‘clients’ who had been designated as ‘other’, volatile, unpredictable and potentially dangerous. This assumed that I would be construed by the ‘client’ as different, as an outsider whose allegiances lay with the other outsiders, the social workers. In this instance the more powerful social actor symbolically reinforced my temporary status of belonging to her group by informing me of the benefits she had accorded me by her actions. Both parties had made judgements about my identity within minutes of meeting, as they viewed me through the lens of their own cultural knowledge and expectations. This is a theme that will reoccur in subsequent chapters.

Role of the researcher - personal and ethical considerations

As a novice researcher, I realised (particularly as the fieldwork continued over the months) that with each interview or contact, I adapted or highlighted, however subtly, certain aspects of my appearance, language, or background experience to smooth the progress of access and participation in the research. During interviews with local, white, working class residents, I became conscious that my North East accent would become ‘broader’, more guttural and defined, and I would use more dialect words, whereas when speaking with members of ‘elites’, with black and minority ethnic residents and workers and with older residents, I spoke more softly and the local accent, while present, was less pronounced. In effect I was performing to a different audience, on a different stage (Goffman, 1969). The intonation in my voice reflected the nuanced judgements I made about how I would be best received, for example was

I portraying the down to earth local woman with a risqué sense of humour, or the respectful and humble enquirer? Would I engage respondents most effectively by assuming an air of knowledgeability, or by portraying the *ingénue*, the *naive*?

As the fieldwork began, I acted on assumptions I made about the people I contacted, in the hope that I would be acceptable enough to them, so that they would help me. I began to recognise that I had, through life experiences, and by living over many years in South Moor, acquired cultural capital that sensitised me to social nuances (e.g. cigarette sharing; importance of family honour as a cohesive bond within communities; awareness of certain obligations for Muslims to fast during Ramadan and how this affects social contact).

On one occasion, after arranging to meet a Muslim woman in her home, following initial contact at a community project, I arrived to find that the woman was waiting for her husband to arrive, to take an older daughter to hospital for a check up. I confirmed that she was still willing to be interviewed, and offered to make new arrangements to meet. The woman indicated that she wished to go ahead with the interview, so we began. Within five minutes, her husband arrived and after a brief discussion, the mother decided that she would take their daughter for the hospital appointment. She asked if I would mind that, and suggested that I interview her husband. My initial reactions were gratitude at the hospitality shown, and that I would still have an opportunity to conduct an interview while simultaneously feeling very awkward about being alone with her husband. I did not perceive him to be a threat but I had, over the years of being married into a Muslim family, become accustomed to avoiding being alone with men who were not part of the immediate familial group. I began talking in general terms about the Kashmiri community in South Moor, then quickly drew the conversation to mentioning an Uncle (husband's uncle), well known in the local area. Not only did both adults know him, but the husband was distantly related. With this brief exchange, I had established that I was aware of certain potential cultural expectations in terms of gender, while claiming for a short time the role of "fictive kin" (Coffey, 1999: 25). I also assumed the 'protection' and respect that such social status afforded.

This considerations helped ease access, and participation, but as mentioned above, taking on the role of researcher led to me to reflect not only on my primary purpose in the field but also on questions of my own sense of identity and belonging, and on the power imbalances between researcher and researched (Coffey, 1999). The latter relationship was especially relevant when dealing with ethical considerations, some of which are described below.

When beginning individual or group interviews, to put people at ease, I stressed that all remarks would be confidential, that participants were free to chose not to answer or discuss any issue, that I would be anonymising responses and that there were no right or wrong answers. To an extent, this was helpful because I could see some people visibly relax before they joined in. After the interview, the majority of people said, “I really enjoyed talking to you”. Some looked surprised and confided that they had been worried about what I may ask in case they couldn’t answer and “looked stupid”, but they were happy to have taken part and hoped their answers would be of some use (to me and to other people). One person commented that until the interview she had never really thought about ‘community’ or ‘belonging’ very much and that the questions had really made her think in depth, which in turn revealed to her that she had put forward a complex analysis of the issues. These responses mirror the findings of Oakley (1979) who asked the women who contributed to *Becoming a Mother* about their experience of being involved in the research. The interaction with a researcher can be a catalyst for participants to view their ‘everyday’ experiences in a new way. The frequency of unsolicited positive feedback also allayed one of the ethical concerns identified at the planning stage and during the face to face contact, namely that encouraging people to discuss sensitive, probably personal, issues on violence and notions of belonging, was potentially difficult and distressing for participants.

The majority of those interviewed appeared to be relaxed and unguarded, and to offer genuinely held views. In one case, a woman who had appeared quite timid and had begun the interview by saying that she wouldn’t have much to say, stood up to act out an actual (non-violent) incident, playing the role of all the characters involved, and as the story continued, her husband joined in to prompt her with more details of the

event, which she incorporated into her account. They both warmed to their portrayal, at times having to pause with laughter before continuing.

I had expected that the subject areas of domestic and racial violence might have raised, at least for some people, some powerful emotions that demanded a sensitive approach. However, I was surprised that laughter became a familiar pattern in many of the interviews, which I attribute in part to the relaxed atmosphere I established from first contact with those interviewed. There was one notable exception, where the respondent broke down in tears, and I had not predicted that would happen at that particular point in the interview.

Alan, a white working class man, talked about his view of 'his community' and gave responses to the vignettes. Up to that point, I had begun and ended the interviews with general questions about community and changes people had witnessed, in the belief that these more 'neutral' topics were less threatening than the substantive issues on violence, and would therefore 'ease' respondents in and out of the interview. However, Alan's sense of belonging to his community was so strong and so important to him that when he reflected on the changes he had encountered over many years, he cried about his feelings of loss, for a closeness and community spirit he felt no longer existed. I asked if he wanted to stop the interview and did he want the tape switched off? He shook his head and indicated that he would continue in a moment. It took some minutes for Alan to compose himself, and then he went on with the interview. Seeing him cry, I felt responsible, my mind raced on to consider appropriate action in this situation and I also felt guilty as I mentally observed that this was an interesting reaction in terms of my research. I was also aware that I was a woman, alone with a man in the room, and that I did not want to make a gesture that could be misinterpreted, but I stood up and said, "I hope you don't mind" as I patted him on both shoulders and said "Are you OK?" Once again gender roles (in this case as carer and behaving in an 'appropriate' i.e. non-sexualised, manner when alone with a man) were an issue for me as a researcher (Gill and MacLean, 2002). Recording the unexpected, i.e. unplanned or unforeseen conversation was also an issue when deciding on the use of data collected outside of the stated interview parameters.

On a number of occasions, there were many interesting, relevant comments made that I would have liked to record for the research but did not want to ask, because it could have been interpreted as snooping or being patronising and may have compromised my position as researcher by putting people off talking to me on the specific research subjects. I could have switched on the recorder covertly but did not do so because I considered this would be a betrayal of trust. I hoped that I would recall some of the comments made and would write these in my fieldwork diary later, but again there is the ethical consideration that this was not done with the consent or knowledge of the women. I decided that it would be acceptable (to me) to refer to the material by anonymising the source of the quotes. In these instances, the dilemma was that I did not openly advise the people speaking that I was still observing and 'data collecting' outside a more formal, transparent interview setting. On other occasions the ethical dilemma was one of using a minor deceit to gain access to views that I potentially would find distasteful. If this proved to be the case, I would compound the deception by refraining from challenging, thereby compromising my principles so that I would have an opportunity to gain insight into antithetical viewpoints. One illustration of covert information gathering that troubled me occurred after I attended an urban regeneration board meeting, whose sphere of influence incorporated the geographical location of this study.

Prior to the first meeting I observed, I had been alerted during individual interviews to tensions between some of the board members, particularly relating to allegations of racist attitudes and comments. At the next scheduled meeting following a specific incident, discussions between the directors (ostensibly on an external enquiry process that had been established to fully investigate the concerns) indicated that there were deeply divisive positions held on matters of 'race' and ethnicity. I decided to explore this further, and, ringing home to delay being picked up, I hung around outside after the meeting, engaging two of the (white) community representatives in a conversation about their perceptions of how the meeting had been. To avoid raising suspicions that I was deliberately targeting them, I opened the exchange with a comment about hoping my lift would arrive soon. The views that followed were racialised, aimed at black and minority ethnic board members and at councillors who had recommended equal opportunities and racism awareness training for board directors. I was careful not to instigate or appear to support their stance, but was concerned that merely

listening would infer endorsement. I also noted that a component of the complaints being voiced was a sense of injustice, a theme that reoccurred throughout the research and was of relevance to subsequent considerations on social cohesion discussed in the data chapters.

Fifteen minutes into this exchange, one of the board members (who was Asian) left the building. The atmosphere became tense. The conversation stopped, and all three directors looked at each other angrily. I was now in a difficult position. By speaking to one section of a group or community in which there was existing friction, I was at risk of alienating others. It was crucial to be seen as impartial as an interviewer – on a personal level I did not want to be associated with exponents of attitudes so different to my own. To make matters worse, as the third board member moved a short distance away, but still within earshot, the first two directors began reiterating their annoyance in voices that projected across the street. To extricate myself, I again wondered aloud when my lift would arrive, and moving off swiftly, I shook hands with all three (by now bemused) directors, saying how nice it was to have met them and that I looked forward to see them again soon. Hoping that I had successfully maintained my ‘neutrality’, I was grateful that to see my husband’s car had arrived and I was on my way home. Still in research mode on arrival, I wrote an account in the fieldwork diary, noting my dilemma about potentially compromising core beliefs on tackling racism while in pursuit of ‘data’, and the consequences of adopting a persona that was so bland I risked being perceived as an ally to none and a threat to all (Lofland and Lofland, 1984).

Keeping a diary was a useful research strategy for a variety of reasons. There is an issue about recalling conversations after the event because they cannot be verified through on the spot writing or recordings, but I ensured that I typed up diary notes with this information as soon as possible on the same day that the interviews took place so that the details were still fresh in my mind. The diary was also a useful device for recording significant non-verbal situations that I encountered, for example exchanged facial expressions; seating arrangements; pre and post interview conversations. The note taking enriched the data from interviews, providing depth and context. The diary became a tool for self-monitoring and evaluation of practice, with reflexive accounts of how I had conducted interviews, or responded to

conversations. This was particularly important when faced with sensitive information. Often, before and during interviews, individuals confided very intimate details about their own or others experiences, not only of domestic or racial violence that was specific to the research, but also of self-harm or child sexual abuse. The latter issue was raised while I drank tea and chatted with an interviewee and a cleaner at the Eddington community project, before the interview began.

The women, totally out of context and without warning, entered into a detailed account about child sexual abuse experienced by people they knew and related this to experiences of their own. I wondered if this was because I was seen as a valid person to take into their confidence, because I had notified them previously that I was from the university and looking at violence. Had I been designated the 'status' of a listening 'professional', separate from their community (i.e. not a local person) but not a threat (not connected to statutory organisations such as social services, health service or police)? On this occasion the incidents recalled had happened many years ago, and there were no presenting child protection issues being disclosed, which would have raised another ethical dilemma – breaking confidentiality when given information that indicates children are being abused. The conversation carried on for some time until I drew it to a close by noting the time and going into another room to begin the interview.

The question of confidentiality in ethnographic fieldwork is always present, given the time spent with and within communities / social groupings, when just 'being there' leaves the researcher open to moving from non-participant observer to culpable witness. Initial assurances of anonymity and confidentiality given on entering the field may be questioned when sharing some of the experiences or confidences of the participants (Hobbs, 1993). Westmarland (2001) reflects on her response, as an ethnographer, to being present when police used varying degrees of violence towards arrestees. While she found specific incidents distasteful and disturbing, after considering whether or not to 'blow the whistle' to senior officers, she concluded that:

It seems crucial, however, to observe and reflect upon why certain categories of violence occur, the motivations of individual officers and the context in which these incidents occur...From my own point of view, it seems that the protection of informants from harm, physical or emotional, is crucial, whether or not we agree with their

justifications for behaving in certain ways (Westmarland, 2001:532).

It is possible to empathise with the academic desire to be assigned (and accept) insider status by conforming to presenting 'cultural practice' in order to gain a richer analysis by maintaining established relationships, but the 'duty of care' to confidants must be considered parallel to an obligation not to condone actions that would impact negatively on other social actors, and potentially on notions of self identity.

The accomplishment of fieldwork is not a passive activity. We actively engage in identity construction and recasting. It is neither helpful nor accurate to treat these processes as cynical enactments of appropriate field roles in order to acquire rich ethnographic data...(T)he actual lived experience of conducting fieldwork confronts the self in ways that go beyond this enactment of a work process (Coffey, 1999:26).

That confrontation with the self was a reoccurring theme many times throughout the PhD at various stages. My previous history as a community activist in the area was an advantage in that I was well placed to access people from a range of social circumstances. More importantly, being so intensely involved in community politics for many years had given me a key advantage – I tended not to take anything anyone said or did on face value. Interacting with the council (and with other local residents) to achieve positive outcomes to sometimes conflicting priorities had taught me to listen, observe and analyse before committing myself to action. In effect, I had served an ethnographic apprenticeship over the past two decades. However, as an activist, I had fewer constraints placed on me when facing difficult situations. Reacting 'firmly' to incidents in the community by making my views clear would not be an appropriate or useful research tool because it would alter the dynamics of the circumstances I observed and recorded. I was re-entering familiar territory without the protection of a political platform or the infrastructure of action-based community networks.³⁹

³⁹ An exception to my self imposed 'policy' of minimal interjection or intervention occurred when I attended a residents' meeting for the first time to introduce myself. Most members of the group were despondent because of a lack of progress with their plans, due mainly, they said, to the indifference and inaction of the local authority. Eventually I asked for permission to speak, and offered a few suggestions on tactics, accompanied by some heartfelt sentences on the strengths and abilities of local residents. Some months later, there was some very positive feedback from a key worker and residents about the impact of my impromptu contribution.

Before beginning the fieldwork I had anticipated that I may encounter some powerful, at times distressing, accounts of both forms of violence, and I expected to hear racist comments and attitudes that I would find offensive. In the former case, I had worked on strategies to deal with such events in a way that minimised the risk for people in distress (by asking participants if they wished to continue or to stop the interview; by making sure contact details of support organisations were available if required). In the latter, when specific incidents occurred, I countered by posing questions such as “Is that always the case?”, or “Where did people’s views on that come from?”, encouraging the individual or group to look more closely at frequently used stereotypes. While I did not want alienate or discourage any respondents whose views or language were radically opposed to my own, I did not want to compromise my principles by saying nothing and appearing to give tacit approval (See Hobbs, 1988). I later realised that I had not given as much attention to the impact on me, when recording, transcribing and analysing the conversations I had been privileged to access.

Conducting the research was exciting, stressful, fascinating, tiring and demanding. There were times when I laughed out loud, with interviewees and when transcribing the interviews. There were a few times, when I least expected, that I had to struggle with my reactions as women described situations that had many close echoes with my own past experiences. There were times when I had to curb an initial reaction of anger at the racism I found, so that I could pursue my research. There were also times when I wondered about the morality of research itself. Is it a dishonest trade, given the above discussion on presenting a variety of images to potential interviewees in order to gain trust and access? As the fieldwork progressed, I reasoned that, given that personal and social relationships are fluid and multi-faceted, it would be reductionist to claim that research relationships must be static and proscriptive. To maintain a monolithic and singularly objective approach would be to deny the dynamic presence of the self in the research process and to ignore the impact of the work on the researcher (Jackson, 2002; Lofland and Lofland, 1984; Rosaldo, 1993).

The positioning and power dynamics of the researcher within the ethnography continues after leaving the field. For example, once the data is collected, who has ownership, as the researcher sifts, selects and analyses the information (Geertz, 1988;

Harding, 1987, Stanley and Wise, 1993)? Most pertinent of all, does the researcher's interpretation of conversations and events contribute respectfully to understanding the snapshot in time presented and shared by the social agents who participated? (Shipman, 1981; Silverman, 1985)

If there is any way to counter the conception of ethnography as an iniquitous act or an unplayable game, it would seem to involve owning up to the fact that, like quantum mechanics at the Italian opera, it is a work of the imagination, less extravagant than the first, less methodical than the second. The responsibility for ethnography, or the credit, can be placed at no other door than that of the romancers who have dreamt it up (Geertz, 1988: 141).

Given the above discussions and with these questions and caveats still in mind, I present the following reflections on the research.

Further Reflections on the Research

For some time, the data analysis was daunting. I wanted to know more than might be gleaned by a narrow focus that concentrated only on individual responses to individuals in given situations. It was for this reason that I wanted to look beyond the immediate reactions to the vignettes, to consider the ways in which communities view and are viewed through the lens of 'race' and gender. My aim was to elicit a broader, sociological exploration of perceptions and understandings of the wider substantive areas of 'race', ethnicity and gender that are implicit in the social construction of community, and, therefore, intertwined in the development of social cohesion.

To these ends, I expected the vignettes to be a useful and safe device in my attempts to initiate conversations on the two sensitive areas of domestic and racial violence: they proved to be a catalyst for some in depth, open accounts and insightful reflections on both forms of violence, not only as imagined, but also as witnessed and/or experienced. What did become apparent was that there were more examples given of actual racial violence than domestic violence, and there were more detailed responses to domestic violence vignettes than to those citing racial violence. I had not foreseen this.

During the course of the fieldwork, respondents gave many accounts of racially motivated incidents that had taken place in the research location, in which they lived or worked. The following reports were not solicited, that is to say I did not ask directly for personal experience or knowledge of racist incidents. The catalysts for the responses were the hypothetical vignettes, or the query, “Do you know of any community responses, in this area, to racial violence?” I do not claim, therefore, that this is an in-depth, quantitative exploration of all incidents of racially motivated violence, as experienced or witnessed by the interviewees. I did not seek out people who were identified primarily as victims / survivors of domestic or racial violence, by themselves or by me. However, I do suspect most strongly that there are many more such stories to tell, given the frequency of examples volunteered during the time I spent with those who took part in the research. I now turn to those stories and accounts, in the following four chapters, which focus on the four substantive areas of the study, namely cohesion and community, domestic violence and racial violence, and which are consolidated in Chapter 7 on the intersections of ‘race’, gender and community.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I described the methodological approach to this research and discussed methods used to gather and analyse the data. I also explored some ethical considerations related to the role of the researcher, and reflected on the process of interviewing on the sensitive topics of domestic and racial violence. This chapter will explore some of the complex strands contributing to understanding and achieving cohesion and community, drawing on empirical data gathered in interviews with politicians, civil servants, and employees from local, regional, and central government and partner agencies and most importantly, local residents, activists and business people, most of whom were, during the period of the fieldwork, engaged in activities likely to contribute to developing a more cohesive community.⁴⁰ The chapter opens with respondents' comments on cohesion, and is followed by sections addressing:

What is community?

Respondents define and reflect on their understanding of the term 'community' and its borders.

Boundaries of community.

This section examines the boundaries of community, and claims of fragmented or 'non-cohesive' communities.

⁴⁰ These activities included work with young people from diverse backgrounds; participation in residents' groups and regeneration; setting up and facilitating support groups for people experiencing domestic and/or racial violence. All of the residents interviewed contributed to their community and across communities on a voluntary basis.

Justice, reciprocity and trust.

This section considers respondents' narratives on the themes of justice, reciprocity and trust, as they relate to the continued construction of community boundaries.

Types of cohesion.

This section expands on my claim that government policy and vision statements present a one-dimensional static model of cohesion. Here I draw on a range of sources to propose a tentative theoretical framework on cohesion as a contribution to widening current debates.

Encouraging cohesion.

The chapter closes with a reflection of the contributing factors and routes to social cohesion.

What is cohesion?

As noted previously, the term 'social' or 'community' cohesion is a contested concept. Data collected for this research indicate that definitions of 'cohesion' appeared, at first, to be simplistic, with vague notions of 'everybody' living in harmonious and peaceful co-existence, facilitated through sustained interaction and dialogue, underpinned by a general sense of *laissez faire*. From the civil servant in Whitehall to the local resident in the corner shop, cohesion was seen as the absence or resolution of conflict between people who share the same living space, the emphasis being on interpersonal relationships.

2232a: [civil servant, national remit, white, male]. What we mean by cohesion is - you have probably seen the definition in the

LGA⁴¹ guidance - but it is just people, mixing together and tolerating each other. It is really quite simple.

2228b: [resident, white, female] I think it's just having everybody together and talking and communicating with everybody. That's the most important thing, people all talking and coming together and discussing things and sorting things out. That's what it is all about, communication.

The above statements from fieldwork respondents, while superficially positive, were problematic in that they belied the complexities of community cohesion. Just as in the vision statement, positing a benign model of cohesion left existing tensions unacknowledged and un-interrogated. The 'mixing together' ideal and the linked plea for communication, though admirable, were not always successful in practice, because existing negative stereotypes, of in-groups and out-groups, were often left unchallenged, leaving the power dynamics between communities intact. At times throughout the fieldwork, these constructions of the 'other' generated competing claims of justice and entitlement, which further jeopardised or compromised the potential for community cohesion.

When opening discussions on community cohesion, the most frequent reference from adult residents was to negative interactions between young people and the wider community. There were numerous accounts of distress caused by youth disorder or anti-social behaviour, including those given below:

2218a: [resident, white, male] There's gangs of kids hanging around.

2218b: [resident, white, female] Three years ago there was twenty [youths]. And there was such a commotion in the street... And I phoned one of the neighbours over the road. A young lad. He says, "I know all about it. I've phoned the police" I says, "Eeh there must be 20" He says "I counted 25."

⁴¹ Local Government Association. See government 'vision' statement on cohesion in Chapter 2 page 13.

JH: How did that make you feel?

2218b: [resident, white, female] [Sighs] Terrified.

2218a: [resident, white, male] Yes. [agrees]

2219: [resident, white, male] With the elderly people...they are scared stiff. They're frightened of passing the gangs or even two or three lads because they don't know what they've been on, whether they have been on drink or drugs... and if they do see them in the street, you will see them cross over the road.

2217 [retired business man, Asian]: You know where I go, where you met me? [at the community centre]. It is a very good community but the area is rough. While I was standing there for ten minutes, I have seen the boy of 10, 14, 15, 16 year old. They climbed up the house, they come from the outside. They create problem, break the window, two, three times. They break my window last Thursday again.

The speaker below also acknowledged the disturbing impact of such behaviour, but went on to identify the need for more positive activities for young people. Importantly, she noted the adults' *perception* of young people as a threat to the wider community, especially when visible in groups, in public spaces.

2213: [community worker, white, female] That's the biggy, youth disorder. If we could just get something done with the young people. [There's] absolutely nothing for them to do. And the culture is, it's always been around here, that the kids go out to play. But it's the kids that are seen as public enemy number one.

The behaviour of young men in communities was also an issue for respondents who were overseeing the regional delivery of community cohesion initiatives closely linked to urban regeneration strategies. Here the emphasis was on public order, concerned primarily with monitoring and policing the behaviour of young people and, in response, offering positive, leisure-based activities. However, there was a suggestion, albeit quickly retracted, that the resulting projects were designed for the containment and appeasement of young people, rather than resolution of underlying causes of conflict.

2215a: [Senior Civil Servant, regional remit, white, male]. Some of the things we do now do actually make a difference.⁴² At least they keep the temperature down if that's the objective. [Hesitates] I am not saying it is...[Stops speaking, looks at interviewer]

2215b: [civil servant, regional remit, white, male]. We don't know enough as a Government, as a state sector whatever. We've got anecdotes when things blow up. We automatically go to the cops and say, "How does it look?" But youth in South Moor are saying it's not enough.

The latter speaker noted claims from young people, that merely monitoring tensions at the community level did not address the underlying causes of friction that *they* experienced within communities. In discussions with communities,⁴³ young people were repeatedly identified as one section of society that was on the margins of or even outside of community. Interestingly, the residents' views of young people contrasted with the more positive, if cautious, comments in the Cattle (2001) report, in which young people were seen as potential catalysts for cohesion.

Younger people were seen to be leading the process of transition and should be given every encouragement to develop it further. Many of those we spoke to preferred integration on many levels and those who had experienced schools with a mixture of faiths, races and cultures were very positive about that environment. However, we cannot say whether they were representative, nor whether others would wish to stress the need to protect cultural identity with an emphasis on separation. It would seem however that the Ouseley Team came to the same view:

'What was most inspiring was the great desire among younger people for better education, more social and cultural interaction and commitment to contribute and achieve personal success. Some young people have pleaded desperately for this to overcome the negativity that they feel is blighting their lives and

⁴² The POCC (Public Order Community Cohesion) funding from central government, to which the respondent referred, mainly financed work with young people, for example providing leisure activities in school holidays. This funding was the immediate response from government after the 2001 disturbances. The *aims and objectives* of the funding is unclear – see Chapter 2 pages 11-20 for discussion on inconsistencies in cohesion policy.

⁴³ I refer here to many people in the research area, and to representatives of communities further afield, including those I have encountered as a community activist, in areas across Britain.

leaves them ignorant of other cultures and lifestyles' (Cantle, 2001:31 point 5.7.2)

However, this research indicated that youth disorder and generational differences were not the only or main factors considered to be important by residents when considering cohesion. The following section analyses views and statements of the interviewees (whether residents, practitioners or policy makers) as they reflect on their lived experiences and interpretations of cohesion, beginning with an exploration of the setting for social cohesion: the 'community'.

Understandings of community.

As noted previously, Cohen (1998) points out that the concept of community is relational, fluid and multi-faceted. The relational aspects of the social construction of community are reflected in respondents' views on 'community', which are considered in more detail below.

Community: Place

For some residents, the boundaries of community were initially defined by the designated local political borders, regardless of any commonalities with those outside the demarcation line, and regardless of differences between those living within the boundaries, which was of interest given that fieldwork was conducted within the geographical boundaries of two adjacent political wards with similar socio-economic profiles. The 'community', in this instance, was classed broadly as all residents sharing the same geographical space:

JH: What does community mean to you?

2217 [retired business man, Asian]: Well my dear I am not a well educated man. But to me it's the people who live in the area. That is the community, I think.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] Because they are there in that place and the people around them then that is their community, that's where they all are. That's one thing they all have in common, they all live in the same place.

2220a: [resident, white, female] Briardene⁴⁴'s got their own community; Eddington has their own community.

These claims to *unity* based on territorial allegiance were also seen as a source of *conflict* between adjoining neighbourhoods. Any individual who strayed across the ward boundaries was recognised as an outsider, visibly identified as a 'stranger', primarily because they did not live in the area.

2220f: [resident, white, female] Hillside and Deneham⁴⁵'s always at each other's throats. They are always fighting. It's like, say a stranger goes into their part, it's like they stand out really.

Another resident also remarked, with some amusement, on the commonly held perception of the 'outsider' as any newcomer from outside the immediate neighbourhood.

JH: Who would not be part your community?

2217 [retired business man, Asian]: I'm living here in this same house, 25, 26 years. They [neighbours] know me, I know them. I believe, black, Jew, white or Asian, African, all of them, it is our community. If it was somebody come from Briardene, you know, they will say he came from down there. That is a visitor!⁴⁶
[Laughs]

⁴⁴ Briardene and Eddington are two adjoining political wards in South Moor. The majority of fieldwork was conducted in these two wards.

⁴⁵ Hillside and Deneham are two political wards next to Briardene and Eddington. All four wards have strong local identities linked to the geographical locations.

⁴⁶ This is reminiscent of Back's (1996:55) " 'Neighbourhood nationalism' that attempts to banish the racial referent and replace it with a simple commitment to a local territory". As later excerpts show, despite similar claims by a number of residents, the community was still sub-divided along racialised fault lines.

Being *known* within a specific location was an important component of 'community'. The women below discussed their feelings of loneliness, experienced when locating from one political ward to another. The distance moved was less than three miles, but they became strangers in a community of strangers and subsequently they returned to the small neighbouring area where they grew up.

2220e: [resident, white, female] I reckon, if you come back to your own you are welcomed with open arms, whereas if you go into strangers they ignore you.

2220f: [resident, white, female] If you go along there [to another area] and they don't like you, if you are not from them parts then you don't belong.

For other respondents also, identification with place was a significant determinant of community membership, but in the following examples, national (rather than local) origin and ethnicity became the primary signifier of community.

Community: National origin and ethnicity

Nationality and ethnicity marked the perimeters of both community enclosure and separation. Within a given area, distinctions were made between groups of residents on an assumption of national origin, with frequent references made during the research to asylum seekers.⁴⁷

2218a: [resident, white, male] Well there's lots of communities cos there's asylum seekers.

2218b: [resident, white, female] Well I know there's Kosovans⁴⁸ further down on the opposite side [of the street] from us.

⁴⁷ See Finney, 2004; and various papers on similar themes of attitudes in the UK towards asylum seekers and refugees at <http://www.icar.org.uk?lid+5019> accessed 16th March 2006.

⁴⁸ The term Kosovans and a number of variables on the word, was used frequently to as a generic term for asylum seekers and refugees of East European appearance.

For the speaker below, her country of origin and generational family links to that country conveyed inclusion in a community.

2225: [student, Iranian, female] Everyone who comes from my country or was born there or one of their parents was born there, they can be part of my community. In my mind, just I consider my country border. Everybody inside the border is in my community. Maybe they have something in common with other people but they would not be in my community.

Ethnicity and kinship were vital elements for the speaker below, and linked to the wider collective of Romani peoples. For this man, however, the country in which he was born was a place of danger, persecution and exclusion. His family history was one of political activism for the rights of Roma in Czechoslovakia, a struggle he continued on behalf of his community in Britain, where he eventually was accorded refugee status. He identified his community, therefore, as the Roma people, rather than a nationalist allegiance to his country of origin.

2231: [community activist, Rom, male] My community is from Romani people. I explain exactly. Romani people are Gypsies. Romani people in United Kingdom come from Czechoslovakia. Why Romani people coming from Czechoslovakia? ...Czech Roma come in from Czech republic because many racist violence. I want to speak about 36 racist murders from Roma community. This is Roma people killed by Nationalist Front. This is fascists. Another discrimination is from institutional racism and discrimination of Roma from Police department. My experience as well, from police people from police department, police from Home Office. From my country. Lots of problem for Gypsies in Czech Republic. Education as well. Education for Romani children is very, very terrible situation, because any children from Roma community are in education only for special school like disability children.

However, while in broad terms country of origin was cited as a signifier of community by most interviewees from black and other minority ethnic backgrounds,⁴⁹ it was noted that

⁴⁹ The majority of black and other minority interviewees who were born outside of Britain cited their country of origin. Most White interviewees cited their assumption about BME residents' country of origin as being outside of Britain, regardless of whether or not those individuals were born in Britain.

homogeneity could not be assumed within any given group sharing a common nationality or place of birth.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] I will give you an example of people here from Bangladesh. Though we will say there is the Bangladeshi community, this area, in a wider sense it is the Bangladeshi community. But they have their own sectors as well. Community they will say this is from Sitpur. Sitpur is a village in Sylhet. And then they will say, “She is from there, so therefore not their own community”, even sometimes we think “Oh they are all together”, but they are not. So this is how people see themselves. It is quite segregated. First I am a Bangladeshi, and then I am from which town and then I am from which village and even within the village I am from which corner of the village and which family. Lots of people even here, they will not have any contact. You will assume they go each other’s house. NO! Not always. No!

The presence of internally defined and enacted boundaries that are not necessarily apparent to people who are socially or physically from outside of any given community is a recurring theme. During two decades as a community activist and a community worker, I became aware of similar entrenched (yet invisible to the non-resident) divisions both locally and in communities elsewhere in Britain. In Mountburn⁵⁰, residents referred to the ‘North’ and ‘South’ end of the estate. Those in the ‘South’ often mentioned that they didn’t use the shops at the ‘North’ end of the estate and residents in the ‘North’ did not usually venture into the ‘South’. The distance involved was relatively small – it would take a moderately fit community worker no more than twenty minutes to walk from one end of the estate to the other. Although the estate was a flagship government initiative, with mixed tenure housing, the physical divide was not drawn on that basis. To me as a non-resident, there was no obvious physical or social marker to explain the differentiation, but for the residents, a significant partition existed. This is borne out by Seabrook (1984) in his study of housing policy and disadvantaged neighbourhoods:

The neighbourhoods were defined by the people who live there and have nothing to do with ward boundaries or parish limits or

⁵⁰ A housing estate in South Moor.

any other imposed administrative boundaries.⁵¹ People always know where their own neighbourhood ceases - at a main road, a canal, a row of shops, a park, a landmark. A neighbourhood is in an area where the majority of people know by sight most of those who live there and probably recognize everyone of their own age group: know all the significant buildings and the central focus of the area - shops, schools, libraries, children's playgrounds, clinics, surgeries, youth clubs, Bingo halls, pubs, or whatever (Seabrook, 1984:2-3).

A parallel situation existed in Hillside, where the majority of housing was local authority owned, with houses of a similar physical standard built on the steeply rising banks of the riverside. In the centre of the estate was the main road. This highway carried the bus route and for many years, on either side of the road, a variety of shops and community facilities were located, including two supermarkets, a butcher, a chemist, a post office, a bakery and a health centre. Residents in homes on both sides of the road accessed these centrally located amenities. There was, however, a divide greater than the width of a main road between people from the upper and lower parts of the estate- there was a social divide premised on a hierarchical assumption about residents on either side of the road.

Very broadly, people on the upper estate saw the people on the lower estate as more lawless, 'rougher' than themselves. Conversely, people from the lower estate viewed the upper estate as 'snobby'.⁵² These attitudes were usually expressed as sweeping generalisations until counteracted by actual contact. When upper and lower estate residents met because of a common cause, for example campaigning for traffic calming measures, there was usually an acceptance of individuals that transcended prevailing attitudes. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the persistence of these boundary markers. Not only do they exist physically and socially, but they also may be acted upon in a manner that may have observable, consequential outcomes, including segregation

⁵¹ This appears to contradict earlier data in this chapter which suggested that ward boundaries *were* significant indicators of community identity. This research found that the ward boundaries were one signifier of community, both internally, by residents and externally, by non-residents. Other more nuanced, internal boundaries were also present, as described throughout this thesis.

⁵² This has echoes of the 'order of ranking' referred to in Elias and Scotson's (1994) study.

and exclusion within geographically located communities. The impact and realism of these socially constructed boundaries was reinforced most powerfully for me through a personal experience.

After fourteen years of living in one house on a certain estate, I moved into a house four streets away, as a lone parent, with my children. Within weeks, my children were exposed to sustained racist abuse, which escalated from verbal abuse to threats, then from destruction of property to physical assaults, from many of the inter-related families, both children and adults, who lived in that street. After eighteen months of increasing fear and isolation, and repeated representations to the local authority, my family and I were rehoused in another house on the estate. At first the landlord, a regional housing association, was reluctant to offer me the tenancy. The property manager did not believe we would escape by moving to a house three streets away from where the abuse was taking place daily. Yet I was sure that the perpetrators would not pursue us because the new home was situated across the invisible boundary - the main road though the estate - and the upper and lower estates did not cross into each other's territory. A locally based Victim Support worker and a sympathetic, local council housing manager confirmed my understanding of the estate dynamics. I moved home and the racist attacks ceased.

Interpretations of, and responses to, spatial and metaphysical boundaries, at the sub-neighbourhood as well as at broader levels, are significant indicators of community, particularly relevant to the construction of the 'other'. As detailed in the following account, the influence of place on individuals and communities was perceived as powerful. The interviewees below suggested that people with similar lifestyles grouped together at a sub-neighbourhood level, and that moving home within a ward to a distinct sub-area could influence the behaviour of individuals.

2214b: [young resident, white, female] It's just like the way it is. Like I live on a field and my house is there [indicates location] and there's George Close there [indicates adjacent location in same political ward]. Now my streets are quite clean and respectable. Well, George Close, that's where you have got all the

smack heads, the drug dealers. All the hoisty⁵³ cars end up there and all the rest... We grew up with most of them that just moved there and when they move there they seem to cross over. We don't know how.

In this case, place of birth and family influence was seen as secondary to the negative impact of residence in a limited number of streets within an estate. The specific example below was given to illustrate further the dangers of place and association. Here, the violence experienced by the woman was thought to be closely associated with her 'choice' of place of residence. The 'community' with which the woman was now associated was linked to a negative life-style perceived as the norm for residents in that neighbourhood.

JH: Do you really think they live their lives differently there?

2214b: [young resident, white, female] Uh huh. Cos we knew a woman that we had known for years. She was a lovely woman, married to a [military] man and everything. She got divorced, she moved into George Close. Now she has all the young uns sitting in her house and everything. She's on the drink every night and stuff like that. But one time she was like me Mam you know what I mean?

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] She was part of the community. She moved to that community, she moved to that area, and then she's being like that *fitting in* [my italics] with her community obviously.

2214b: [young resident, white, female] Maybe if she had moved somewhere else, maybe if she had stayed on our side, she would still be coming to my house for a cup of coffee and then going home on a night time. But instead – she is buying a *crate* of Carling and then going home. And she's got faces on her, like I say, "Eeh, what have you done to your eye?" and she says, "Oh I was in a fight" And you feel like saying, "Well you were never like that". She just says, "Well I'm living a bit now."

The speakers above [2214a; 2214b] remarked with sadness on their perception that the woman had changed her persona in order to *fit in* with the 'new' community in which she

⁵³ Hoisty - stolen

now lived. Sennett (2004:225) also points to the inherent tensions of maintaining the presentation and performance of self in the context of community.

A person who holds fast to a set of beliefs despite conflicts with those around him has to think them more important than the values which bind groups together. Here it is inequalities of value which matter, and it is just such inequalities which give shape to character and social structure. On the street, that assertion of character translates into a problem of self-protection. This problem arises because of the street's very power of ritual performances of respect in concert with others, those body gestures, words, and acts which compose the "code of the street." The players are both brothers and threats to self-respect.

Here, Sennett (2004) indicates the centrality of conforming to the prevailing norms and the associated rituals which signify 'belonging' and collectivity. Resistance to or rebuttal of communal values is at once a threat to the cohesion of the 'community' *and* a source of potential danger to the individual who challenges the status quo. Displaying 'otherness', then, may be interpreted as a show of disrespect for the majority. Although the speakers [2214a; 2214b] ascribed the woman's changed behaviour primarily to her relocation to a different *geographical* site where the inhabitants (in their view) shared a certain lifestyle, it could be argued that the concept 'community' was premised as much on a *performance* of commonality as it was on *residence within* a communal location. In the following accounts, definitions of community move from a primary association with place to those with an emphasis on common bonds and communities of interest.

Community: Common bonds and communities of interest.

Many respondents defined community in terms other than association with a specific location or origin. Here, the primary criterion for assigning the status of 'community' was an assumption of collectivity among individuals who were linked by at least one common bond. These unifying factors varied, from kinship and friendship, to common goals, backgrounds or experiences.

2214b: [young resident, white, female] You can have people all over the place. You can have people in Broadmead [neighbouring town]. London. It's still part of the community because you all believe in the same thing. Like I have family all over. They are your community as well, your family. Just cos they are family doesn't mean they are not part of your community.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] To me, community is a group of people living together and also community could be on the basis of the race or on the basis of the culture, on the basis of different things...on the basis of the area where you live. *Or* on the basis of the area from where you come from.

2214b: [young resident, white, female] A community is your friends. That's what it is. Cos your community is who you hang round with, who you talk to, your friends. Who you bother with, who you can be bothered with, that's what your community is...Like I live in Millfield she [her friend, 2214a] is still in my community of friends and she lives in Pitbank. Yous are like my friends so you are my community and yous are in Hillside, you know what I mean?

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] And then we all get together in different places.

People who were brought together by potentially threatening circumstances also formed communities. Facing challenging circumstances that presented individual life-changing experiences could lead to persistent, supportive alliances.

2225: [student, Iranian, female] Basically, groups of people from the same aims or same background, they can create a structure of a community. For example... the patients, breast cancer patients, they have a community for instance.

JH: What does 'community' mean to you?

2218a: [resident, white, male] Neighbourly. At one time you know, the neighbours weren't close but they are now. Since [threat of demolition], people have been fighting for each other with that.

2218b: [resident, white, female] It said on the radio or the papers, neighbour against neighbour, [but] I've never met as many people since all of this happened [threat of demolition]. I've made so many friends.

2218a: [Nods] People passing, [in the street] just discussing it.

2218b: We go to all of the meetings don't we?

Again, the existence of distinct communities *within* communities was also noted, as cited below. In this instance, for example, two distinct groups (of many) were identified who inhabited the same neighbourhood. Groups of young men, whose involvement in the prevailing, negative street culture was typified by driving stolen cars at speed around the local neighbourhood, were contrasted with residents in a specific street on the estate, where many of the families were inter-related through marriage. The bonds that unified these groups were respectively, a form of kinship by association for the young men involved in the car racing gang, and kinship and proximity for the extended families. Interestingly, the two 'communities' were seen simultaneously as mutually exclusive yet simultaneously part of a larger community.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] The thing is there could be different types of communities in one area. In this area for example there could be ten different communities. I could name a few off straight away. There's the likes of all them little radgies⁵⁴, the flipping hoisty car-ers⁵⁵ and all that. That's their community. They've got one community whereas they wouldn't go and sit in Kelvin Avenue, that's another community, cos they are all family [related] there. That doesn't mean they are not part of your 'community'.

Membership of communities of interest, that is communities formed independently of familial or geographical links, may be closed as with the young men who raced stolen cars, or open to wider participation, as with the residents facing rapid change in the social and physical infrastructures of their neighbourhood. Importantly, community does not

⁵⁴ Radgies – young men who exhibit persistent anti-social behaviour

⁵⁵ Hoisty car-ers - 'Joy'riders or TWOC-ers [young men in stolen cars, Taken Without the Owner's Consent]

have to be a static entity; it is, rather, a multifaceted concept, as illustrated by the student below. Here, the boundaries of 'community' were fluid, neither confined to a specific place nor to a specific group of people. This inclusivity, and the 'porous borders' were attributed in part to communication and receptiveness to change and new experiences. The 'community' comprised a multi-stranded framework of connections, based variously on family, friendship, shared geographical location, country of origin, and shared faith beliefs and practices that transcended physical borders.

2224: [student, social group convener, Iranian, male] [Laughs] I don't know how I can describe myself or our community; it is a little bit hard...because we [Iranian students] have a lot of friends in the [wider] community. So we have English friends; we have other Muslim friends in the community. Also one year ago we attended in the church to see how they pray, there were black people, some of them living in [housing association homes], some of them not. Maybe I can say that the Iranian community, we integrated with the neighbours in [housing association homes] so we are living there. However we do have some other members who are outside the geographical location where we are living at the moment but most of us are in the same geographical situation and maybe because we see each other more, that's the point. But in other cases when we do some celebration, for example 100 families are gathered together so we are a very large community, you know.

Community, then, may be seen as multi-layered and shifting: the boundaries are dependent on the context of any given social interaction. For the majority of respondents in this research, community was synonymous with *sharing* - sharing location, origins, aims, and experiences. It could, therefore, be argued that a community exists primarily in the assumptions of common links, between those we identify as 'like us' and those we claim to be 'like each other'. In that sense, community is an arbitrary notion, open to negotiation and interpretation by the social actors involved. As such, it is a fragile concept, whose enactment depends on a consensus on the parameters of commonality, i.e. who is 'in' and who is 'out' and why this is so (Anderson, 1983; Elias et al, 1994).

[N]ot all boundaries, and not all the components of any boundary, are...objectively apparent. They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so,

the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by the people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side (Cohen, 1998: 12).

This suggests that the nominal definitions of community, mostly posited as positive collectives (at least by 'insiders' pronouncing on 'insiders') may actually mask more fragmented relationships.

2222: [community worker, Asian issues worker, Asian, female] I always challenge that notion of the community anyway...Just because there's people from a particular background or from a particular country or particular religion, it doesn't necessarily make them a cohesive community...What you get is, quite often, a whole set of individuals scattered here and there...There is no notion of community - there might be some binding forces in terms of religion, but even then, people have such a wide range in perspective of what religion is, ..so it isn't cohesive. Religion, as belief or that force which you would think would bring people together, isn't always cohesive because...within my own family, through my own experience, I don't think you'll get two people who'll have the same view about religion.

The dynamic nature of community, therefore, is pivotal to this thesis. It is the interplay of various manifestations and constructions of community that informs any consideration of community cohesion, because it delineates both persistent and shifting allegiances; it highlights perceptions of similarity and difference. This is particularly evident where communities meet and overlap, *wherever and whenever the boundaries are drawn*. The following section considers some these demarcation lines in more detail.

Boundaries of community: 'race'

The main distinguishing fault line or signifier of difference referred to repeatedly within communities was that of 'race'. It became evident that 'race', or ethnic heritage, as a determining factor of difference and discrimination, remained a persistent phenomenon to

which people referred when describing or discussing relationships between groups in communities, indicating a fault line that may also signal a lack of cohesion.

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] I think you must feel as if you are part of a community. That is first. If you are not a part of the community, if you are a different colour, a different race or whatever, I think sometime that can be difficult.

2219: [resident, white, male] My block where I live, it's cut in half, we have a white majority up the street and we have a coloured majority down the street. It's like only one family of coloured on either end, but I am very friendly with the top half one and fell out with the bottom one. And the residents we fell out with, the top half of the residents has fell out with them as well.

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] That [racial harassment] still goes on, so there is interaction between the two communities [black and white] but it is as a perpetrator and as a victim, again.

The categorisation of residents by the criterion of 'race' in this research was, with few exceptions, a primary distinction made by white residents about black and minority ethnic residents. The normative state of whiteness, and resulting claims of allegiance, were rarely discussed or challenged. The exceptions to this were the interviews with respondents 2214a, a young woman of dual heritage and 2214b, a young white woman. Both were aged 19 and were some of the youngest people interviewed. Throughout their interview, they were clear that their concept of community was not premised on 'race', but was multi-dimensional.⁵⁶ In their following reactions to domestic violence in a public place, their responses pointed an underlying sense of justice that transcended

⁵⁶ See for example their comments on community as both location and common bonds, page 83. Throughout the interview, they made repeated reference to their sense of self and their position in relation to the 'community', as in the excerpt above. Their analysis was that they were simultaneously both within and without the community.

limiting constructs of community based on notions of familiarity or belonging, or of 'race' or gender.

2214a: You see if I knew them or not – like I don't belong to any part of any community I believe but if I seen someone whether I knew their faces whether I didn't, if I thought that someone was bring threatened and they couldn't help themselves, then I would, because me being the person I am, I would say something. Just to make that person make a little bit more at ease and if they needed help they could say. If they looked like they needed help and they couldn't say then me and me bigmouth I would probably go and put me foot in it and go and approach them. But just so that person who is a feeling a little bit threatened feels at ease whoever they are whether I knew them or didn't.

2214b: You do because at the end of the day, if you are arguing I wouldn't care if someone was black or white if they stepped in for me. Just because they were black I wouldn't say, "Don't step in for me. Do you know what I mean? So I hope if I stepped in for another girl that is black she wouldn't say, "Don't step in for me because you are white". It's about look out for someone who is like your own age or a female or even a male. It doesn't have to be just backing a woman.

This egalitarian stance was not matched by many of the adult respondents. It was evident that, for most of the adult respondents interviewed, the racialised community was not a neutral concept but rather was imbued with assumptions of power, hierarchy and superiority, perceptions of danger and notions of injustice. This is illustrated by the following exchange.

JH: Who do you think belongs to your community? [Stress no right or wrong answers]

2219: [resident, activist, white, male] Well I would like to think we – we belong first as we are the first people who have been there.

At this point, the interviewee gestured to me, then to himself to indicate that I was included in his community. I attempted to clarify the grounds on which I was being included. At first [2219] picked up on the phrase 'long term', referring to differential status according to period of residence in the locale, but he returned again to phenotypes.

JH: Is that white people or [shrugs] long term residents?

2219: I think the long term residents have a right to be there first and then us next and then - and then obviously the coloured people afterwards because we are letting them into the country. I mean we have about –what, 4, 5 nationalities in the country?

Again including me in the ‘we’, he positioned white people as benefactors who were allowing people who were not ‘white’ to enter from abroad, assuming that to be black or Asian was not synonymous with being British born. He expanded on his perception of the extent of such immigration, exhibiting some incredulity at the range of diversity. When asked to recount views encountered other than his own, he again spoke from a ‘white’ standpoint to underline the supposition that to be ‘non-white’ was to be outside the community, to be cast as a racialised ‘other’ who was a trouble maker and abuser of hospitality.

JH: How do you think other people see what’s going on? How would they see the community, who belongs and who is outside of it?

2219: Well all they think is they should be packed off to Pakistan. Packed off to Pakistan. That’s the majority I would say. “They should send them back! Why should we put up with them?”

However, the demarcation of community (and notions of belonging and identity) according to national origins and ethnicity was not restricted to a ‘simple’ black /white dynamic although this was the community relationship most frequently cited by non-black/non-Asian residents and by policy shapers and makers. All interviewees from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities had a more complex analysis of or a wider ‘radar’ for potential divisions and differences between residents in their local area than the usual arbitrary, binary distinction of ‘colour’. The consensus amongst BME respondents was that there was a degree of separation between many diverse groups within communities, on grounds of national origin or affiliation. Some saw this as a result of housing policy and housing allocation, including dispersal of asylum seekers, which led to long-term separation:

2217: [retired business man, Asian] In this area, there some Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi. And there are some asylum seekers. And what I think they should be mixed you know. As an example, some places they put the Pakistani you know, other Indian and sometime it creates problem. And moreover, the person, new generation coming, they don't know what the other person is. Because if [they] mixed, they [would] know each other.

2230: [resident, taxi driver, Asian, male] There are a lot of diverse people here now...They are from all over. It's nice and strong in one sense. I love it where people are [of] different races can get on but they are not really mixing here yet, because the government has plopped them up in the poorest part of town and left them there. And the poor people there already are thinking we don't need any more. And basically the government themselves are building up the hatred between these people.

Others talked about enduring divisions between communities that were historically grounded, and linked with contemporary, international, political events:

1109: [community worker, centre manager, Asian, male] Victimising someone they think they are better than, it's carrying the chain on. I think in the Asian community the Sikhs think they are better than the Pakistanis, The Pakistanis think they are better than the Bengalis, then there's a chain as well that goes down [laughs]. But I don't know if that's something that's been learned or if it's from all the trouble back home, there's all the fighting, but it all comes down to the British Empire, splitting things, amalgamating things when they left and stuff. A lot of the hatred is still there amongst the older community...There's a lot of in-fighting, but when it comes down to being racist, this country, when you look at the balance of power, it's in the hands of the white people.

2222: [community worker, Asian issues worker, Asian, female] Tensions arise because people have not divorced what's happening in their country of origin, because they still have families there, they still have relatives there, they have most of their families there, their families are affected by the politics, therefore they're affected by those politics.

Familial connections were also important in the current local setting, at a sub-neighbourhood level, but as noted previously, it could not be assumed that living in close proximity to residents sharing the same national or cultural background was a safeguard against isolation or exclusion. Concerns were expressed about professionals working within communities who did little to challenge such divisions, indicating that a lack of cohesion was not confined to community relations between residents.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] People get on their high horse and work with the people they want to work with because it's easier, like the one's who respect our values and it's easy to do that but they are the one's we don't need to work with because you know they are there. The one's we do need to work with are the one's that maybe have difficulties around things.

2222: [community worker, Asian issues worker, Asian, female] The last time there were major tensions between India and Pakistan... I remember going into projects [working with BME women] and you could hear the pin drop, absolutely, in groups which had women, Muslim women and the Hindu and Sikh women, and I said to the workers, "Why the hell aren't you addressing this? You should be talking to the women. You should be opening it up to the groups. Why is this so uncomfortable for you to address?" and the workers weren't interested in it!

The tensions resulting from international events were also raised in discussions on Chapter 5, where the issues are explored in more detail.

Boundaries of community: gender

References to the fault line of gender were less overt and less frequent compared to the 'racialised' version of social interactions, suggesting that gender relations between men and women were not as immediate a concern for comment or note for the people interviewed. This may be because gender was not perceived as problematic in discussions on social cohesion. It was as if gender or at least gender dynamics had

become invisible in this context. However, the position of women within communities, as arbiters of internal cohesion and guardians of a sense of community and social history, was raised repeatedly during the research.⁵⁷ The following two contributions highlight an enduring tension in relation to this role:

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] The women do speak to each other, will support each other...They know you've been through it [personal troubles] cos "I've been through it"...I know my Mum's saying, "Oh so and so has had a bereavement" and they'll talk about it but not there [in corner shop] because you're not supposed to talk about these things in public... And yet, all other people can see is "Oh God all those bloody Aunties all they do is shout and scream at each other" And "They don't know what they want" and "They gossip" But they'll [older women] remember when they came here, whose kids they were because you were all in each other's houses, and you would all get fed and there was all that community.

2229: [community arts developer, white, female] Something that came out in young Asian women and young white women, they police each other big style. Whether it's relationships, sex, whatever, they police each other big style.

While the former interviewee focused on women as providers of emotional support and guardians of social history, the latter talked about a socially controlling, inhibitive aspect of women's relationships with each other. References to opposing perceptions of women's roles within communities were to re-emerge in discussions throughout the research, signalling the centrality of women in the 'maintenance' of community relationships, whether positive or negative, through gendered networks. Male dominated networks were also raised as powerful agents of social control within communities and institutions, with far reaching effects for many communities, in respect of resources and decision-making.

⁵⁷ See for example McClintock, 1993; Yuval-Davis, 1989 on the centrality of gender relations in the construction and guardianship of community and culture. The role of women as cast as the 'border guards' of community is raised again in Chapter 7.

2222: [community worker, Asian issues worker, Asian] In South Moor, there were men, who were figures within South Moor...so-called representatives who were doing favours. And they ask for favours back, I actually saw them holding people back to favours, ... but... they don't do any service to the community I think. They put the block on services being developed, in terms of people going mainstream. And if there were services developed, people wouldn't have been in that position where they're indebted to somebody. It's a favour, and in return, they have to do so many things for that individual.

2211: [school governor, health policy officer, Asian, female] The children are thriving on things like drama and violin lessons, art classes. They are in competitions galore; they are always in the press. But it is something the Muslim leaders feel very unhappy about because those kinds of activities are not seen as respectable for children and for me they are at the heart of learning for children. It is a game! It is a complete game! It is like I scratch your back, you scratch mine and we will take care of each other. Ostensibly, the Bangladeshi and Punjabi speaking communities are united but actually when you get them alone or individually they slag off the other groups like nobody's business. It's horrific and it's like kindergarten behaviour and it's played out in the community in terms of funding, in terms of how community representatives are picked. It's played out in who gives support to what group.

Subsequent chapters will consider the evidence of gendered expectations and roles in responses to domestic and racial violence. The following section highlights some of the prevalent racialised and gendered issues commonly raised within the research area and beyond when residents discussed their views on asylum seekers and refugees, illustrating the boundaries of community where race and gender intersect.

Boundaries of community: intersection of 'race' and gender.

During the course of the research, it was evident that some residents were persistently seen as being outside of the community. Despite their disparate backgrounds, asylum

seekers and refugees⁵⁸ were often seen as a single group who remained separate from the established communities:

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] It's the newcomer who is always seen as the outsider, and the newcomers are still arriving under the National Asylum Seekers Dispersal programme.

JH: Do you think they [asylum seekers] are seen as part of the community or separate?

2218b: [resident, white, female] Well if *they* [asylum seekers] *were more inclined to mix* [my italics]. I don't think they are very keen on mixing are they?

JH: Why do you think that is?

2218b: [resident, white, female] I've no idea. I think they just want their own little ways.

2218a: [resident, white, male] It could be the language as well.

2218b: [resident, white, female] That doesn't help [no apparent animosity].

JH: Do you think asylum seekers become part of the community?

2220: [resident, white, female] [all]: Na Na Na.

2220c: [resident, white, female] They are sat there on their own.

JH: Right. Why do you think that is?

2220a: [resident, white, female] Some of the people don't accept them.

2220d: [resident, white, female] Bad vibes as well, because sometimes one of them kind does something and it gets round and then they think "Oh well they are all like that."

⁵⁸ "In the UK, an asylum seeker means someone who has made a formal application for asylum, and are [sic] awaiting a decision about their status. If their application is accepted they become a refugee." Fuller explanations of terms relating to asylum and refuge are to be found at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/A2179884> accessed 1 March 2006. Most frequently there appeared to be no awareness by respondents of the distinction in legal status between asylum seekers and refugees.

The notion of the ‘dangerous stranger’ was particularly powerful when residents gave accounts of perceptions and incidents involving male asylum seekers /refugees and white women. There were frequent, open references to the men as sexual predators, targeting women of all ages, with more oblique suggestions of children being at risk of unsavoury attention:⁵⁹

2220d: [resident, white, female] The kids along my way, they see asylum seekers and they say “Oh, we have to stay away from them”. We’ve got to ... say, “Well they are just normal people you know” Kids from 8 years old having opinions like that?

2220f: [resident, white, female] Some of them [asylum seekers/refugees] have sick minds sort of thing, though.

2220c: [resident, white, female] Here man, all the kids are going [clicks fingers, talks animatedly] “Here man they are going to pinch all the young lasses and get married so they can stay in the country” That’s what it was all about when they first came. That’s why they got all the abuse when they first came. Then you have people saying, “They shouldn’t have had the men over here, they should have had the women and children because the men should have been over there fighting”, you know, like helping.

2220a: [resident, white, female] They should have brought the woman and children. I mean I can’t see why some of them haven’t sent back for them?

2220d: [resident, white, female] But the woman and children won’t fend for themselves, would they if they come with the family?

That said, relationships between recently arrived asylum seekers and longer term communities were not always recalled in such a negative manner.

The symbolism of family and neighbours – redefining the boundaries

There were some claims that asylum seeker families were viewed more positively than the previous comments [2220all] might suggest, and that *families* were ‘included’ as part

⁵⁹ See also chapter 5 on Racial Violence and chapter 7 on Intersections of Race and Gender for further references to asylum seekers being cast as deviant ‘others’.

of the community. In the following account, long term residents responded to the plight of newly arrived neighbours who were the victims of a notorious, unscrupulous, local landlord. Once alerted to the unsuitable and sparse provision, the residents alerted the local councillor and shared their own belongings with the family. The councillor subsequently challenged the landlord, despite intimidation and physical risk to herself, and successfully obtained from him adequate provision of furniture and fittings for the family.

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] But I must say, if we've got a family [of asylum seekers], it doesn't matter where they are from, that family is usually accepted. If you've got a family, you are fine... you'll find you are welcomed with open arms... [For example] there had been a family, it was father and daughter... And the landlord had actually put these in [to rented property] and they couldn't speak English at all. They had just landed [arrived]. They [asylum seekers] had been told when they moved in, "This was it. That's what you are getting." All he [landlord] had gotten them was a double bed. Now this was a father and daughter, right... So they [concerned local residents] rang me up and said, "What can we do? They've got no cooking facilities. They've got no blankets or anything. Anything at all." And I must say the community came with blankets, they came with food. They actually all pulled together and brought things, so the house was all done ... The double bed was taken out, there were single beds put in [by landlord]. Brand new everything.

Again, another woman had befriended a family who had recently arrived in the area, and who eventually were granted refugee status. She talked about them warmly, and saw them as part of her community. Over time, the two families developed a mutually supportive relationship, which she attributed to the father of the family being sociable.

JH: So why did you first help...?

2216: [community activist, woman, white] [interrupts, warming to theme] Because he's a neighbour. [Said matter of fact. i.e. how else should it be?] Because he's a neighbour.

JH: So why is he your neighbour? Do you feel like he belongs to your community? Would you see him as part of your community?

2216: [community activist, woman, white] Yes! Yes, for the simple reason is, he's trying to blend in with the community. He's not trying to be separate.

Although the speaker [2216] states that her neighbour was 'trying to blend in' and was 'not trying to be separate', this did not include or 'necessitate' the man in question turning his back on his own cultural or political heritage. He was openly very active politically within and on behalf of his own ethnic community. Within her statement was no apparent call for assimilation from the long term white resident to the newcomer. Rather their relationship was built on mutual trust and reciprocity. Both these examples [1103a; 2216] represented a commonly expressed view of the high value placed on notions of family and neighbours as positive components of community, above any construct of difference premised on ethnicity. However, care and inclusion by the wider community was not always present on that basis, as illustrated by the story below:

1110: [health policy officer, Asian, female] We have had cases where people - there is a woman with 5 children a couple of weeks ago. She is a refugee and she has vouchers and she spent the vouchers on jumpers and socks and stuff for the children - it was freezing - and she thought she needed to prioritise that because her little girl was going to school in slippers and she was being ridiculed and she was enueretic and all sorts of health problem and the house was damp so her mother's priority was warmth. And there was no food and there was no milk for the baby and so for three days this family just kept themselves completely isolated. They couldn't talk to their neighbours, couldn't talk to anybody else until [health visitor] did a home visit once and found out. And it was heartbreaking. We managed to contact Social Services and the refugee unit in South Side and they managed to sort out food and milk and everything straight away but that was just one isolated example. There are many, many families living in vacuums surrounded by regeneration and relative community engagement resources and they cannot open the door and say, "Look I don't have any food" or "Look, I don't have a telephone; I don't want to report this; I don't want to make myself visible," and it's 2001, and there are groups, there are people, there are humans in this city where we live that are so incredibly vulnerable that they can't even articulate their experiences and I find it really hard to even talk about it without getting upset sometimes because you see these people and you

meet with them and you think, “I am a Muslim, they are Muslim”.

When I heard this account of a mother, so isolated from formal and informal support networks, that despite her best efforts she was unable to feed herself and her children, I was, as perhaps most people would be, personally distressed. For me, the empathetic link was primarily as a mother myself, trying to imagine the woman’s circumstances, and those of her children, in relation to my own family. Secondly, on a political level, the failure of statutory services and government policy to meet, in this case, the most basic of human needs, for warmth and food, was reprehensible. For the speaker [1110], the context of such poverty, juxtaposed with high profile, local and regional regeneration initiatives, only served to sharpen the sense of injustice. Importantly, she identified her allegiance with the woman and with others in severely disadvantaged positions, whom she met in her work, on the basis that they were members of her own faith community.

Our responses, though similar in terms of compassion, were premised on different grounds. It could be argued that we reacted as individuals, based on our own perceptions of self and identity, and projected these differing commonalities on to the woman in question. It certainly hints at a process at the heart of cohesion, that of identifying common bonds with people who are not necessarily part of a daily interaction but with whom there is, nevertheless a meaningful, symbolic connection. Yet in doing so, the speaker [1110] and I had constructed contrasting persona for *ourselves*. In other words, we drew our differing reservoirs of social and cultural capital to form an alliance of sorts. The common bond that linked *us* was a shared sense of injustice and a common view of the basic entitlements that should be afforded a human being. This sentiment, although not acted on jointly in this instance, was nevertheless significant in that it represented a source of bonding that *potentially* could be utilised in future. In one sense, our responses were those of individuals, but the collective significance was the common values, ‘dressed up’ in terms of difference. This suggested an inherent tension within the

concept of the cohesive community, which has echoes with recent critiques of multiculturalism.⁶⁰ How can a common vision be compatible with a sense of diversity and difference, *if the differences are most clearly 'in view' and those differences are signifiers of community boundaries? Do members of communities have to abandon their identities in order to achieve some as yet undefined, general commonality? Do the range of differences within communities, or even paradoxically, the call for a common vision, signify the end of 'community' itself?*

In the following section I examine this tension further, drawing on data reflecting concerns about the isolation of individuals and groups, which was cited in more general terms as indicative of the fragmentation of communities.

Fragmentation of Communities?

The statement below, by Hirschfield and Bowers (1997), claims that neighbourhoods with high levels of social networking linked with a shared 'community spirit' may be said to be cohesive. Conversely, an absence of those factors is indicative of an area in distress, where residents do not share common bonds or aspirations.

Socially cohesive areas can be defined as areas with relatively high levels of interaction between residents and a strong sense of community. By contrast, areas lacking in cohesion, or socially disorganised or disintegrated areas, do not have such well defined social networks and it is often the case that the residents of these areas share very few common interests (Hirschfield and Bowers, 1997:1276).

At first this perception may appear to be echoed by the speakers below.

⁶⁰ Recent key debates on multiculturalism, including an article by Modood (2005), can be found at <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article.jsp?id=2&debateId=124&articleId=2879> accessed 20th March 2006.

2228b: [resident, white, female]. Communication...Now you have lost a lot of that over the years. I think it's because a lot of people have separated themselves from different people. Instead of communicating all together, they have separated themselves.

2217: [retired, resident, Asian, male] I don't know what that is, but our own people [Sikh community] you know, some people they can't get mixed up. They don't mix too much. I think it is a lack of communication. And the thinking is different you know.

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male] We've had community here before... It used to be one big community cos I have been here for a long time, for twenty-five years. And there was a community and a community spirit as well but unfortunately that's died off over the years. For example take New Year. Everybody used to knock on everybody's door cos they knew each other but that doesn't happen any more. but what's happened is that people are staying here for long periods of time, say for 6 months and then they are going somewhere else, so there is no community here now for that reason. At one time everybody knew everybody in the area and there was a community feeling in the area but since everybody is just coming and going now there is no community...I think it's asylum seekers who are moving in to the area and other people are moving out now. [Laughs slightly]

2220a: [resident, white, female] It's the atmosphere. You cannot walk out of your door and just say "hello" but in Hillside you could. In Hillside you seen everybody and you could.

2220c: [resident, white, female] That's shite. Everybody's canny there. [adjoining estate]

2220a: [resident, white, female] Ah Nanna, half the people there are dead snotty. The woman next door knows I've just moved. She comes out of her passage, she walks past you. You can guarantee you walk back in the hoose and she's in her hoose at her curtains nebbing⁶¹ at you.

2220c: [resident, white, female] Well you should say, "Lovely day." [all laugh]

⁶¹ 'nebbing' - being nosy, intrusively inquisitive

In each case above, the absence of familiarity was the primary factor fuelling the impression of loss of community, while knowing people and being known was central to a sense of a cohesive community. On the surface, these expressions of 'community lost' may appear to concur with predictions of the fragmentation of society in the post-modern world (Nancy, 1991). All the speakers above appear to note the lack of communication of others, either at a personal or communal level. The first three speakers talk in general terms about a less communicative society than experienced previously, where difference is more pronounced and is a barrier to dialogue and interaction. Yet these three residents were all actively involved in long term, collective action in the locality; with young people, with residents' associations and with a traders' association respectively.

JH: So what community things are you involved in?

2228b: [resident, white, female]. Football, different other sports, likes of the [community project] office, Jill [community worker] knows me. The two lads in there, [youth workers] Rosie [neighbourhood assistant]. I am still involved.

2217: [retired, resident, Asian, male] I would say [this is] mixed communities you know. We go to the meeting. Everybody [is] there, I met you there, everybody there. At the same place I saw you, in the morning there was a meeting for the Age Concern. You know, that exists, the people who live around, all colour creed, all religion, is what I think is a community.

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male] We set up the South Side Asian Traders Association. That was set up because of the racial harassment that a lot of the shopkeepers were getting in the area and we provide, we help people make then aware of what grants are available for security, such as CCTV systems, security grills and things like that. So we managed to have ten projects, finished now and we hope to have another ten on the way. That's been going three years now.

This suggests that they had a commitment to the continued existence of the concept of community; they themselves communicated with others in the locality through actions that transcended difference, separation and individualism. Even in the case of the young

woman who felt lonely and excluded, the mood was lightened by her Grandmother telling her she should initiate contact, rather than remain passively (and unhappily) as an 'outsider'. This commitment to perpetuating 'community' would suggest that there is an abiding perception that community is a positive concept to which everyone should aspire. The literature on social capital relies in part on the presence of social networks as indicators of levels of cohesion (see Granovetter, 1982; Putnam, 2000). The lack of *active* social networks does not necessarily mean that there is not a strong *sense* of community, just as expressions of the decline of community may disguise acts that specifically encourage cohesion.

I would argue, then, that the statement by Hirschfield and Bowers (1997) is too simplistic in that it appears to see social cohesion as a semi-static state, identifiable in the 'present', in the 'here and now', and mainly based on the claim to evidence of extensive social networks among like-minded residents. The statements above from interviewees begin to hint that cohesion and a strong sense of community cannot be restricted to observable contact rates or singularly positive notions of community. Given the state of flux in any social construction of community, it cannot be assumed that any given area is constantly cohesive, or that cohesion will be experienced similarly by all residents in that neighbourhood, regardless of recorded levels of networking or reifying community.

In this research, the concept of community was envisaged, observed and analysed by interviewees based on complex reflections on community past, present and future and was open to influence by external events. Moreover, at times, some respondents' expressed views on community appeared contradictory when compared with their comments on 'outsiders', indicating that a "strong sense of community" was not necessarily inclusive of all residents in any given area. The relationship of race and gender to the boundaries of cohesion has been outlined above. As this research progressed, three further key, overlapping factors emerged that were crucial concepts involved in the construction and enactment of community, namely justice, reciprocity and trust.

Justice, Reciprocity and Trust

Many of the interviewees revealed a strong sense of justice, that is to say, 'fairness', when talking about community and cohesion. This was raised occasionally in relation to reciprocal arrangements of support between families or altruistic gestures towards families in need that transcended any potentially racialised or gendered divisions within communities. In the example below, the individuals involved were active within their own communities, campaigning for better resources, and opportunities; however it was their day to day interaction as neighbours that fostered their relationship, based on trust and mutual respect.

2216: [community activist, woman, white] What happened was, we were moving. I'd been in the flat next door. And I got the house, cos I've got me daughter and granddaughter living there and the flat was too small, cos it's only a two bedroom flat... And what he did is, [name] and one of the other lads in the Czech community, come across and helped us to shift the furniture next door. Now, mainly if we want any support in anything he would be there for us. There was once over we lend him some money, that shows you how much I trust him. Mind some of the others I wouldn't but I would [name]. And they come back and they give me a lovely ornament, for doing it.

This positive relationship, however, appeared to be an exception to the prevailing notions of fairness in relation to newcomers in the community. A persistent expression of concern raised by others in the area centred on a perceived lack of justice, not only in terms of allocation of resources, but also about expectations placed on communities by government policies [see 1103a below]. Raised by residents of all backgrounds, injustice was frequently underscored by the existing fault line of 'race'. These racialised divisions presented as resentment about perceived unequal allocation of resources; as a sense of injustice about perceived preferential treatment of groups other than the one with which they most identified; and as anger about a lack of reciprocity in community relationships.

In one neighbourhood, a number of respondents, independently of each other, talked about long term tensions between two closely situated community projects. The conversations revealed deeper, existing divisions of racialised mistrust within society more generally, that were exemplified by the on-going situation. There was evidence of anger at a lack of reciprocity, which was seen as disrespectful and/or racially motivated.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] You need to be able to speak – at the moment what seems to happen is that people are frightened to say anything, you are frightened to say anything against an Asian family because if you say that, you're racist. And that's not the way people's coming from sometimes.

JH: Can you think of an example of that?

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] Right. An example of that is the [Community Centre B]. It seems as if we criticise the [Community Centre B] in any shape or form...[Pauses] We agree that there should be a place for the Asian community BUT they have to understand that there has to be a place where everybody out of [i.e. in] the community should have a place where they can go to. Because there was big shock when we found out that they had gotten money to put up [Community Centre B]. Nobody disagreed that they shouldn't have but what we should be saying is that they should understand that they have business people to help them do this we haven't had this. We seem to be fighting on two sides that we can't get money because we haven't had the experience. When we asked them for help, we're not getting any help. It's the same with the [Housing] office up the top. We asked them to come to our meeting of the [Residents' Association].... [They said] "We have nothing to do with Eddington". But as soon as we wanted to put in for things, "You've got to consult us. We are part of yous" And we said "NO."

2213: [community worker, white, female] When we had [Centre A] down there, we had black residents support groups based in there, [but] as soon as they got their own project which is [Community Centre B] there's no joined up working now. So really it divided. It's divisive really because everyone looks to [Community Centre B] for anything to do with the black community and it's wrong. It's wrong...What we hope is, is this [Community Centre A] is kept up as a community centre, it's for *everyone*, BUT the language problem is *huge*, it really is quite

big. But it's almost the feeling of being welcomed into somewhere. And if they wanted to come in, everyone is welcome to come in...

JH: So what is the relationship now between this project [A] and [Centre B]?

2213: [community worker, white, female] Very, very loose links. We send Eddington Residents' Association minutes and steering group minutes to [Centre B] after every meeting. Now we don't get anything back from them [long pause as she thinks]. When the housing project [working with black and minority ethnic communities] was there [in same area] a colleague wrote something about involving the black communities, and [Centre A] got this terrible letter saying we weren't doing any work with the black community so why were we trying to get money on the back of the black community?

The above situation had been simmering for some years, since community centre B was funded. Some of the tensions identified by various players involved included the view from black workers that the priorities, concerns and work of BME communities were marginalized by white workers (often employed by the local authority). This was resented as disrespectful and indicative of entrenched devaluing of BME communities, amounting to institutional racism. The situation was compounded when white workers contacted projects working with BME residents in order to claim consultation had taken place, in order to legitimise plans by white residents/ council officials.⁶²

Some white residents and workers held the view their projects were disadvantaged by funding being allocated to projects perceived in the neighbourhood as for BME residents only. They were concerned that they were being judged unfairly as racist when trying to discuss their position. Each group perceived the other group as unfairly advantaged by funders and officials because of preferential treatment based on 'racial' background. Both groups claimed to be open to anyone of any background in the community, but they perceived the other as either white or black. Both expressed resentment that the other group did not communicate or co-operate with them. The perceived injustices had

⁶² See Defensive Cohesion below, page 122.

become racialised and were seen as representative of similar tensions present more widely in the neighbourhood. Potentially, the ongoing situation was a barrier to social cohesion in the local area.

The above circumstances were played out mainly amongst long term residents. This research also found that a particularly keen sense of injustice came into force when discussing the relationship between established communities and more recently arrived residents. As noted previously, 'community' was premised on notions of connections with family and friends and with an attachment to place, factors, which, it may be assumed, are not present for most newcomers. This immediately singles out the recent incomer in any given area as different, as disconnected from the main body of the community and therefore not automatically entitled to the benefits of belonging. In the case of asylum seekers in the research area, who arrived under the Government dispersal system, distinct boundaries of community constructed by the settled communities were bolstered by a sense of injustice that existing long term suffering had remained unacknowledged by central government. The barriers towards newcomers were compounded by strong feelings of resentment at the expectation of welcome and perhaps support to be extended by existing residents.

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] I still see it from two sides. I still see it from our community, the actual Eddington community, I'm thinking of. Eddington is a community, as is Hillside and Briardene, that's going through a lot of changes, a lot of stress an lot of upheaval and we get, you know, asylum seekers, hoyed⁶³ into an area that's going through tremendous change and difficulties. And I don't think the government or anybody else has thought it through. And I think what they've done is made our situation worse. I mean people actually feel as if they have been *invaded* and they are thinking, "We're going through so much stress ourselves and we're expected to accept all this and be lovey-dovey with everybody". So I can see where they are coming from. I think places like the South Side⁶⁴ are given a shitty deal, because the more they give, the more *shite*

⁶³ "hoyed" – thrown, forced

⁶⁴ South Side – a number of adjoining political wards including Eddington, Briardene and Hillside.

they get hoyed at them. You know, if anybody needs to go anywhere, its got to be an area like South Side that's got huge problems to start with.

1103b: [councillor, resident, white, male] It's like a *dumping* ground, isn't it?

1103a: These people [long term residents] are supposed to help or it's "Oh no"? These people find it hard to get by day to day. And that really angers me and frustrates me and I know the pressures these people are under and I'm thinking they're [government] giving them [residents] more pressures. And these people are holding the olive branch out and they are still getting shit on.

The language used, which included the terms 'dumping', 'shite' and 'invaded', at first suggested that asylum seekers were constructed as an overwhelming, contaminating presence. However, the discussion above [1103a; 1103b] is also reminiscent of Derrida's (1994; 2000) writing on hospitality.⁶⁵ In some measure, the sense of injustice described above was premised on the demands of the state for unquestioning hospitality on the part of the communities where asylum seekers were newly arrived (and often unannounced).⁶⁶ That very act of demanding or assuming communities would welcome newcomers potentially negated the gift of welcome by increasing existing levels of perceived helplessness or frustration amongst residents. "The host is...someone who has the power to give to the stranger, but while remaining in control. This constitutes the aporia of hospitality for Derrida, as:

It does not seem to me that I am able to open up or offer hospitality, however generous, even in order to be generous, without reaffirming: this is mine, I am at home, you are welcome in my home, without any implication of "make yourself at home" but on condition that you observe the rules of hospitality by

⁶⁵ See also 1103a's comments on community attitudes to families who are asylum seekers.

⁶⁶ In 2000, I contacted a wide range of service providers and statutory and voluntary organisations in and around the area where I later conducted the fieldwork, in part to encourage uptake of support networks and services for people experiencing racial harassment. I was informed by staff at a hotel and a hostel contracted to accommodate asylum seekers that they had personally witnessed the unexpected, unannounced arrival of groups of young men who arrived from London, often in the middle of the night, needing shelter and assistance (personal communications from two members of staff at separate locations, August 2000). Residents also remarked on the 'sudden' arrival of asylum seekers in 'their' neighbourhood.

respecting the being-at-home of my home” (Derrida, 2000:14 cited Gibson, 2003:376).

The comments of 1103a above indicate that the *process* of rapid population diversification was a source of resentment and injustice as much as the *presence* of ‘others’. However, that resulting resentment was more likely to focus on those who were near and visible (asylum seekers), rather than those who less visible and distant (politicians, policy makers and institutions). A sense of injustice, therefore, was more likely to develop further in response to perceived competition between ‘old’ and ‘new’ communities for access to resources.

Allocation of resources

The main argument of 1103a above was that distressed communities, who already were socially and economically disadvantaged, had their emotional and material reserves unreasonably abused and overstretched by further external demands. In the research area, there was a history of community organisations competing with each other for funding locally, for example, through funding made available at ward level, and through successive government funded area regeneration initiatives. During the fieldwork, the distribution and allocation of resources emerged as a major cause of friction again, fuelling unease and a sense of injustice that undermined the possibility of social cohesion within and between communities, but this time attention focused frequently on asylum seekers as the most visible and recent of newcomers, or ‘strangers’. Many expressions of anger and perceived injustice were underpinned by popular myths surrounding levels of support for asylum seekers:

2220e: [resident, white, female] And what else I have heard as well when you are an asylum seeker and this is true, and people are giving them things right left and centre, like cookers, washers, and all sorts and if people like us go for our house we get nowt.

2220c: [resident, white, female] *You got a starter pack.*⁶⁷

2220e: [resident, white, female] *Aye, you get a like starter pack but that's...*

2220b: [resident, white, female] *I never got a starter pack*

2220e: [resident, white, female] *All I am saying is like, for the communities that are here, what people are saying, that that's wrong. How they [asylum seekers] can furnish a full house like ours? We move in, we get nothing.*

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] *You know because of the things people say and the things people hear, like they hear that a lot of asylum seekers can get a lot more money than you, and I know that pisses a lot of people off. And they drive around in cars and that, whereas the people who live here have to fight for their dole money. Like the other day, somebody says to me, cos they went to sign on and they couldn't get their money. And there was an asylum seeker getting money and how can asylum seekers get job seeker's allowance when they can't speak good English and he was really pissed off because of that. And he was saying they drive around in cars and that and how can they afford cars when they get no money? But they get mobile phones and so much else. But you see more men than women so where's all the women and children?*

Once again, prioritising support for those in need generated resentment when the recipients were newcomers. Validation for that stance was offered through comparative narratives of unequal treatment, given as first hand accounts or second hand accounts. The speaker 2214a above ends on a reference to family as a high order symbol, with a suggestion that male asylum seekers may have abandoned related women and children in pursuit of their claims to resources, an assertion made by other respondents during the fieldwork. A more moderate expression of concern about distribution (2230 below) also refers to meeting the needs of established communities first:

2230: [resident, taxi driver, Asian, male] *The government has to realize that if you are going put people from outside in, then you will have to invest a lot more money in here to help people who*

⁶⁷ starter pack- a package of basic household goods supplied by council to first time council tenants.

are living here already so they do not feel left out. If people haven't got a house to live (although some people don't want to live in a house) but over all you have to be fair with them all. They are on the same wave-length, it means you can't be giving extra to somebody outside and giving less to people who are already here. Charity begins at home so you have to start from home before you give it out anywhere else. It's no good thinking just give money out if you can't sort your own problems out. That's just covering the cracks up with polyfilla, thinking they won't see it but they will.

Even 'at home', established BME communities were not guaranteed equality of access to available funding. Resources were restricted or denied by funding bodies distributing central government money at the local level, on the assumption that financing projects that benefited black residents would inflame a sense of injustice among white residents. The speaker [1109] below notes that although the money was eventually given to an initiative combating racial harassment, the primary concern had been for the sensibilities of the white population rather than addressing the identified needs of the Asian population:

1109: [community worker, centre manager, Asian, male] We went to the board meeting. First time we went to the meeting, it was deferred. And the response was actually minuted somewhere, it was deferred because, "It's going to create ill will amongst other residents of the Bentown Vale and Renton Tor⁶⁸ area". In other words, "Why should the Asians get the money because all the white residents will be pissed off?" And nobody mentioned at the time that this money was separately funded, separate money for people who are suffering racial harassment so there wasn't a need for it to go to anyone else, it was for a specific group. And it did get passed eventually but the mere fact that was mentioned to stop it the first time round means, on that board, there is some kind of racism in there if you ask me, if people are making that kind of comment like, "Why should they get it when we are not getting anything?" Cos that's the line.

⁶⁸ Bentown Vale and Renton Tor – two political wards adjoining the research area.

Preferential treatment

Despite any evidence to the contrary, the perception of preferential treatment for individuals or groups of people seen as 'other' was a common source of anger for many of those interviewed, not only in terms of resources but also in inequitable (and therefore 'unfair') treatment by institutions and organisations. To some white residents, it appeared that black and minority ethnic residents were treated more leniently than their white neighbours. The following speaker, for example, makes the claim that such discriminatory practice had a negative impact on social cohesion:

JH: Do you think people do mix around here or are there separate groups?

2219: [resident, activist, white, male] I think they mix. I think on a small minority they do mix, but when things happen like they see them [BME residents] getting away with things with the police, then that tends to push them apart. It's not really unfairness, it's just that they are seeing the police letting them off when they know for the same thing, they would be lifted⁶⁹, prosecuted and put in jail. And they are seeing them get off with it.

When the speaker was asked if he had personal knowledge of instances where this had happened, he gave the following account of one incident that, to him, proved his point conclusively.

2219: [resident, activist, white, male] There was one incidence where a Kosnov (sic) man got a hold of a lad in our street. He [white youth] actually doesn't live in our street, he used to live with his Mam's sister. And one of these Kosnioff (sic) fellows got a hold of him (apparently he was cheeky to his [man's] wife), by his ears and dragged him down the back lane and down the street. And the police was called and ... it [went] to the youth court and then it all got dropped at the last minute. All got dropped and as far as we knew, the Kosniaf (sic) family that was involved was shifted to another address well known to everybody. And his [white youth] Mam, said, "I want to claim back all the expenses I

⁶⁹ "lifted" -arrested

took to take off work” because she’s a working Mam and her man was as well. And she [police officer] said “Well, you have had that⁷⁰ cos the case has been dropped and they have been to pastures new. We won’t even tell you where they have gone”. I mean they went through solicitors and everything, to the juvenile courts and as I say it was dropped, just like that. All that time wasted.

This account illustrates the complex construction of injustice [see also Chapter 5 on racial violence for further discussions]. The man in this case is given the label of an (assumed) national origin, setting him apart from the speaker’s community. Described variously as Kosnov, Kosnioff and Kosniaf⁷¹, the man is marked out as a refugee or asylum seeker. The labels not only confirm his outsider status but serve to dehumanise him as an individual. He is referred to as the ‘man’ and ‘fellow’, an adult compared to the youth who is given the more affectionate term of ‘lad’. The suggested dynamic is that of the adult stranger who uses physical force to assault a young member of the white community. The man is portrayed as an unreasonable aggressor, whose violence is described graphically, with connotations of inappropriate behaviour towards a child. The actions of the youth prior to this incident are mentioned almost as an aside, and are minimised; the insult (unspecified) to the man’s wife being described as ‘cheeky’. However, the police analysis was that the youth had behaved in a criminal manner towards the woman and the case was pursued.

The failure of the criminal justice system to concur with the perception of the man as offender and the youth as victim fostered indignation, which was compounded when the case did not proceed. The youth’s family now acquired victim status, being portrayed as hardworking, honest people who had been inconvenienced by wasted time and had been financially disadvantaged by the ‘unwarranted’ court action. To make matters worse, they were denied any opportunity for recompense because the case had been dropped. In

⁷⁰ “You have had that” – you don’t have a hope of that happening.

⁷¹ At the time when the fieldwork was conducted, it was common practice for white residents to use the term Kosovan (and variations) as a generic term for refugee/asylum seeker. It was also used as a term of abuse. As such, the terminology was an indicator of a process of dehumanisation and distancing.

comparison, it was claimed that the man's family had benefited from the situation, being moved to a new home, to "pastures new". At no point during this account was there an attempt to explore an alternative analysis of the situation. The resentment generated from the perceptions of unfair treatment in this one incident solidified into an exemplar of injustice, used to rationalise the continued lack of cohesion between various groups within the community, and to re-affirm the stranger / outsider status of the newcomer (in this instance asylum seekers and refugees). While this account is given in detail, numerous remarks in a similar vein, claiming preferential treatment by the criminal justice system towards asylum seekers, were made in my hearing during the period of fieldwork, suggesting this stance was not unique to the interviewee.⁷²

The preceding discussions on the nature of community, as perceived and enacted by the social actors, lead now to a data-led examination of cohesion.

Types of cohesion

Broadly speaking, governmental policy documents appeared to define cohesion as an absence of conflict, as a result of respectful relationships, across and between communities at the neighbourhood level and beyond. This method of conceptualising cohesion as a 'blanket' phenomenon, covering and protecting all within its domain, is reminiscent of Benn's (1982) model of the community of 'mutuality'. This, he states, demands a high degree of commitment to community rather than individualism, but unlike 'total community'⁷³, it requires a high degree of autonomy. The central premise of

⁷² This mirrors accounts recorded by Back (1999a), where white residents contended that they were unfairly treated by statutory bodies, with preferential treatment given to 'non-white' communities. This confirmed the findings of Hewitt (1996).

⁷³ In the case of 'total community', the central focus and commitment of all members is on the community rather than on more personal individualistic relationships. The primary function of all members is to maintain the solidarity of the group, by "sustaining...a set of idealized attitudes, almost a depersonalization of members, despite the heavy stress laid on their mutual support. For the individual is required to

mutuality is that each participant values and respects every one in that community as an equal partner, and trusts and expects that same respect from others. The relationships will change and develop but always within a mutually respectful framework. One problem with this model is that it becomes difficult to maintain the relationship of respect and mutuality borne of in depth knowledge of others when groups become so big that it becomes less possible to be sensitive to the nuanced needs and responses of others. He also notes that this model is contingent on having a shared history, so newcomers are not full or equal partners.

The vision of the cohesive community or cohesive society is also problematic because there are no clearly stated parameters or scales for assessing the extent or limits of cohesion. It would appear that (implicit albeit un-stated) within definitions of cohesion is the aim of widespread cohesion within unspecified boundaries. Vaguely referred to as pertinent to "all communities", there is no guidance on where a community begins and ends, nor is there an indication of who defines the boundaries of community. The following statement from a civil servant working in the government's national social cohesion unit raises a number of fundamental issues, not only about the borders of cohesion but about the essence of the concept. Is there only one form of cohesion or many? If there are multiple forms of cohesion, are they equally valued by government, or by others? Can it be said that cohesion is always positive or benign?

JH: But is social cohesion always positive?

2232a: [civil servant, national remit, white, male] If you have a community that has internal cohesion, that can be - can work against overall community cohesion. I think it is probably right to say that neither would we regard that sort of cohesion as being what we call community cohesion.

surrender his personal or idiosyncratic self-image for the sake of the love he earns by becoming a loyal and committed participant" (Benn, 1982:56).

Yet the nature of communities and community life is dynamic, with alliances being made, broken and reformed depending on internal and external factors. This suggests that cohesion may be flexible too, and that the dynamics involved in the social construction of community, therefore, contribute significantly to an understanding of cohesion. Further, if evidence of cohesion is present, it should not be summarily dismissed as insignificant because it is on a small scale, or because the social players involved are 'inward looking'. To better understand cohesion, it may be useful to explore the concept as a shifting process rather than a set state of being. As such there may be differing forms and sites of cohesion, as discussed in more detail in the typology below. I have developed this (tentative) framework not only from the fieldwork conducted during this research but also from observations and analysis made over a twenty year period of local activism and residence in the research area.

1) 'Placed' or internal cohesion

'Placed' cohesion refers to a sense of solidarity or togetherness shared by residents who identify with each other at the neighbourhood or sub-neighbourhood level. This is most apparent when talking about the significance of place in developing a sense of community within the boundaries of a neighbourhood. Sometimes referred to as social bonding capital or 'sociological superglue' (Putnam, 2000:23) this form of cohesion may be positive for those within the community, in that it symbolises belonging and inclusion, but may appear threatening or exclusionary for those living outside the area or for those who do not conform to internal norms e.g. those residents perceived as different on the grounds of ethnicity, or lifestyle. A strong locally based area identity may be perceived as inward looking, with little appetite for change or widening the diversity of residents. However, some analysis of this phenomenon gives cause for concern, as in this excerpt:

Some groups which have both strong bonding social capital and are geographically concentrated such as ethnic minorities in many cities, may become insular and disconnected by both desire and by default. Similarly, strong communities can be oppressive and

seek conformity among their members, restricting routes out of poverty and exclusion. (Kearns, 2004: 12)

I fail to see why this comment has been racialised; the comment is surely equally applicable to predominantly white communities? And may the same claim not also be made in respect of middle class, gated communities? The second comment may also be critiqued for presenting a partial view which obscures structural, social, political and economic barriers to the escape routes from poverty.

2) Familial cohesion

Familial cohesion is based on a sense of belonging and identity that is represented by strong family ties and allegiances.⁷⁴ Primary identification is with the family and loyalty to the family. Conflict may exist within the family, between family members, but 'family' has symbolic significance in that it is linked with honour and status so internal conflict is hidden from those outside the family. Some family members may live outside of narrowly defined geographical boundaries, for example outside the political ward, but the presence of large extended families living in close proximity within a neighbourhood, or certain streets of a neighbourhood represents a cohesive force that is supportive to members while potentially threatening to those who are not included. To argue with one member may incur the wrath of other members not directly involved, with possible repercussions such as exclusion from the wider community, who do not want to challenge the united presence of inter-married / related networks. This phenomenon may be most frequently associated with locally well known, infamous, families with criminal reputations but the same dynamic is evident among families whose claims to status are based on living in a given area for generations (see for example Elias and Scotson, 1994). 'Family' may also include 'gang' loyalty, as a form of honorary family or 'fictive kin'

⁷⁴ See for example Chapter 3 interviews with group 2220all.

that conveys belonging and expectations of support and solidarity from (predominantly) young men involved in the street culture, again often identifying closely with place.

For many youth, attachment to a gang fills the psychological and social void that emanates from their experiences of family, school, and an aloof adult-dominated community. With no other social institutions providing regular occupational outlets, gangs function as surrogate families that alleviate youthful feelings of powerlessness and fulfil their needs for intimacy and personal reassurance (Maclure and Sotelo, 2004:9).

The attachment to family and fictive family may, for some, be the source of a degree of status, stability and security. Inherent in that construct, however, is that oppositional dynamic of 'us' and 'them'. Given the relational nature of community, and alliances within communities, is the governmental, one-size-fits-all vision of cohesion sustainable?

3) Sustainable cohesion?

The government vision on cohesion appears to aim for a 'once and for all' state of 'togetherness' in a conflict-free zone. Forrest and Kearns (1999) acknowledge that collective struggles on behalf of a neighbourhood, or community, may increase the potential for crossing internal community barriers, thereby increasing levels of trust and 'tolerance': this would appear to support the cohesion project.

Alliances and boundaries will shift and there may be uneasy tensions between the defence of the neighbourhood and other ties of kin and ethnicity. Nonetheless, the implication is that resistance contributes to the social capital of a neighbourhood through collective endeavour, mutual aid and community activities. Trust and tolerance are created through collective action (Forrest and Kearns, 1999:10).

The above stance is in keeping with community development principles of localised collective action, forms of which are promoted on the government's website on

neighbourhood renewal. Here the government builds a picture of localised control, gained through active participatory citizenship which gives rise to *sustainable* networks.

Community development aims to give people in disadvantaged areas or communities of interest more control over their lives. It builds the confidence, capacity and sustainable networks in communities that are essential to widespread participation. It supports communities to develop their own activities, services and assets, to respond to opportunities from outside and to engage with the agencies and policy makers that affect their lives. It also works with professionals and policy makers to enhance their capacity to engage effectively with communities and to change ways of working that prevent people from participating effectively.⁷⁵ (<http://www.renewal.net> accessed 3rd March 2006)

The key point here is the notion of sustainability and cohesion. This statement bears further scrutiny, not least because it raises the issues of who dominates and controls sustainable networks, and are those community networks underpinned by racialised and gendered barriers, as suggested elsewhere in this thesis?⁷⁶ During the fieldwork, as well as during my time as activist, there were frequent examples found of sustainable networks that did *not* facilitate participation because the power dynamics of 'race' and gender were not addressed.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] You can work with people as long as the things you do are the festivities, all the social things, right, but there's nobody doing any really concrete, what I call political – there's no political work going on whatsoever and that's because in the 1980's politics was taken out of community development. Now you've got spin doctoring and you have to get *the* person and you have to do it in this manner or it's not a legitimate ride.

Again this does not recognise the fluidity of alliances, and competing constructions of community, which carry with them notions of loyalty, reciprocity and justice. There

⁷⁵ Details of community engagement linked to urban regeneration neighbourhood renewal can be found at <http://www.renewal.net> which cites examples of good practice from the government's perspective.

⁷⁶ A deeper critique of the government statement and the wider issues of community participation and urban governance are outside the remit of this thesis. Data collected on these issues, during the field work, would support further investigation.

were also numerous examples given of coalitions that both fostered and undermined identification with community, and examples of a veneer of cohesion. In effect, these were examples of temporary cohesion, two forms of which were identified in this research.

4a) Temporary or Provisional cohesion

Provisional cohesion occurs where existing or perceived differences become secondary to a presenting issue e.g. working to regenerate an area, or reacting to a specific incident.

2222: [community worker, Asian issues worker, Asian] Maybe you have to accept that there may be issues where all black, Muslim people might come together ... like Muslim people coming together across their particular experience, post September 11th and nothing else. There's a whole range of other things they will differ on with each other and they're still not cohesive. But they have a cohesion on a particular issue and I don't know whether you can call that a temporary cohesion or whatever.

JH: Do you think people here (I'm thinking of the Asian, white, refugee communities) pull together or try to fight their own little corner?

2216: [community activist, white, female] It depends on what it was. Cos when they [local authority] were talking about pulling it down, the whole community pulled together.

Provisional cohesion may last for the duration of a campaign or in the face of an ongoing threat. It may be transient or may result in more lasting positive relationships, as an outcome of close association on a specific issue. However, provisional cohesion may carry with it a demand for loyalty from everyone to the presenting cause. This internal expectation of cohesion can facilitate exclusion. For those individuals born and residing in the area, but not sharing the same goals and attachment to the geographical location, a sense of isolation from other residents may be sharpened.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] The community round here were all fighting... because they wanted the houses to stay up. That was the community sticking together cos they all wanted the same thing. But then the people who didn't join in, like I wouldn't have joined in, cos I diven't⁷⁷ like the place! The place should come down! So therefore I am not part of their community.

Another form of cohesion may be found where conflict exists but is not acted upon, so there is an appearance of stability, a condition I have called expedient cohesion.

4b) Temporary or Expedient Cohesion

Expedient cohesion is a veneer of cohesion, that is to say groups and individuals are aware of differences, which may result in a sense of not 'belonging', but a decision is taken not to challenge the status quo because of possible repercussions, or to avoid more overt conflict, which may then escalate. In both the examples [2214a/b; 2229] below, the speakers describe how they as individuals adapted, for a time, their behaviour, in order to fit in with the people i.e. the 'community' around them.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] The two places in Penton where I have lived, they were proper full of smackheads⁷⁸ and that. And then this woman [neighbour] complained to me landlord, she complained about me in the meetings (I was told) and I wasn't even doing anything. So I had to do me best to get on with this woman because everything I did she complained. Then she moved out and I get a totally, totally different person - there was a schizophrenic woman living upstairs from me. So from a woman who is bang in with the polis, who wants to be everything so perfect, to a schizophrenic woman and I had to get on with her. You have to learn to get on with the people who are around you because you either fit or you don't. If you don't fit in, life is going to be a lot harder for you so you fit in with the people around you.

⁷⁷ diven't –don't

⁷⁸ smackheads – heroin addicts

2224b: [young resident, white, female] *It's all about surviving. It's not about community* [my emphasis]. You don't want to feel like part of the community. You just need to survive.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] Aye, it's about survival, about surviving in the place that you are. *You have to do what you have to do* [my emphasis].

2229: [community arts developer, white, female] I was always the butt of jokes (and *I played up to it as well, cos it meant I fitted in*) [my emphasis]; I was, "Candy, you can always have a laugh with her. She's that working class." Whereas at school I had never had that because everyone was more or less the same class. So college made me more aware of my position, how they saw me, and they also saw me because I was a woman. But feminism wise, I became far more politically aware when I started to go to University and actually met other women older than myself, younger than myself, all talking about the same thing and actually sitting thinking, "Right, so they weren't doing that because I'm not a very nice person or..." It's hard, because looking back now, I can see that I was trying to fit it, be Candy always laughing, always smiling, ha ha ha. ...It hurt sometimes when they said stuff to me. Thinking they could call me a slapper because I was working class and I was a lass, you know what I mean? And thinking they could talk to me like that...But that's what I mean. *Women live their lives always trying to fit in and have a sense of worth. And the only way they feel they have that sense of worth is to fit in* [my emphasis].

The contributions above highlight both the pressure to conform, to *appear* as part of a cohesive whole, yet at the same time point to the tensions inherent in that position. For the first speakers, 'fitting in' meant 'survival', meant becoming almost invisible. For the second speaker, her time of conforming was injurious to her identity in terms of class and gender, a situation she broadened to encompass her perception that women's construction of identity and self-worth was also premised on 'fitting' in. While based on individual experiences, the accounts are nevertheless important from a sociological perspective because they point to a state of being or existing that is, if not analogous to, then at least

on the spectrum of, that identified by du Bois (1903/1989:3) and later developed by Fanon (1986), namely ‘double consciousness’⁷⁹:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.

The notions of ‘fitting in and ‘surviving in the place that you are’ may also be said to apply to communities in the context of wider society, e.g. peripheral estates on the outskirts of South Moor. Similarly this affects communities within communities, e.g. groups based on an assumed collectivity of ethnicity. ‘Fitting in’ becomes perhaps even more problematic for communities that are faced with threat or change initiated externally by people or events. When danger or risk is perceived to be extreme or widespread, two further forms of cohesion may emerge – defensive and siege cohesion.

5) Defensive Cohesion

Defensive cohesion may present positively. In the face of externally generated crises, for example threat of demolition or area clearances, residents may organise collectively to engage in processes that would otherwise exclude them. For those who do not become involved (for example in residents’ groups) there may still be a sense of common threat, that supports an assumption of unity and serves to emphasise clear boundaries of insiders and outsiders. Another example of unity in adversity may centre on anger at proposals to reduce or remove resources in an area, including funding and services, such as a Post

⁷⁹ Because the concept of double consciousness is rooted in the long history of the systematic oppression of black people through discourses and practices of white supremacy, which includes the horrors of slavery (see Gilroy, 1993), I do not suggest that the data cited is relating, as it were, *equitable* circumstances. Nevertheless, the comments 2214a/b and 2229 are illustrative of the phenomenon of ‘passing’, whereby the knowledge of being ‘other(ed)’ is present but for the present not spoken of openly. This concept is discussed in relation to sexuality, for example in the work of Butler (1993) and as a device for constructing and refuting problematic identities (see Caughie, 1999). See also Larsen’s (1971) novel *Passing*, which tells the story of Claire Kendry, a woman of dual heritage who ‘passes’ as white, and marries a white man with strong racist views.

Office, a G.P or shopping facilities. Sometimes the threat to a community is more abstract, for example negative reports in the media, stigmatising a neighbourhood and the people who live there. Whatever the threat, a keen sense of justice and fair play can unite a community into defensive cohesion, where challenges are met and contested for the benefit of the neighbourhood. A less positive manifestation of defensive cohesion occurs when parts of a community become targeted for abuse or view other groups or communities with mistrust. In these situations, sections of communities may withdraw from the wider grouping as a defence mechanism, resulting in pockets of cohesion that are symptomatic of a non-cohesive whole.

2222: [community worker, Asian issues worker, Asian] [Anti-Islam backlash] is a set-back for a lot of black women who wouldn't normally come to mainstream services because they didn't feel them accessible, because of language problems or because of racism or because of cultural stereotyping; because they don't feel it was culturally appropriate, now are not coming forward because they feel there's a role for them to protect their particular communities, post September 11th.

1109: [community worker, centre manager, Asian, male] You could have social cohesion for people who live in say in the Penton area, you know, middle class people. And then you've got good social cohesion among ethnic minorities who live in the likes of Eddington, but apart from that if try to mix groups together, so you can have white residents living in Eddington and the Asian residents living in Eddington and mix the groups together and get some cohesion I think it'd be very difficult, there's going to be a lot of suspicion there.

The speaker [1109] above refers to a perception of cohesion *within*, but not *between* communities. Here the common bonds of community were given variously as class, place of residence and ethnicity. However, as the interview continued, the reason for the stated barrier to a broader form of cohesion, namely suspicion, became clearer. Based on experience of competition for limited resources, within a defined locality, the speaker had developed a cynicism about the motives of white community activists and council officials who made contact with the centre in which he worked, which was used predominantly but not exclusively by black residents.

[1109] I mean, they've [black communities] had nothing from them [white communities] in the past so why do people all of a sudden want to know now? In the [Community Centre B] itself there's a load of suspicion when we are approached by white pundits in the area. Cos we know that we are being approached because they need ethnic minority numbers, basically so they can get funding to say, "Oh we have ethnic minorities". And they say it anyway regardless of whether we are going to be on board or not. And that just causes animosity and there's never going to be social cohesion.

Previous experiences of exclusion from decision-making processes and uneven distribution of resources served to symbolise the communities as competitors. Here, it was the perceived lack of respect and the tokenism of current inter-community contact that led to the reinforcement of community boundaries and a continuation of the sense of injustice, which, unaddressed, fuelled animosity and mistrust. As such the on-going tensions created a form of defensive internal cohesion. This may then turn into siege cohesion, as described below.

6) Siege cohesion

If suspicion or mistrust between communities is not counteracted, and external pressures (from economic disadvantage to activities of far right organisations) are not resolved, tensions become internalised, and a more negative 'siege cohesion' can develop.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] Because they've [communities] been under so much pressure, what happens is that you turn in on yourselves. Care gets pushed out.

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] I think communities and families and extended families will stick together and generally people do become quite inward-looking. Extraordinarily so. If you are a community that's being victimised then undoubtedly there is strength in being inward. Community cohesion documentation doesn't appear to analyse this at all.

When the gaze of a neighbourhood community turns inward, it is more likely to distinguish communities within communities. A strongly held sense of injustice, often focusing on allocation of resources, may intensify with racialised resentment, or inter-ethnic conflict. Siege cohesion is more aggressive than defensive, with greater sense of threat and danger, and as such is more likely to tip over into fractured cohesion.

7) Fractured cohesion

Where elements of siege, contracted and negative familial cohesion exist, the absence or removal of one or more key indicators of cohesion (trust, status, cultural code map) can tip individuals and communities over the edge into fight or flight. Similar to the Durkheimian concept of *anomie*, but frequently localised rather than spreading throughout society as a result of a national crisis, fractured cohesion can occur in localised pockets within communities, resulting in disturbances or riots that are brief, violent episodes within a long term context of deprivation, social exclusion and perceived injustice.

8) Expansive cohesion

Expansive cohesion can be said to exist where there are open, flexible boundaries and cross cultural interaction, while retaining some positive elements of familial and contracted cohesion, namely a sense of support and belonging. In this case, individuals and communities are prepared to explore situations from perspectives different to their own and have the confidence to be critical but not negatively judgemental. This allows an inclusive sense of justice to develop, premised on notions of fair play for all members/citizens/residents. A shared identification among residents within a given geographical location may be subdivided into various further common bonds, including culture, religion, national or ethnic heritage, which are deemed to enhance, not diminish or threaten the wider community. Examples of this are given in the following contributions,

which explore residents' experiences of and aspirations towards cohesion within communities.

Encouraging cohesion?

For most respondents, cohesion was possible within a context of respect for diversity, which incorporated dialogue that allowed critical discussion. 'Race' or ethnicity was still a primary marker of difference (rather than class or gender, for example) but was not necessarily an insurmountable boundary.

2219: [resident, activist, white, male] Well, it [cohesion] means a joint effort from *all* the people all joined together, all races all mixing in together.

2224: [student, resident, Iranian, male] If you have a heart, if you like other people, you don't want...to give them hurt. The point is that most of the people don't like to hurt people. So...if you want to make peace for each other, you should not argue or fight with each other. We can talk, we can discuss, we can say everything we want in a proper manner, but if we decided to fight with each other because 'they' don't think like you, you cannot find any end to the situation like that.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] Well, my thoughts is that we need, in the community to be tolerant of each other to a certain extent. We may not always agree with each other. But, the thing is, there is a certain amount of tolerance that should be there ... Sometimes you have to get into that other person's point of view. From the Asian communities' point of view. From the refugees' point of view. But not always agree with them. But you need to be able to speak – at the moment what seems to happen is that people are frightened to say anything, you are frightened to say anything against an Asian family because if you say that, you're racist. And that's not the way people's coming from sometimes.

When the interview [2216] began, the speaker was, for a time, hesitant about talking about racial violence or 'race' per se. Her stated worry was that she would be judged a racist if she voiced what she deemed to be valid criticism of anyone who was not white. This was a concern echoed by other white residents both during and outside of the research. The expectation of condemnation and labelling as 'racist', often also couched in terms of railing against 'political correctness', points to a tension relevant to social cohesion. In varying degrees, the comment above was typical of a recurring spectrum of unfairness or injustice promulgated in such complaints/ concerns. Discussions on racial violence led to a reiteration of other racialised 'injustices' in the broader context of community and cohesion.⁸⁰ This stands in contrast to responses to domestic violence.⁸¹

While many interviewees focussed on 'public', inter-community relationships, one respondent reflected that cohesion was, in part, a personal journey of acceptance of diversity, beginning with familial interactions:

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] It begins with your own family. So you work with the members of your family who may have mental illness and you welcome them at your door, you welcome the people who have disabilities, you welcome the people who haven't gone for a heterosexual relationship or haven't made their minds up and they are all welcome in your home. And once you can do that, you can start to break down the isolation.

When communication was sustained and organised in the more public domain, for example in residents' groups, neighbours formed open, cohesive relationships [see 2225 below]. Information, knowledge and awareness of various groups within communities

⁸⁰ This is a rich vein of racialised resentment into which racist and far right fascist 'political' parties tap. In the lead up to the May 2006 local elections for example, the BNP locally and nationally are campaigning on an Islamophobic platform overtly exploiting claims of injustice to whites. The BNP propaganda machine has also sought political gain and acceptance for its repeated far right attacks under the banner of free speech, not least in relation to the trial at Leeds Crown Court of Nick Griffin (BNP leader) and Mark Collett (activist with national profile, responsible for designing anti-Muslim leaflets).

⁸¹ See Chapter 6 page 198. However, see also Chapter 8 Conclusion for discussion on how these apparently different stances to both forms of violence are both linked to the tensions inherent in social cohesion.

were cited by a number of respondents as key components contributing to developing cohesion, by challenging misconceptions and stereotypes:

2225: [student, Iranian, female] We have good relationships between the families [in same area]. There is an Iranian community association starting to establish. My son who is 14, he is one of the leaders. I find there are some white people who have been involved with the racists, now they are interested in the group or in some way that helps the minority group that feels hate in the community.

JH: Why has that change happened do you think?

2225: I don't know? [Laughs] Some of them maybe feel guilty, that they are innocent that they do not know about the politics. Most of them don't know who is behind this war [in Iraq]!

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male] I think education is another factor, that's important as well. I think a lot of kids don't know the background of Asians, what their religion is, how they live and things like that. If that was more open they might understand it better.

2225: [student, Iranian, female] There are lots of English neighbours who are involved with other ethnic groups. When they started for first time to have contact with other groups, they found something very uneasy. "Oh are you using school?" A question like that. "Oh my God are you driving in your country?" "Oh have you roads in your country?" Can you believe it? But I have some friends they come into my home and we have a relationship together for a time so when they ask things, they are not so horrible. I ask my friend, she is educated, "What do you think about my country" She said, "Just desert!" [laughs] I said "No it's not! Why are you thinking like that?" She said "It's because we don't know. We don't know why. We hear something about, for example, Egypt...the ancient and culture of Egypt and we know" but about Iran and countries like that, they don't know what is the difference between them and all of the area just using camels. It is horrible sometimes.

2228b: [resident, white, female]. I *do like other cultures* [emphasises] And one thing I do like is I like the clothing, I am very interested in clothing, the other cultures, the clothing. The

food. Now to me, you don't know you have lived until you have experienced all different types of cultures' food.

A recurring suggestion for bringing residents together was to hold a festival or sporting event, especially football, as suggested by the speakers below, an idea echoed by other residents and workers within the community.

2219: [resident, activist, white, male] Have a festival or something like that. Create something that will bring them [black and white residents] together, anything that will bring them together, like a football match on the field. Things like that gets them involved and brings them together. And if we could just get them together, just talking, it would be do it.

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male] I think getting people together having certain events and getting them together, like having a football match together, to get one community to play another community as long as they are mixed, you know not Asians against white, have them all mixed together. Some things like that. And when you go to a football match, it's good. It could be done but it would have to be done properly.

However, a number of accounts were given which highlighted some of the persistent tensions and barriers to cohesion. This was apparent in the case of one social event which was organised locally. In that example, given in more detail in Chapter 5, tentative steps were taken by some members of the community to include an isolated family in the local social occasion. This met with some success at first. The perception that the girls were kept separate from the wider community on the basis of religious restrictions was challenged, and gradually the children began to play with others in the neighbourhood. However, the family were then subjected to sustained racist harassment by a white family that moved into the area, and the fragile trust was broken, when the wider community could not stop the perpetrators or protect the family from abuse. This indicates that cohesion requires effective strategies to counteract racism, which go beyond the (temporary) gains of shared leisure or social activities.

Concern was expressed about the limitations of the 'steel-band and saris' approach to encouraging cohesion, if community engagement was devoid of any political context. In the absence of a political or structural analysis of inequalities within communities, the call for universal access and opportunities may appear to have some credibility as a prerequisite for cohesion.

2219: [resident, activist, white, male] We've got to have more community activity together, not like the [Centre B], you see they tend to class that as coloured because its being funded by the lottery. But it's coloured people that control it. Now if they got more white people involved in trying to get people together, and they work as a team that would work right. That would definitely work. And other things like clubs - get things started off like that and get people involved, get the kids involved, get the parents involved, coloured as well as white.

2230: [resident, taxi driver, Asian, male] It makes no matter whether you are green or white or black or pink, you are in that same area, it should be equal for all of them and not you go to that one [project] and you can go there. That's keeping you separate. I have had friends that were white, black, brown. I've always had a mixture of friends, and I've been able to mix with so many different people.

Other respondents rejected the agenda for cohesion that suggests all resources should be shared equally without regard to prioritising need or allowing for separate, as well as joint, facilities and organisation, as simplistic. The first speaker below [1106] was critical of the 'multi-cultural information' approach that did nothing to tackle institutionally racist barriers to all levels of employment for members of BME communities. Similarly, the second speaker [1109] cautioned that cohesion was dependant on addressing unequal access and opportunities for work.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] You don't need to know what food I eat. I said, "Have you looked down your High Street – you have Indian takeaway, Chinese take away. You can go in the yellow pages and get any kind of food you want. Madonna's wearing saris and bhindis probably better than I could. So you don't need to know about me clothes...I eat

pizza, right? I wear jeans. Now tell me why I haven't got the manager's fucking job."

1109: [community worker, centre manager, Asian, male] I think for social cohesion to work fully, you need more people from ethnic minority communities in better jobs, better positions, given more opportunities. Because that would show the people that "Well yeh, people from ethnic minorities are doing well for themselves." What you find at the moment is that only way they are doing well for themselves is not through employment or stuff, it's through business, something they've set up for themselves. And they've got all the hard headache that goes with it. Obviously working a lot of long hours and things like that.

The final comments of this chapter reflect the pessimism expressed by many BME respondents about the prospects of achieving social cohesion. Previously, both of the following respondents [2222; 1109] were among those who cited racism, evident in structural and institutional inequalities, as barriers to social cohesion. Here they reflect on the centrality of *attitudinal change*, as a cornerstone of social cohesion:

2222: [community worker, Asian issues worker, Asian, female] Maybe at some stage very, very far in the future will there be a possibility [of social cohesion]. But I don't think there is a possibility immediately, even in this century. I think what you have to work towards is trying to create a better understanding, across communities, respect across communities, respect across cultures and a feeling that you respect other people and you understand where they're coming from and you *demonstrate* that understanding.

1109: [community worker, centre manager, Asian, male] So, social cohesion. I mean fair enough everybody does get on with each other but we'll never have ultimate social cohesion with ethnic minorities and the white community if the white community persist in treating people differently. And the underlying thing is they always think they are better than anyone who's not white. And that's what really hurts - a lot of people. That hurts me, because whenever I've got the feeling that people think I am not better than them because of me colour, it really upsets me. And that's endemic across the whole British society.

They do think they are better than ethnic minorities and it could be for any number of reasons, it could be language, it could be cultural, it could be the fact that people have not got a good job, or difficulty in housing...*You are never going to have social cohesion if that's the way people are thinking* [my italics].

Once again, the potency of attitudes and actions premised on an interpretation and construction of the 'other' was noted, as illustrated by the afore-mentioned effects, including impacts on social relationships, and limitations put on access to employment and housing. Such negatively-charged events and processed will impact on social cohesion if not addressed.

Summary

The findings of this chapter are that there are varied forms of cohesion, which are fluid and multifaceted. This contrasts with the government projection of cohesion as unchanging and, at times, one-dimensional. Community cohesion is present or absent within a wider social context, that will include factors such as national/international events, or social divisions including those of gender, 'race' and class.

Cohesion is enmeshed with the concept of community, in government rhetoric and in respondents' views: constructions of community are therefore the frame around which to judge the existence of social cohesion. The range of definitions of community, given in this research, indicates that *this* concept is not static. Despite some claims of the fragmentation of community, it appears that the *desire* to construct and re-construct community was a persistent and dynamic process that reached beyond observations or expectations of separatism. Importantly, with only one exception, all respondents who contributed to this research held to the stance that community existed as an observable and experiential entity. This again signals the importance of 'community' in relation to social cohesion. In its positive form, this may be seen as identifying links that facilitate or enable communication with others; in its negative form, the construction of

community is limited and inward-looking with impermeable boundaries. Cohesion can not be identified or evaluated by the presence of factors such as social networks, social capital or absence of conflict alone, but by identifying the more symbolic and abstract notions on which community is constructed. This has major implications for the social cohesion agenda.

Clearly, the community boundaries were identified within both extensive and limited geographical borders; they were also constructed, for the most part along the fault lines of 'difference', 'threat' or 'inferiority'. The 'stranger' danger, frequently identified as emanating from those outside a given area, was also perceived as a malign influence within the borders, where co-habitation of the same space was a contaminating influence, from the 'stranger within'. The persistent insider /outsider dynamic, which is a key component in conceptualising social unity and disintegration, is also a key factor in *enacting* social cohesion. As seen in this chapter, this same dynamic, delineating the boundaries of community, was also linked to further significant aspects of community, and cohesion, that is to say justice and entitlement, reciprocity and trust. The following chapters, firstly on racial violence, subsequently on domestic violence, will explore indications of the process of forming, reforming and enacting of 'community', as evidenced by community responses to both forms of violence.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESPONDING TO RACIAL VIOLENCE - THE CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY THROUGH THE LENS OF 'RACE'

Introduction

The previous chapter looked at people's views of community and found that connections/associations made via family, neighbours and place were important signifiers of community. In keeping with the work of Barth (1969) and Cohen (1986; 1998), the data further indicated that the concept of community was relational, that is to say it carried with it notions of both similarity and difference, *within* and *between* communities, and that the social construction of community was most notable at the fault lines or borders of interaction. These boundaries may be physical, symbolic or both; importantly they were interpretative, often shaped by perceptions of belonging, entitlement and justice, premised on a range of factors, including 'race' and gender.

In this chapter I will explore further the construction, interpretation and enactment of community as viewed through the lens of 'race' by examining responses to racial violence. In doing so the following themes emerge:

Risk and response

This section examines community responses to racial violence. Beginning with a consideration of risk and response, I then go on to discuss the related issues of 'visibility' and response.

The Place of Community

This section begins with a reflection on the place of community in responding to racial violence. It then draws on interviewees' accounts of community-based and community-experienced responses to racial violence at the individual, community and corporate levels. Here I explore the racialised

nuances present in the community responses to racial violence and therefore in the construction of community.

Imagined Communities

This section reflects on the persistence of racialised, hierarchical constructions of community, and shows how the persistent reservoirs of ‘othering’ can be agitated by external as well as internal events.

Justice and entitlement

This section examines expressions of injustice, which if unaddressed, reinforce community borders.

I use interview data from the whole sample to illustrate these themes, highlighting differences within the sample as and when they emerge. Some of the data were generated by the use of vignettes, some by probing questions and some from the interviewees’ accounts of personal experiences. The resulting data and analysis were augmented by participant and non-participant observations while carrying out the field work and by my own experiences as a resident, activist and researcher.

Risk and response

A review by Laner and Benin (2001) of some of the literature on bystander intervention suggests that identification with the victim through shared personal characteristics engenders empathy that may evoke a desire to intervene (Smithson, Amato et al, 1993). However, the responses below run counter to this claim (although the first speaker suggested his response would be an exception to the predicted non-response from others):

JH: There’s a young Asian woman being shouted at by white youths in an area you know. What would most people do?

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] I would say, "Leave the lass alone. She's in a foreign country, just leave her alone" ...but a lot of people would just let it, see it go on. That's the majority of people.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] I would go over to her and if I knew them [abusers] personally I would tell them in words of two syllables, "Mmm off". If I didn't know them I would walk up to the young lady and walk along with her and hope she could speak English and even if they call me whatever they want to call me, I am not bothered. I wouldn't physically get involved with them. I don't think that's the right thing to do, but I would show that young lady support. To show she's not on her own.

Both expressions of intended intervention revealed considerations of difference between the 'bystander' and the 'victim', in the first instance a form of outsider status based on assumption about nationality, and in the second, the possibility of communication difficulties through lack of a shared language. Despite the stated perceptions of difference, and in the case of the second speaker, the potential that she too may be abused, both wanted to react in a way that demonstrated solidarity and care for the young woman.

Other studies note that the possibility of intervention is more likely if the bystander is confident of a successful outcome for the victim and themselves, particularly if they deem themselves physically capable of intervening (Midlarsky, 1968, cited in Laner and Benin, 2001). This was borne out when the issue of repercussions for witnesses to racist violence was raised by a number of respondents, who explained that avoiding personal intervention was due primarily to an assessment of personal risk, taking into account uncertainty about the level of potential threat to themselves. Here, on reflection, the first speaker above [2219] qualifies his reaction. He still intends to counteract the racial violence, by enlisting the help of the police, but points to the assumption that groups of young men *per se* pose a substantial threat to personal safety, necessitating non-personal intervention, a view supported by the subsequent speakers. The third contributor, referring to a number of racial incidents, including those in which he had intervened, confirmed the fear that groups of men presented a high risk of danger, which may be exacerbated by drugs or alcohol.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] Eh [pauses] Well depending if they were drunk or full of drugs you would have tendency to call the police. I mean whether they were white, black yellow, if you've got a gang of lads, they are dangerous.

JH: Ok, there's this elderly white woman walking around and there's a group of white lads shouting abuse at her. What would people do?

2218a: [resident, white, male] The same [Non-intervention, as with Asian woman being abused].

JH: Why?

2218a: [resident, white, male] Intimidated by the gang of them.

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] It's that thin line... You have to be very careful, especially when people have had a drink, ... because everybody reacts in different ways. And I think that's the reason why a lot of people keep quiet. It's one of the main things – you know about turning a blind eye. I think people know what's happening but they have got to worry about their own safety. And when you do start challenging things, you just put yourself in difficult situations. I mean even outside of the centre [Centre B], if any little kids are like swearing racist abuse at me I will challenge them. But with some of the older guys and you tell they've had a drink and stuff, you've got to think twice because it just aggravates the situation.

In these examples, the primary factor inhibiting intervention was the fear of repercussions, regardless of the ethnicity or gender of victim, or bystander. Gender *was* an issue in the case of the perpetrator, where the perceived risk was the combination of youth and masculinity, creating the fear of 'dangerous men'.⁸² Importantly, one further element in the decision to 'standby' was the expectation of reprisals, not only by the individual perpetrator, but also, as stated below, by a prediction of censure by the wider community.⁸³ For these residents, as others, involving outsiders, especially the police, was deemed too risky.⁸⁴

⁸² For further discussion, see Chapter 7 on Intersections of Race and Gender

⁸³ This consideration of community is important. It indicates the centrality of community as an arbiter of responses to racial (and domestic) violence, an issue discussed in more depth in subsequent pages.

⁸⁴ Contacting the police to report a crime is deemed by many in the research area to contravene a primary social rule, "Thou shalt not grass".

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] Well I can't do anything for the woman you know. If you like, you can go to the police but living in the area might create you more problems.

2218a: [resident, white, male] I think they should phone the police

2218b: [resident, white, female] [shakes head] I think people would be frightened to phone the police in case any one found out.

Returning to the scenario of a young Asian woman being racially abused by a group of young white men, the group of white women below also stated that 'most' people would not intervene. The anticipated response in this instance, however, was not only non-intervention, but also that tacit support would be given to the abusers, first by ridiculing the victim, dismissing the significance or impact of the abuse through laughter, then abandoning the victim by leaving her alone.

2220e: [resident, white, female] I think most people would just stand and laugh at them getting picked on. That's what most people do? Probably just stand and laugh

2220b; 2220c; 2220d; 2220f: [residents, white, female] Laugh! Just laugh! Aye!

JH: Why do you think they do that?

2220e: [resident, white, female] They would just laugh and walk away sort of thing.

This was, to an extent, substantiated by a comment made by a young woman in another group, who had witnessed a young Asian woman with a baby, being attacked and robbed outside a local post office:

2221: [resident, white, female] [Angrily] Wey that happened didn't it? That woman at the post office? I laughed, me. It was funny!

However, group 2220 also referred to this incident and in doing so they underlined that, once again, fear of violence itself may also have been a significant factor that inhibited involvement, rather than disassociation based on racialised differences alone.

2220a: There was this woman at the post office once.

2220c: She was with her bairn wasn't she?

2220a: Aye, she had just got her money and this lad come over and put his hand in her pocket and tried to pinch her money and he knocked [emphasis] her pram over, the bairn got hit, and not one person tried to help her.

2220d: And everybody knew what was happening

JH: So how does that make you feel?

2220d: Scared sometimes. Cos it could be drugs and that so you get scared.

So far, respondents alluded to their assessment of risk *to themselves*, as witnesses of racist incidents. In the following section, in order to contextualise the responses to racial violence discussed in this chapter, I will examine perceptions of the risk of racial violence *per se*, from the viewpoints of residents and workers in the research area, and then, by drawing on accounts of a range of racist incidents, begin to explore community analysis of such violence as it relates to the construction of community.

Identifying risk: Recognising racial violence

During the research, it became apparent that there were varied perceptions of the levels of racial violence in communities. In 2002, I attended a conference in London on community cohesion which was addressed by a senior representative from the Commission for Racial Equality. This keynote speaker confidently informed the conference that numbers of racist incidents had decreased nationally in the past year. I countered this by referring to a contemporary report produced in my local area by a racial harassment project, which indicated racially motivated incidents were increasing. Some respondents in my research were aware of this national increase:

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] One of the things we are also conscious of is that racist violence is of course escalating. In 2001, reported racist incidents increased nationally by 18%, by 107% in 2000, which is staggering.

I was followed (in a scene that resembled Kirk Douglas and company declaring 'I am Spartacus') by a succession of senior police officers and local authority employees

who stated that, in their areas too, reports of racially motivated violence and harassment had increased. This discrepancy between the watchdogs' and policymakers', and frontline practitioners' knowledge of racist incidents was mirrored in the differing perceptions found at the community level. As the speakers below suggest, estimates of the levels of racist violence within communities or within society are dependent not only on reporting or monitoring trends but also on identifying and openly acknowledging racism in the first instance.

2212: [community safety policy officer, white, female] First of all to challenge racism you have to recognise it. You have to name it to deal with it.

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] When was the last time you've seen anything in the paper about a council officer being proved to be racist? Have you ever seen anything?

JH: No.

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] So you are saying there is no racism in the City Council?

This last statement points to the inconsistency between, on one hand, personal experience and observations and, on the other, public recognition of and reaction to racism. Underpinning the questions above was a sense of frustration and injustice that was evident throughout this and other interviews, that racism was repeatedly ignored or was rendered invisible. It is important, then, before considering the issue of justice in more depth, to ascertain the varying levels of awareness of racist abuse as raised during time spent with members of the communities in the research area.

Invisibility

In my research, perceptions of the extent and forms of racist violence and abuse varied greatly among respondents. For the majority (but by no means all) of the white respondents, racism was not identified as a significant issue, in part perhaps because it was not recognised and because the majority of white residents did not feel targeted

for racist abuse. The respondents below, for example, voiced the view that levels of racist abuse were low and that racist violence did not occur:

JH: Do you know of any community responses (in this area) to racial violence?

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] I don't think there is racial violence round here to start with and I don't think you need to start that division; I mean unless there is a need for it, I would say no... Why? It's not a thing I've - I've never really seen very much like that around here.

2218b: [resident, white, female] Well to be honest, I've never known of any racist violence here.

JH: Is there any racism if there's not actually any violence, you know, saying racist things?

2218a: [resident, white, male] Well that happened the other night. Hung around the door. It was bunch of kids. She [neighbour] cannot understand us like but I still talk to her.

The 'invisibility' of racism was not restricted to white residents' perceptions; some Asian respondents noted with frustration and almost disbelief that black/Asian colleagues and family members did not share their identification of persistent and endemic racism in all spheres of life – citing repeat incidents at work, during leisure time, when house hunting – even when visiting relatives in hospital, as illustrated by some of the examples below and in subsequent pages.

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] If you can find me one Asian person in Newcastle who would say they have never had any harassment because of race then I would have to say that they were lying... Whenever I go out I feel like I am always looking for people to say something about me because I know it is going to happen... Even comments like "Oh the shop must be closed early". Some of my friends might not see that but I know that that is a racist comment.

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] I've had members of my family, and there are black workers I've talked to or black colleagues too who sometimes say that they've never heard a racist remark and [laughs] I think, have I been living somewhere else or have they? *How can they be disconnected from this* [my emphasis]?

It is possible to speculate why racism, as a significant factor of exclusion and abuse, is apparently invisible to some. As noted previously, boundaries can take many forms, including the physical and geographical, for example, rivers, mountains or streets; they can be imagined constructs of national or political ward borders (Anderson, 1983); they can include religious or linguistic differences; they can be actual, physically constructed walls to separate people on the grounds of political and/or ethnic and 'racial' differences as in the Berlin Wall, the wall at Ústí nad Labem⁸⁵; the wall built by the Israeli government on the West Bank.⁸⁶ However, as Cohen (1998) observes:

But not all boundaries, and not *all* the components of *any* boundary, are so objectively apparent. They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by the people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side (Cohen, 1998: 12).

It may be, then, that claims of 'no racism here' derive from a range of standpoints, from lack of empathy, to self-delusion or self protection.⁸⁷ Or, perhaps it is because, as C. Wright Mills (1959; 2000:76) observes,

A problem to one man is no problem at all to another; it depends upon what each is interested in, and upon how aware he is of his interest. Moreover, an unfortunate ethical issue arises: Men are not always interested in what is to their interests.

What was noticeable, however, was that the experiences of those claiming an absence of racism were greatly outnumbered by the respondents who reported a range of racial abuse.

⁸⁵ See article by Balázová on the wall built at Ústí nad Labem, by the local Czech authorities, to separate the "ethnic Czechs from the ethnic Roma." at <http://www.geocities.com/~patrin/the-wall.htm> accessed 20th March 2006.

⁸⁶ See for example the BBC report on the West Bank wall online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4657151.stm accessed 20th March 2006. The physical walls (see also previous footnote) may also be viewed as both tangible and symbolic manifestations of the social construction of the outcast 'other'.

⁸⁷ It may also be pertinent to ask, "Who benefits from racism?" (See Hesse, 1992).

Visibility

Racist attacks, recounted during the research, took place in a variety of publicly shared open spaces and more situation-specific places; racist abuse was reported as occurring in a range of social settings, and took many forms, both overt and 'understated'. Explicit instances ranged from verbal to physical assaults, from attacks on property (vehicles, homes, businesses) to attacks on people. Claims of more 'subtle' forms of abuse were made when, for example, the victim or a witness did not hear racist language, but nevertheless had perceived the motivation behind certain actions to be racially aggravated. Frequently, there were multiple forms of abuse taking place on the same occasion.

Various authors have documented a wide range of racist incidents and behaviours, and their impact, including Brown (1999), Chahal and Julianne (1999), Fitzgerald and Hale (1996), Solomos and Back (1996) and Virdee (1995). The following accounts, taken from the whole sample, illustrate some of the experiences of racism in the research area:

2213: [community worker, white, female] There was a family here, and...he was a taxi driver. There had been niggly things, you know just the other boys [neighbours] stepping out into the road as they were driving past. If the kids were walking out, stepping out on to the pavement. Nothing that was criminal but it was nuisance...Sometimes it wasn't anything [concrete]. *How can you describe a look?* [my emphasis]

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] My Granda was terminally ill...and the guy in the bed next to him started shouting "Pakis, there's hundreds of them turn up". And I was really hurt by that... I had a word with the nurse and she said she would go and have a word with him [man who shouted]. And I think she did because he never said anything again after that. But the fact was that he *said* that, you know. I was gutted, like really gutted. It just brought it to the top, like I know that people, beneath, people feel it but a lot of them won't say it but they feel that they are some way better than ethnic minorities.

2224: [student, resident, Iranian, male] One month ago one of our members was passing ... through that alley, it was around 6.49pm and then he was attacked by one of the children [white teenager] and his nose was broken...

In addition, a common observation by black and minority ethnic respondents was that they experienced repeated, long term abuse in a variety of circumstances, from many sources, but often perpetrated by known individuals, on multiple occasions. Again this is important to note, because it resonates with the experience of domestic violence which, frequently, is also a repeat crime rather than a singular event, and of course, is perpetrated by people known to the victims. The repeat nature of both forms of violence, and the wide-reaching impact on multiple spheres of victims' lives, may lead to similar outcomes. In the following quote, if the words domestic violence are substituted for racial violence, the analysis remains equally valid:

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] Racial harassment is never ever a single occurrence. Victimisation then becomes a process of accumulated negative experiences affecting people's day-to-day decisions and exerting a detrimental impact on their quality of life and their lived experience. It's all part of life's routine. It occurs on a daily basis, influences all aspects of family life, partner relationships, children, visitors, family routine, family space, health and well being, and undoubtedly on feelings of security, confidence and comfort. So the people who are being victimised, are isolated, marginalised, both socially and economically and they may be scared to leave the home, or even scared to stay in the home.

Victims of both forms of violence may seek to implement coping or diversionary strategies; this carries no guarantee of cessation of violent attacks. In the following two examples, even when the people who were attacked took action to avoid or challenge the abuse, they were at best inconvenienced and economically disadvantaged, and at worst, threatened with further violence:

2224: [student, resident, Iranian, male] This is a group of teenagers... they smashed the windows on my car three months ago and they took out the radio cassette and stuff like that.

JH: Is it the same people?

2224: [student, resident, Iranian, male] They are the same...After that [last attack] I decided to park my car ... next to my friend's flat,

it was just 5 minutes from my flat. But I prefer to do that rather than wake up and see the windows smashed and you want to take your son to school and you don't know what to do, because at that time you should spend a lot of time to go out and repair it.

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] I told you, they broken the car. They broken my house, they burn my garage door. And when the insurance man came, they sent a man who will do it for you. They were paying me £500 but the insurance would go up. So they are not paying, you are paying finally. What can you do?... The polis has taken them to the court three or four times and he [perpetrator] got some time, but he was again outside, in the street.

JH: Did you have any more trouble when he got out?

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] Oh one day he stopped me on the road and he said he would smash me head. He had two men with him, two boys. I kept quiet. "I'll see you, I do this and that". Let him come... But what can you do? They targeted us and told his friend. Then they left the area, but there was another family, they used to bring the hammer and break the gates. We could not stop them. But now it is much better.

With only two exceptions,⁸⁸ all the incidents identified as racially motivated were perpetrated by white people, as individuals or perhaps as members or supporters of an extremist organisation,⁸⁹ targeting people of black and other minority ethnic backgrounds. In comparison with above illustrations, racialised abuse by black people towards white people in the research area was not identified as an issue by the majority of respondents.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] I have to be honest with you. I have never seen that round here.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] Well, it's – the majority is white unfortunately. It's white. It's white, I hate to say it. You know what it is, I'm getting less hassle, in fact I have had no real hassle off coloured people. I feel ashamed to say it but I have had no real hassle off coloured people.

⁸⁸ See pages 149-150 and 263.

⁸⁹ See also page 178 for an account of fascist, National Front stickers placed on Centre B, which was perceived by many residents to be a project for minority ethnic users only.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] Does it happen? [answers immediately and laughs]

Within academia, there has been much debate about the changing constructions of racism, from discrimination based on appearance and biological essentialism, to a focus on culture and presumptions of incompatibility between ethnic groups (e.g. Banton, 2001; Barker, 1981; Barot and Bird, 2001; Wieviorka, 1998). Arising from those debates is the critique of racialisation premised on a black-white dualistic model, not least because this contributes to the “conceptual ‘over-racialization’ of Asians and African-Caribbeans and the correlating ‘de-racialization’ of white minority groups”⁹⁰ and reinforces the “homogenization and reification of ethnic minority and majority groups” (Mac an Ghail, 1999:10).

Multiculturalist policies still allow the naturalization of the western hegemonic culture to continue while minority cultures become reified and differentiated from normative human behaviour (Parekh 2000 cited Yuval-Davis, 2005:11).

However, the view that racist perpetrators were predominantly white was supported by the data generated in this research, during which there were only two references⁹¹ to Asian residents abusing white residents.⁹² In the example [1103a] below, the children of an Asian family who had suffered long term exclusion, racism and abuse began to retaliate indiscriminately:

JH: So what happened with that family that you were saying were giving them [Asian family] a load of grief?

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] Em, not a lot [angrily]. Em, the police were involved on numerous occasions. I found even the little boys from the Asian family started to stay in by then. To be fair on both families, the Asian family would play out in the backyard, and they had the stairs going down, I mean you’ll know what I’m talking about by the flats. And they would - the only way they could get back [at the perpetrators] (and this started a lot of

⁹⁰ A concentrated focus on a simplistic black /white binary dynamic also makes invisible, for example, the racism experienced by Irish, Chinese, Eastern European, Traveller and other communities, and does not address inter and intra-ethnic conflicts (See Mac an Ghail, 1999 for further discussion).

⁹¹ The second example is discussed in Chapter 7 on Intersections of Race and Gender.

⁹² This may be in part because of the demographics in the research area and the range of the sample. Nevertheless, the resulting exploration of power dynamics inherent in the construction of community as discussed in this thesis may be valid in a range of differing community settings.

conflict with a lot of other residents I must admit) was that they would get dirty nappies, and they would hoy them at *anybody* in the lane, regardless of who it was.⁹³

The example above suggests that, in some instances, when black residents respond to racist abuse, they may then be perceived as perpetrators, regardless of any prior incidents that may have led up to the events described. This also picks up on a frequently recurring theme voiced elsewhere that ‘racism works both ways’, which is often underpinned by claims of injustice when referring to acts of violence by black people upon white people. This point will be explored in more detail below.

There is a further factor, related to visibility, which should also be noted. Being aware of racial violence is a prerequisite for the potential of intervention; however, it is not a guarantee of action. Parallel to identification of racism and assessments of risk are considerations of appropriate or acceptable intervention, determined by the subjective delineation of public versus private space and relations. By referring to the willingness of witnesses to intervene when racial attacks occur in or at the ‘private’ realm of the home, rather than incidents in public or communal areas, the boundaries of the obligation of community may also be reviewed.

Public / private divide?

When considering threats or acts of racist violence at an Asian family’s residence or business, respondents recorded a range of possible responses including contacting the police or the council to act. Even if there was uncertainty about the possible outcome, most people expressed a willingness to take some form of action:

2218a: [resident, white, male] Just warn them [the targeted family].

2218b: [resident, white, female] Just report them as long as the policeman didn’t come to the door [of the person reporting].

⁹³ I did not verify this story. It may have been accurate; it may also have reflected a form of racist myth-making. Hewitt (1996:17) also reported accounts of “Asians [who] throw dirty nappies out of the window”.

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] Because the council sometimes can do something, if it is their house, take it over and try to tell the police. But still what can you do?

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] Well if I seen it happen, I would phone the police and get it logged, get it reported. We could phone the number we have been given, ask for control and get it logged as an incident and get some help out to them straight away and get the graffiti removed... I'd ask the police to step up their patrols.

This willingness to intervene contrasts with responses to domestic violence in 'private' spaces (see Chapter 6) indicating that it is not necessarily the violent acts themselves that are judged to be unacceptable but rather the context in which they occur that influences responses and attitudes to the situation. Meanwhile, the visibility of racism was given further consideration by respondents who referred to manifestations of racism and class, as observed in relation to the characteristics of perpetrators.

Class and visibility

A distinction in *exhibitions* of racism was noted by respondents who referred to class. Class based accounts of racism, citing social stratification and social status formulated on fault lines of 'race' in relation to labour, have, broadly speaking, pointed to inter-class conflict, for example white working class prejudices against black workers, in the competition for employment and work conditions (Castles and Kosack, 1985) and to middle class racism, as seen in the exploitation and control of access to opportunity and resources, supported by institutionally racist practices (Faulkner, 2004; Rex and Moore, 1967).

Much research, including that on social cohesion, has inter-connected 'race' and class, linking high levels of economic and social deprivation proportionately with levels of crime and social disorder, particularly in areas that are ethnically diverse (Hirschfield and Bowers, 1997; Janner-Klauner, 2004; Lee, 2000). Violent acts, including

extreme, *visible*, forms of racist violence (i.e. physical, resulting in maiming or murder), have also been associated with place⁹⁴, focusing specifically on the living space, the locality of the working class.⁹⁵ As Forrest and Kearns (1999) note:

There is a tendency to focus on racial tensions in poor, ethnically mixed neighbourhoods or to see ethnic heterogeneity as a barrier to collective action and activity. The frustrations of poverty can certainly erupt and be expressed in racial terms and often they do so (Forrest and Kearns, 1999:16).

However, they go on to point out the empirical evidence from their study of two estates in Nottingham where there was a long history of ethnic diversity, stating this "had produced a gradual tolerance of difference and an evident decline in overt racist tensions" (Forrest and Kearns, 1999:17). One of the key words here is 'overt'. This research indicates that visibility of racism is a central component in constructions of community and claims of cohesion, in perceptions of risk and experiences of justice (which I consider in more detail below). Yet while a simplistic correlation between ethnic diversity and low levels of social cohesion has been vigorously challenged (John, 2001; Modood, 1994), the gaze remains firmly on so-called 'race' relations within the working class, leading to the observation that "the prevalence and impact of racial abuse in predominantly middle class areas has yet to be addressed" (Barter, 1999:2).

This research also found some examples of extreme racist violence in predominantly working class locations, within and close to the research area.⁹⁶

2231: [community activist, refugee resident, Rom, male] Some people have a very bad experience of living here, because NASS [National Asylum Support Service] give accommodation in...a very, very bad area. Every time you have a broken window and a

⁹⁴ This attitude is evident in the media coverage of the racist murder of Anthony Walker, in Liverpool, on 29th July 2005. Frequent reference was made, in tones ranging from surprise to incredulity, to the perception that the murder took place in a *middle class* enclave in Huyton, (which also has areas of high deprivation).

⁹⁵ A study of the North Plaistow project in East London by Bowling (1998) found that the most likely victims of racist abuse were Asian women and they were more vulnerable if living in local authority housing. The white male perpetrators were either resident on the same estates as the victims or on nearby estates. This raises the issues of gender, 'race' and class, discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

⁹⁶ The racist murder of Mr. D, an Iranian asylum seeker, took place in Broomwick, a city near to South Moor in August 2002.

fire in car in the last two weeks. Somebody put some petrol in the car - it's a very bad area. And asylum seekers have very, very bad experience. Everybody said, "It's like the Czech Republic area. I left the Czech Republic about this problem. Now I am coming for a democracy country and have the same problem."

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] A member of my family was actually racially attacked and ended up on a life-support machine for a few days. We had arson attacks. My father's business was burnt down.

However, the configuration of class, 'race' and location reveals a conceptual dilemma. The focus on the most obvious forms of racism, coupled with *the collectivising of middle class racism under the banner of 'unwitting' institutional racism*, may have created the impression that the working class, as individuals or as a stratum of society are more racist *and more culpable* in their racism. This has the effect of maximising perceptions of the extent of working class racism while either sanitising or rendering invisible the racism of the middle class. It also, as with domestic violence, problematises and prioritises physical assault ahead of other manifestations of violence and tactics of control.

In this research, it is not claimed that people from working class backgrounds were more racist than the middle class, but rather that racism was presented more *overtly* by some people from areas of high deprivation. This is illustrated by the following observations:

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] I feel that unfortunately – I don't like to classify people as a class, but... I think they are lower class people in that area unfortunately... you can see from their behaviour, from their style of life. For example they never, if you say, "Hi" to them, they never reply if you are from ethnic minority. I saw one of my best friends living there [in a more affluent area]; I had contact with her all the time. So ... I can't exactly feel what is the difference between two areas. Because maybe in that area, the people don't look at you or don't like to speak with you but never show their hatred towards you. They are quite polite.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] Like the racial harassment, the racial violence. It depends on where you live, isn't

it? People suffer but it could be the extent is different and the way they show this bit different... Sometimes like when you, if you live in the inner city area, it [racial harassment] is obvious. But sometimes when you live not in the inner city area, it is a little better area and your neighbour will not show perhaps, their racial abuse but they show it in a different way.

2230: [taxi driver, resident, Asian, male] I am in a public sector job...[and]...if I don't get abused every single day when I am out at work I don't think it is a good day [ironic]. ... There's something wrong there if I haven't been called a 'darkie' or a 'black bastard' or 'bin Laden'. It's a quick way of learning that people judge you by your colour. And the worst people are not the people from Hillside but they might say it because that's how they are brought up. The worst people are the intellectuals. The doctors, the lawyers, because they say it in such a way that they mean the same thing but they are polite about it. You know. "You people"...And you think what do you mean "*You people*"? [laughs ironically] Basically they are on about your colour. With their [speaks slowly] "Where you from?" I was born here, mate! ... That's what I'd like to say! "Britain is where I am from". People like that, educated people think they are so high and mighty and don't realize they are being racist. What's this, "Where are you from?" Where you are living now counts, not where your ancestors come from. His kids or his kids down the line probably won't know where their ancestors came from, but I know mine! [laughs].

These three speakers highlighted that for them, racism and racist abuse was a regular occurrence and *that the perpetrators were from both the working and middle class; the manifestations of racism from the middle class were merely more 'discreet'*. In addition, multiple forms of racism were experienced persistently by black and minority ethnic residents regardless of any other presenting socio-economic factors of either victims or perpetrators⁹⁷. For the speakers above, the primary signifier of difference picked up and acted on was their physical appearance, in particular their skin colour. Reinforced by racialised stereotypes and accompanying assumptions about nationality, the racism was exhibited by various means, non-verbal and verbal; rudely overt and 'politely' covert. The uniform factor in these encounters was that

⁹⁷ See also Raj (2003) for the responses to white racism in Britain of middle class Hindu Punjabis, who she claims "not only hide their success from white neighbors who they feel resent their prosperity, but they also distance themselves from poorer groups such as Bangladeshis" (Khandelwal, 2004 reviewing Raj, 2003 online at http://www.aaanet.org/aes/bkreviews/result_print.cfm?bk_id=3129 accessed 8th January 2006)

they conveyed, in varying degrees, difference, contempt, and distance: the boundaries of community and the markers of exclusion were both class and 'race'.

So far this chapter has considered some of the barriers to community responses to racial violence, including calculation of risk and visibility. This then pointed to the parameters of community as delineated by, race, class and to an extent gender. Before exploring the community responses identified during the research, the importance of community in relation to racial violence is now examined.

The place of community in responding to racial violence

In Chapter 2, Sibbett's (1997) work on the relationship between the community and racially motivated perpetrators was discussed and, to an extent, critiqued as a useful but potentially simplistic model. Nevertheless, the focus on the community in respect of racially motivated violence is still valid when considering work with perpetrators which adopts an holistic, long-term, inter-agency approach. The speaker below discussed the resources needed to create an environment that would sustain non-abusive behaviour after initial intervention with racist perpetrators. She envisaged a network (or perhaps a safety net) comprising workers from organisations such as Connexions, social services, family support or youth offending teams, and volunteers, to offer support, mentoring or just maintain contact. In recognising the difficulties presented for the individual who is trying to change, the focus is turned to the relationship between community and perpetrator.

2212: [community safety policy officer, white, female] We have to ...[ensure]... they [ex-perpetrators] are not worked with intensively for a period of time then dropped in the cold to sink or swim, because they will sink... I suspect it will need really constant intervention over a long period of time to maintain changes in attitudes and behaviours because it is so endemic. You are not going to do a 6 module programme over a month and expect people to go, "Oh, done it" because you are asking people to give up a lot. You know what I mean? Friends, family, life long habits, you know. All the stuff about the community, you can be ostracised by the community because you are not seen to condone or act out the violence.

Developing this theme further, Chahal (2003), in his evaluation of racial harassment support projects, refers to the relationship between the victim, the perpetrator and the wider community. He identifies the need to build 'local coalitions of support', stressing that victim support and casework alone will not provide sufficient challenge to racist abuse:

[T]he victim, the perpetrator(s) and the community are interlinked and require an effective intervention that recognises this context...Projects should therefore consider working with victims and agencies to identify who the allies might be within a neighbourhood and within familial networks to create a coalition of support, develop conflict resolution strategies, instigate awareness raising campaigns and identify long-term prevention strategies in local communities (Chahal, 2003:39).⁹⁸

With these intertwined relationships in mind, I will now turn to examples of community responses to racial violence which were identified during the research, and explore further the construction and enactment of community that these illustrations reveal.

Community responses to racial violence

The research identified a range of community-based or community-experienced responses, aimed at challenging racist violence, which were initiated at a number of levels, including:

- 1) the individual,
- 2) the collective or community, and
- 3) the corporate or institutional.

⁹⁸ Similar concerns, about sustainable attitudinal and behavioural change in *domestically* violent men, are raised by Cavanagh et al (1996) and Dobash et al (2000). Dobash et al (2000:184) strongly advocate an holistic approach: "While abuser programs are a vital part of the overall societal response to violence against women in the home, they certainly cannot be the only part, and numerous other agencies need to be involved in constructing an overall approach to responding effectively to men who already use violence; to the needs of women who are abused; and to the children who make up the next generation of adults, some of whom will become the next generation of abusers and abused unless and until concerted efforts are focused clearly on the cessation of this violence. Whether undertaken by the state, the community education, the media, or others, all responses should be carefully examined with an eye to considering the extent to which they are simply orientated to tending to the inevitable rather than contributing to the transformative project of ending violence against women in the home."

In the following pages, I examine some of these responses to give a picture of the initiatives and dynamics that shaped and informed perceptions of community, and potentially impacted on social cohesion.

1) The individual response

During the research, there were many accounts given of positive interactions between residents from diverse ethnic backgrounds, some of which I witnessed personally. When asked specifically about community responses to racial violence, interviewees referred to individuals reacting to incidents of racial violence, either immediately or after they occurred.

JH: Do you know of any community responses round here, to racial violence?

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] Well yes, neighbour, if they see a fight or something you know. Sometimes they give me a ring you know, this is happening, that is happening, somebody is at your door.

JH: So is that just individual people?

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] Yes, yes. Yes. People know you, they tell you. Yes. Someone came and took my car and the Sikh woman came to me from 5 doors down and she said, "They are taking your car." And we do the same thing, if we see something. Like Mr. S's shop and I know somebody was kicking it, and I ring the police. Or something I see, I ring the police if I am suspicious, you know.

JH: Did other people in the community stick up for him [victim of sustained racist abuse]?

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] Well, we did. We said, "It's wrong". He [victim] shouldn't go, cos they are an elderly couple now. And I went to one of the families [white perpetrators] and said, "It's wrong that you should go against these people, cos they don't deserve to be hassled. All they want is to be left alone to live their life and to walk down the street without abuse or having their windows stoned or whatever." I says, "There is no need for it. They don't do you no harm at all so why harm them?"

This was interesting to me in that I asked about community responses, meaning communal or collective reactions, but this was reinterpreted as any act by a person in the community, which in this context meant all those living in the small, geographical location. This suggested to me that *individual* acts of care and consideration were construed as '*community-in-action*', as representative of an ethos of informal guardianship and reciprocity that encapsulated the concept 'community'. Each intervention potentially demonstrated an altruistic care for others that transcended divisive considerations of ethnicity, faith or gender, and in doing so possibly contributed to a sense of community and belonging. This was evident in the following excerpt, told after the speaker [2228a] had talked about a very violent attack which he suffered when in his shop. Here, he recounts subsequent offers of help received from the 'community':⁹⁹

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male] And all the villains in this area, they've got that much respect for me that they said, "If you know who it is, we can go and do him over". *That's the sort of respect I've got* [my emphasis]. That's from the main villains who live here, *which I thought was nice of them* [my emphasis]. I says, "It's not worth it, what's the point you know?" Like anybody that comes in here, I try to get on with everybody whether they are villains or just ordinary people, which I think is important, because if you get somebody behind the counter who is going to be against these people, he is going to be in trouble, I would think, all the time. He's going to be targeted. *I mean, we are coloured any way so we have to be a little bit more careful* [my emphasis] as well in case there is any backlash from them [white community].

The above contributions, it could be argued, are illustrative of the 'individual' becoming 'collective', in the sense that they were interpreted by the speakers as being representative of the 'care of the community'. However, if acts of support may be transposed to become symbolic of community, then acts of abuse may also be interpreted as collectively representative too (see 'The 'collective' as a barrier to intervention' below).

⁹⁹ See also Chapter 6 page for a similar offer in relation to domestic violence.

Inhibiting individual responses

Some respondents who identified barriers to individual responses pointed out that they personally were inhibited not only by considerations of risk, or isolation, but also by a sense of helplessness. Racist violence, being a repeat phenomenon rather than a single event, precipitated a process leading to ongoing fear or distress due to threats to personal safety and wellbeing, and, in many instances, breakdown of trust and separation from the wider community. The sheer persistence and pervasive impact of racist violence led even the staunchest campaigners for racial justice to retreat, at times, into periods of despair and withdrawal.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] I think, you know, Dayita [addressing herself] with all your skills and all your contacts and you can't help your fucking mother? Do you know what I mean? Help your mother! But there's nothing I can do. I can't help me sister when she's screaming at me [loudly] "Dayita, the kids are outside – They are chucking stuff at us!" And I think "Just tell them to fuck off" – you know [wearily] Or "I don't want to know". Or actually I don't want to know - because I don't want them to come chucking stones at my windows [sadly]. You know? And you internalise it.

This led me to conclude that, just as individual acts of positive intervention are not viewed as independent of, but rather as indicative of, community, so the individual isolation and helplessness of the victim of violence becomes emblematic, reinforcing the homogeneity and collectivity of the 'perpetrator community' and heightening the exclusion and loneliness of the targeted person or group. This then contributes the 'flight or fight' response (see the accounts of 1103a/b below). There were also a number of positive collective responses to racial violence identified during the research, as described in the following sub-section.

2) The collective or community response

Some individuals experiencing repeated racial harassment and violence responded by joining with others in the same or similar circumstances, to develop support

mechanisms and structures that benefited themselves and others. One such collective response to the repeat victimisation of Iranian families was to fund leisure activities, initiated by a council employed harassment worker, which were then co-ordinated and promoted by a committee formed by members of that community.

1107: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] It's very difficult to develop a collective response [to racially motivated violence]...Certainly ... the best example is the work we have done with the Iranian community – suffering racist attacks, particularly when taking children to school or collecting groceries. People ... wanted interaction and sociability. So we decided that, in order to build people's confidence, we set up a swimming group...We were very conscious that you can respond to one incident of racial harassment but if you can equip the community with skills to build confidence they can deal with the matter themselves.

This 'indirect' approach was proven to be successful. Although the immediate concern was to tackle the isolation and fear, which was heightened by the racist attacks, the mechanics of setting up, promoting and facilitating the swimming group brought together individuals and families who until that point had little contact outside of the university environment. The resulting confidence was complemented by other community-led strategies.

2224: [student, resident, Iranian, male] We decided ...to go with the group. People are going around lonely. That was the best action for us. For example, my kid he wants to play outside, I can't force him to stay at home. He is seven. So we decided at least 7 or 8 families living in a circle. So my kid wants to go out, I will phone up my friend and "Is your kid coming out? Are you coming out?" So at least one supervisor will be with them... and...other people living in our community or in ... the Housing Association homes, they realise that ok, we are all highly educated people who don't do any harm things to them. We keep the environment calm and also we did not come here, for example, to get their money. We have something to do that. Here we are specialised persons, we have skills.

In this instance, the collective approach was a catalyst for improved relations with the wider community. This informal guardianship, and reciprocity in the form of shared childcare within the Iranian community, initially addressed the needs of the parents, who created a safe environment for their children. Importantly, the visibility of the

Iranian residents in such positive circumstances appeared to break down barriers of mistrust among neighbours from the wider community, and led to collaborative relationships between the landlords and tenants from diverse backgrounds. By tackling racism and threat, in the first instance through relatively low key, self supporting initiatives, links were made that ensured the Iranian residents were valued as good neighbours, and that acknowledgement led to their further participation in the life of the community as active citizens.

2224: [student, resident, Iranian, male] So the housing association, they work with us very well, and they publicised we are an overseas group living here. We make the community to be nicer, for example the neighbours – we don't have violence in our community, we don't disturb our neighbours, especially during the night and stuff like that. So after spending one or two years, the people in housing association are looking friendly to us. The staff and the white neighbours also, because in answer to the monthly newsletter, we had one of our members as one of the community members. They elected one of our members to do lots of things like organising trips. So people [in the resident's association] realise that OK we are doing something to the community.

Clearly this is an example where relatively simple (and low cost) initiatives fostered community cohesion within and between communities. Another practical, collective response emerged from the daily abuse of local, Asian, business people. This led to a long term project, which encouraged further community action to address racial violence. Funding was secured through council and a regeneration scheme, 'trade safe' project, and after three years, ten very successful target-hardening projects¹⁰⁰ reached completion. This led to further funding being allocated to continue the work. As a result of this initiative, shopkeepers and other business people who had felt isolated when faced with racial abuse and violence, formed alliances across faith groups, and held regular meetings with the police to press for effective responses to racial violence that affected the wider community as well as themselves.

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male] We set up the South Side Asian Traders Association. That was set up because of the racial harassment that a lot of the shopkeepers were getting in the area... People suffered in silence they had nowhere to turn to. We help make people aware of what grants are available for security, such as

¹⁰⁰ Target hardening projects – devices to enhance security, including locks, lighting, lockable metal shutters at windows.

CCTV systems, security grills and things like that. Now we have got the association going...we have a backup of 100 members! It seems to help people because a lot of people were getting racial harassment and nothing was being done. The same with the police, people used to never come forward, but now we have the association they are aware of it and things are moving, it's a pressure group. It's unfortunate that you need to have these groups to get something going.

All the above examples indicate that, at the individual level, there were acts of neighbourliness, of altruistic gestures of care that attempted to deal with presenting situations but other than perhaps facilitating a sense of belonging or inclusion on the part of social actors involved, there might be little opportunity to impact on or extend cohesion given that the participants tended to be known to each other, so the reciprocity was localised. At the collective level, the practical responses increased the potential for benefit for both individuals and those within specific groups, leading to more long term outcomes, which included sustained positive interaction between a wider, more loosely connected core of beneficiaries.¹⁰¹ This active, participative citizenship, then, could be said to contribute to the development of social cohesion, having evolved initially from internal, through provisional to expansive cohesion as exemplified by the future plans outlined below:

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male] We are having a big event shortly, in October... We had one [event] last year...and the Mayor and South Moor regional police were there. It went very well. We'll probably have a pop group and things, you know, an Asian pop group like. Local Asian shopkeepers in the area will come down. We want the community involved as well, that's the whole of the South Side...

Not all attempts to counteract racist attacks produced such a positive outcome, however, as indicated in the following examples below.

¹⁰¹ Literature on social networks points to the impact of strong and weak ties, or connections, between and within communities, as a conduit for sustainable, mutual advantage and reciprocity. For detailed debates on social networks, see for example Ahlbrandt (1984), Bridges (2002), Granovetter (1982).

The 'collective' as a barrier to intervention?

A local councillor told how a family in her ward were suffering repeated racist attacks and had become increasingly isolated in their own home. In an attempt to offer support, and to open up opportunities for contact with the wider community, the councillor and other residents made gentle approaches towards the family. Some residents had decided to organise a street party, and there were a number of attempts made to contact the family and invite the children. At first, communication was difficult, because of a lack of a shared language. The councillor persisted, leaving a note through the door to say she had called. Eventually, contact was successful and the family accepted the invitation to the party. After this, the councillor and others in the community maintained contact and encouraged the family to become involved in meetings about plans to regenerate the local area.

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] It took a long time, mind you. It wasn't just a week or a fortnight, I would say just over a year, it took about a full year, to actually...

1103b: [councillor, resident, white, male] To get them involved?

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] For them to realise that we weren't a threat, Joe. And we weren't. A threat...And they did eventually start to come to meetings as well. The ladies, the ladies actually started, *but* the only way that we could actually get them involved was if we had the meeting actually in our house.

However, the family were subjected to sustained racial violence again, and despite the efforts of the councillor and local people in the residents' group, the family became isolated from the wider community once more.

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] We had gotten a break through. They (Asian family) were participating (in community events)... then sadly, we got some families moved in within the other street, eh, gave this family in particular a *lot* of grief. And I mean a *lot* of grief. And it was racial. No buts about it, it was racial. And we tried to intervene, as a residents' association, as an action group. It did work to an extent, but I felt that them people never felt - safe - after that... and then it got worse from there...eventually the family [perpetrators] left...because as you know they don't stay long these type of families, they drift on...But it was still never the same. It was still never the same.

As seen previously, the impact of repeat racist violence is far reaching, affecting individuals, families and communities in many ways. The abusers were not long term members of the community but they were white, and even when they left, the trust between the Asian family and non-perpetrator white residents was gone, in a scenario reminiscent of the *dynamics* of Sibbet's (1997) perpetrator communities. The racialised fault lines of community were reinstated and in this case, as with others, it curtailed opportunities for economic and civic participation (Niyazi, 1996).

Other interviewees also identified the concept of 'race' as a powerful boundary, which, as in the following examples, inhibited intervention. More specifically, as indicated by the responses [2219; 2214a, 2214b] below, there can be an assumption of grouping or collectivity based on perceptions of 'race', which carries with it an expectation of allegiance based around that construct. There was a clear expectation that anyone who crossed the 'colour line' (Gilroy, 2000) to challenge white racists would also be viewed in racialised terms, either as a 'race traitor', if seen as being of the same ethnic background as the perpetrators or as a legitimate additional target for abuse, if seen as belonging to the targeted group.

JH: Why do you think most people wouldn't do anything [if they saw a young Asian woman being attacked by white young men]?

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] I think for fear of being attacked themselves if it's a group of young lads and they see you sticking up for a coloured person, depending if they have drink or drugs in them they tend to turn on you, it backfires.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] If it was a group of lads you didn't know, they would overpower you.

2214b: [young resident, white, female] Aye cos they would say, "Paki Lover" and they would start on you.

2214a: Aye but it's different as well, cos if Kathy [2214b] says something, she is white and you can tell, so it would be "Paki lover", this and that, and she would get it because she is white, but if it was me it would all turn on me because they would say, "Shut up you darkie! You are only sticking up for her because she is a darkie".

In her perceptive observations above, the last speaker [2214a] identifies a subtle yet key distinction as she anticipated different responses from racist perpetrators to herself as a young woman of dual heritage, compared to her friend, who is white. Targeted by white youths for intervening on behalf of an Asian woman, 2214a was deemed, by her physical appearance, to be showing solidarity for a woman who was, as it were, like herself. She and the woman were linked together as representatives of the same 'community'. On the other hand, her friend [2214b] would be abused because she had 'crossed the colour line', in effect demonstrating allegiance to a woman outside her community. The insult 'Paki lover' carried with it not only condemnation at the perceived show of disloyalty to her own 'race', but also undertones of sexual deviancy.¹⁰² In the former case, the speaker's perceived ethnicity was the target for abuse, in the latter instance, the ethnicity i.e. whiteness remained the standard that must not be sullied. In a perverse way, the encounter reiterated the racialised boundaries of community: 2214a and the original victim were on one side of the fault line; the perpetrators and 2214b were on the other. The collectivity of community formed through the lens of 'race' was maintained.

A further 'collective' response to racist violence identified during the research was that of corporate or institutional bodies. Although the responses discussed below were not 'of', i.e. initiated *by* the 'community', the expressed concerns were raised repeatedly by many of the interviewees in the context of discussions on community responses to racial violence. The 'handling' of racism by corporate mechanisms was clearly of significance to respondents, as indicated by the data below.

3) Corporate or Institutional Responses

Macpherson (1999) et al have made reference to those organisations and institutions whose practices are deemed to be racist, with the focus shifting from individual acts to structures, policies and customs, which have the effect of racially discriminating against or disadvantaging black and minority ethnic communities. During this

¹⁰² See Chapter 7 for further discussion of this theme.

research, a number of residents expressed anger that interventions from statutory agencies, including the police, were ineffective and unsuccessful when challenging repeated racist incidents. This led to mistrust in the services, which in turn created a reluctance to report crimes of racial (and domestic) violence.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] People can sit and cry about it [racial harassment], they can ring up projects where there's workers who don't understand the issues, who are not committed to changing things so there isn't anywhere to turn to. You ring the police, you ring the police, you ring the police then you ring the police, right, and twenty years on, it's still happening. And people's experiences haven't changed, from that mistrust of nothing happening, like, "This is what we are going to do to people who are racist. This is what we are going to do to people who commit domestic violence" *because the people in power are part of the perpetrators* [speaker's emphasis].

While condemnation of corporate responses focused on a range of organisations, including the local authority, the majority of concern was directed towards the police. Two recurring themes emerged in discussions about policing racist violence. Firstly, there were frequent references made during the research about an initial lack of legal recognition, by police and the criminal justice system, of the racially motivated or aggravated element of incidents, as illustrated by the following data:

2215b: [civil servant, regional remit, white, male] It's getting the agencies and the police in particular to take it seriously as well. To get the right processes and procedures to investigate it.

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] And what became prevalent was that some people are more scared to report incidents than not to report them. The police will take ages to arrive. The police are not interested in minor incidents, they simply do not care. Some police even doubt that incidents are racist, despite suspected offenders having previous convictions or arrests for racially aggravated offences. People are unhappy with the previous action. There was a quote that came up time and time again "Nothing ever happens. Nothing ever happens." So undoubtedly there is a lack of confidence, not just in the police but in other agencies.

Secondly, respondents referred to unsatisfactory responses and outcomes after reporting abuse, which inhibited the reporting of subsequent incidents, as communities lost trust in the criminal justice system.¹⁰³ This is illustrated by the following data:

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] It takes an awful lot of courage to then make a stand and report an incident, particularly when you have friends and family around who have gone through the legal system already (and some of these people may be well educated and may be affluent, may be shop owners, private landlords, who have gone for prosecutions) and they have been told at court that racially aggravated charges have been dropped and the outcome that they have been assured in the law, was not the outcome that they got...The police have been called, not catalogued them as racist incidents so the charges through the criminal prosecution service have been dropped or amended.

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] If you like, you can go to the police but living in the area might create you more problems. I tell you, it happened with me. If you are living here and you say something, how can police come some time if they are under age, 14, 15? You can't do a thing you know. And the polis told me, "It's better to hold your tongue here. It's better to try to keep quiet, but inform the police, otherwise they come in a crowd." What can you do? One day the crowd came and they grabbed earth and mud and threw it on my old house. What can I do? What can the polis do? You get used to it... [but] I do feel angry you know.

Ineffective challenges to racist incidents may be attributed in part to the prevalence of racism, and reporting rates may be affected because of fear of reprisals. However, a common theme to emerge was the inconsistency of police responses, to specific incidents [1109 below], and, more widely, to identifying and recording racially motivated violence [2223; 2225a/2225b below]. This further undermined confidence in the police and criminal justice system:

¹⁰³ This was also a matter of continued concern to a multi-agency advisory group which monitored and shaped work with racially motivated perpetrators, in South Moor, from 2002 – 2006. I was an active member of this group from 2002-2004, during which time there were repeated examples given by the project worker of the racially aggravated elements of charges being dropped when cases, including violent acts, came to court. The project worker was informed by court staff, probation officers, police officers and others that the racially aggravated element was dropped in order to secure a conviction on the remaining charges: it was assumed by those making the decision that that it would be too difficult to prove racist motivation for the criminal acts being pursued. The logic was that it was preferable to obtain a conviction on a lesser charge, than not to convict at all.

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] I phoned the [city centre] police and they never even turned up. They didn't even bother to come. At least in South Side, I think there's a difference, because they are more aware of the issues. I mean there is a large Asian community... With South Side, if I ring up to make a complaint, I usually get a phone call back to say well, we are there now and the guy's whatever. So I was expecting that phone call from the city centre as well saying, "Oh well we are here". I don't think they even bothered sending somebody up because I never got that phone call back. I waited around and went. I mean that could quite easily have turned into violence.

Training for police officers was highlighted as an issue of concern, in terms of identifying and recording racist incidents [2223] and as a vehicle for changing or adapting racist attitudes found within the police force [2225a/2225b]. This is illustrated by the following data:

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] I think there is some inexperience and it's a training implication, what inexperienced PC's and beat managers are deciding incorrectly because clients told me, "We reported this. We said it was a racist incident. We rang 999. They are kicking down the door and the police or the operator on the phone said, "Tell them [attending police officer] this is harassment, under the additional harassment act racially aggravated penalties." Then when the PBO [police beat officer] turns up to investigate, they decide that "Well perhaps there is not enough evidence, or not enough people to come forward as witnesses to backup this, so I will put it down as a neighbourhood dispute and put it through the system."

2215a: [senior civil servant, regional remit, white, male] My impression is some police forces have done a lot more than others, you know.

2215b: [civil servant, regional remit, white, male] Mmmm [agreeing]

2215a: There has been a commitment from the top [highest ranks of the police], they have brought in competencies, they have brought in training. They have said that's unacceptable. You can /can't use that sort of language,¹⁰⁴ you know, it's worked through whereas

¹⁰⁴ It is important to acknowledge the symbolic power of language to evoke constructions of difference, power and hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1992), which may ultimately be implicated in, at the extreme, in acts of genocide (Keane, 1996; Smith, 2003, van Dijk, 1999). However, it is clearly insufficient 'progress' to merely 'sanitise' or prohibit the use of racist terminology if racist attitudes remain and can be acted on, supported by structures, including those of the state, which are either inadequately utilised or

others you have the impression, you know “We don’t have a problem. There’s not very many out there”. [laughs]

2215b: Patronising

2215a: It’s almost that sort of 20 years ago, “We don’t to bother about it. This is the South Moor region”. [laughs]

The implications here are that, despite training on racism and issues of diversity, and despite the legal requirements placed upon the police to promote racial equality, in practice the service delivery was inconsistent. As the above statements suggest, this was not only due to a failure of some officers to act on the MacPherson (1999) definition of a racist incident¹⁰⁵ when responding to and recording racist incidents, but also, importantly, because awareness and understanding of the nature and impact of racism remained inadequate and unchanged at many levels within the force.

As noted previously in this chapter, the question of the ‘*visibility*’ of racism was raised by respondents. It would not be surprising, then, to find similar ‘blind-spots’ and related discriminatory attitudes and/or practices present at all levels within the police force, given that recruits are still predominantly white, and also are products of their own communities.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on the police as well as other listed public authority bodies, to eliminate “discrimination (direct and indirect) and victimisation” and to actively engage in a

monitored, and/or are inherently institutionally racist i.e. that disadvantage or discriminate against minority groups.

¹⁰⁵ The MacPherson (1999) definition, “A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person” has been widely adopted (if not acted upon) by many institutions, including the police, the crown prosecution service and local authorities (see for example <http://www.cps.gov.uk>) accessed 10th November 2005.

¹⁰⁶ The undercover reporter, Mark Daly, in the BBC programme, “The Secret Policeman”, transmitted 21st October 2003, noted that there was a significant number of racist probationary police officers. “The majority of officers I met will undoubtedly turn out to be good, non-prejudiced ones intent on doing the job properly. But the next generation of officers from one of Britain’s top police colleges contains a significant minority of people who are holding the progress of the police service back. Racist abuse like “Paki” and “Nigger” were commonplace for these PC’s. The idea that white and Asian members of the public should be treated differently because of their colour was not only acceptable for some, but preferable.” See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3210614.stm> accessed March 10th 2006. See also http://www.blink.org.uk/docs/secret_policeman.htm accessed 10th March 2006, for the transcript from the BBC’s (2003) programme, “The Secret Policeman”.

“general duty to promote racial equality”.¹⁰⁷ In practice, this was met with some scepticism by respondents, as indicated by the preceding data.

The accounts given above, relating to predominantly to policing, indicate a strong dissatisfaction with the responses from that wing of the criminal justice system. Similarly, within communities in the research area, there were mixed responses identified in the practice, provision and attitudes of organisations, including the local authority, towards racial violence. This has implications for the social cohesion agenda, in that structures and institutions were seen to be failing black and minority ethnic communities despite recent policy and legislation.¹⁰⁸ Inadequate corporate and institutional responses, including those described in the research, compound the original racist insult and/or injury, thereby feeding into further marginalisation of groups and individuals, from mainstream service provision and from adequate recourse to social justice through the criminal justice system. In this way, the ‘invisibility’ of racism is embedded in the structures with a responsibility to *address* racist abuse. It then follows that, with racism ‘hidden in full view’, the *injustice* of the response may also be concealed.

It could be argued that the apparent denial of racist motivation serves to bring the boundaries of community in sharp focus again for those who *do* experience, observe or interpret acts as racially motivated and yet have their interpretation of events denied. The significance of ‘invisibility’ to social cohesion, especially when linked to a sense of injustice is taken up again in Chapter 8 (see also ‘Justice and Entitlement’ below). Meanwhile I turn to further examples, identified during the research, of the demarcation of community borders through the lens of race, ethnicity and nationality.

¹⁰⁷ See www.homeoffice.gov.uk for details of Amendment to Act accessed February 11th 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Recent legislation and policy includes the Race Relations Amendment Act (2001) which places a new statutory duty on public authorities “to promote race equality. The aim is to help public authorities to provide fair and accessible services, and to improve equal opportunities in employment” quoted on the Commission for Racial Equality website, which includes details of the legal requirements of the “‘race’ equality duty at <http://www.cre.gov.uk/duty/index.html~specific> accessed 20th March 2006.

Imagined communities: The chains of 'othering'

As noted in chapter 4, and in more detail in subsequent pages, the historic, political and socio-economic origins of divisions between settled communities may influence contemporary relationships (Anderson, 1983), which are then enacted within an hierarchical framework of power constructed on the basis of assumed 'racial' or national differences. This is underscored with notions of justice, entitlement and belonging. It is evident, then, that the ideology of 'race' and the multiple expressions or racisms both new and old are persistent, powerful and present (and international). Whether based on phenotypes, on assumptions of psychological traits, or on claims of the incompatibility of cultures, individuals and groups are singled out for abuse, derision and exclusion. Inherent in the demarcation process is the struggle for supremacy and for power. Stratification and hierarchy were key themes raised repeatedly by many respondents.

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] Carrying the chain on... victimising someone they think they are better than, it's carrying the chain on. I think in the Asian community the Sikhs think they are better than the Pakistanis, the Pakistanis think they are better than the Bengalis, then there's a chain as well that goes down [laughs] But I don't know if that's something that's been learned or if it's from all the trouble back home, there's all the fighting, but it all comes down to the British Empire, splitting things, amalgamating things when they left and stuff... So there's a lot of infighting, but when it comes down to being racist, this country, when you look at the balance of power, it's in the hands of the white people.

As this speaker so vividly articulates, any boundaries drawn between given communities along the fault lines of assumed national, religious or cultural superiority are in fact chains that both sustain and perpetuate divisions within society, while simultaneously entrenching a sense of identity within specific groups. He points to 'inter-ethnic' tensions, which in some areas of Britain have erupted into violence, or claims of no-go areas based on certain 'ethnically identified' groups staking their claim on sub-neighbourhood territories (but as alluded to previously, this may be a case of posturing masculinities in the guise of 'race'/ethnicity. This matter is examined again in Chapter 7 on the intersections of race and gender).

However, not all stereotyping, identified during the research, appeared negative at first. In some instances, when questioned about community responses to racial violence, an interesting perception of communities emerged, as it were, *from outsiders looking in*. The Sikh, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities were characterised by individuals who were not of those communities as strong, determined and active against racist abuse. In that sense, there was still a homogenisation of the communities by outsiders, irrespective of their own ethnicity or experiences, but in the examples [2227; 2228a; 2219] below, there was a reification of Asian communities as strong, cohesive entities. This stands in contrast to the more frequent, negatively charged framing of minority communities as other and sub-ordinate.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] Communities also need to be together. If they want to be active, they need to work together and they need to be strong...I mean like the Pakistani community are more strong, they can fight back. That's what I feel, that the Bangladesh one is more docile...[Perhaps] because the Bangladeshi are new here, the newest community among the other communities and also perhaps they are working hours, they don't have the time even to spend. It is the women who looks after the community?

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male] I think it depends on that actual community, who they are. Like the Bangladeshi community for example. They would stick up for every body in their own community. It just depends on the community. I think the Bangladeshi community have the backup of their own community they have community leaders, which deal with their own community themselves.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] I think they have a tendency to favour their own You see coloured families are tight knit and when there is trouble they always club together, you know and you cannot get past it. Like a wall of stone. A wall of stone... That's how they have made it because they have stuck together ... and this is what the coloured families do when there is trouble. Especially the Sikhs. I have never known [such] strong willed families as the Sikhs in all my life.

On the surface, these views may be perceived as a positive construction of the 'Other', with attributes of self-help, care and fortitude, but as noted elsewhere in this chapter, the assumed homogeneity of 'others' actually reinforced notions of

difference and separation, which in turn may inhibit intervention when abuse (particularly domestic and racial violence), is identified. This, in turn, can also lead to 'they look after their own' sentiments, which then equates with the presenting violence is "not a policy issue".

Also, the positively expressed views were less widely held than the more frequently articulated, negative perceptions of groups, when comparisons and distinctions were made. The downside of reification is a proscriptive identity allocation, which can then be utilised for exclusion, non-intervention, violence or justification of resentment. For example:

The reification of 'the Muslim community' has brought with it...its own set of demonologies - the underclass, the terrorist, the Fundamentalist, the book burner, the rioter - which have served equally to pathologise these groups *as* communities (Alexander, 2000:231).

The pathologising of long-term Asian communities was evident when respondents raised concerns of injustice and inequality, linked to entitlement and respect, considered in more detail in subsequent pages. This process of exclusion based on collective 'othering' was also evident in relation to racialised newcomers, namely asylum seekers and refugees, who were often singled out for abuse, particularly when they were from a 'visible' minority ethnic background. As such, recorded reactions to asylum seekers may give some insight into the dynamics of community formation and point to some tensions inherent in the cohesion problematic.

2220e: [resident, white, female] I think they ['people', the 'community'] are harder on the asylum seeker than the white person, they are harder, I think

JH: Why do you think that is?

2220e: [resident, white, female] I don't know. But I definitely think it is though.

2213: [community worker, white, female] Jenny [co-worker] has said, actually now the refugees and asylum seekers have replaced the Income Support [Claimants] now in the hatred list. They are way down on the bottom. And I thought it was quite interesting when they did make comparisons, because it used to be all those on

Income Support, on benefits and now it's refugees and asylum seekers.

The pervasiveness of this low positioning in the social hierarchy was evidenced by the frequency and range of disparaging comments about refugees and asylum seekers, made by both black and white residents. This may in part have been due to a lower social status afforded to asylum seekers as non-citizens, who were then perceived as extant to any resident community, a view that some respondents associated with negative representations in the media and with comments from politicians. Others talked of the role of peer group association, or parental attitudes in fuelling resentment and prejudice against asylum seekers/refugees. Another factor was the broadening of individual experience into the stereotyping of entire groups or communities, which in turn prevented inter-community contact because of mistrust.

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] I am sure there is suspicion when we do not have full understanding. We form stereotypes. We make hypothetical leaps of faith and most of these stereotypes are historically formed, incorrectly, so ignorance breeds ignorance so unless you have a direct relationship or understanding of something, what is the incentive for you to cross that great divide to learn?

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] But there was that young lad who was in our street and he was noncing¹⁰⁹ the bairns. And it only takes one person and it's the whole community of them. And it's like I was saying before, if I go out of the area and somebody says, "Where are you from?" "Hillside" and people class you all the same as everybody else round here. Same as that one boy – he could have been from anywhere round here but because he was an asylum seeker they tarnish them all the same. It's like those spraffing¹¹⁰ ones [asylum seekers] up the street. They were always spraffing.

Distance and separation were further enforced through a racialised/cultured coding of

¹⁰⁹ Noncing- sexually abusing

¹¹⁰ Spraffing – scrounging; persistent borrowing

otherness which was linked to danger and/or criminality, as evident in the stereotypes below of the sexual predator,¹¹¹ and the sneak thief.

2220f: [resident, white, female] Here man, all the kids are going [clicks fingers, talks animatedly] “Here, man, they are going to pinch all the young lasses and get married so they can stay in the country.” That’s what it was all about when they first came. That’s why they got all the abuse when they first came.

2220e: [resident, white, female] Some of them have sick minds sort of thing, though.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] I was hearing about a burglary at somebody’s house... There were 5 women and one man, and also children and a baby, and they were trying to distract the people in the shop. They entered from the shop to the house on the top floor, and one of the women crawled past and then went up. The safe was open, because they have lottery money and there was £10k and all the jewellery. And it was Romany people...In the last two, three weeks, they [black residents] are again talking about black refugees and asylum seekers [as criminals].

Just as stories of local incidents fed into the reproduction of racialised marginalisation, so more widely published events were taken up and utilised in the manufacture of communities. One event ‘overseas’ continued to have repercussions for local residents in the research area, as both individuals and as members of actual and imagined collectives; as representatives of both self-defined and externally allocated communities. Whatever the source or explanation attributed to ‘day-to day’ stereotypical views, this one incident was singled out repeatedly as a catalyst for widespread, overt expressions and acts of racism towards black and Asian residents—the attack on the World Trade Centre on 11th September 2001.

September 11th

The following accounts are given to indicate the extent of the abuse ostensibly linked to the attack on September 11th and to highlight that anyone from a visible minority

¹¹¹ See also Chapter 7 for further discussion on this theme.

ethnic community who appeared to be of Asian heritage was deemed to be a legitimate target, regardless of age, occupation, class, gender, religion, country of origin, or location and activity at the time of the racist incidents. With only one exception [1101]:

1101: [councillor, resident, white, male] My radar is usually very good and if I didn't pick up on it, someone would tell me...The police are being particularly vigilant too. I would say I haven't picked up on any increased tension post-September 11th.

all references to September 11th related incidents that occurred in the first fifteen months after the strike on the World Trade Centre.¹¹² The confrontations were primarily linked to the event, as demonstrated by the following excerpts, but were indicative of wider patterns of racist abuse:

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] I was sitting in a bar with me mates and... people...banged on the window, pretending they are aeroplanes and stuff and obviously you know what they are doing. You know, like bombing.

1110: [health policy officer, Asian, female] We've had so many cases of people just being refused to be served in shops. I have been attacked in Avondale Road [main shopping area in South Moor] where people have just chanted Bin Laden, Bin Laden, Bin Laden.

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] In Seacote [coastal area near to South Moor], an effigy was hung up, with a turban, adorned with a beard and shalwar and kameez,¹¹³ hung up around about November 5th and strung over a dual carriage way leading to Broomwick and Seacote... It brings up images of people being strung up, from the Deep South.

¹¹² During the course of this research, on 7th July 2005, four men exploded bombs in London Underground and on a London bus, killing 52 people and injuring 700 (see for example http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/london_blasts/investigation/html/bombers.stm. accessed 23rd March 2006. In the run-up to the May 2006 elections, the BNP nationally and locally produced and distributed anti-Islam leaflets which contained a picture of the bomb-damaged bus. The propaganda was part of a sustained Islamophobic campaign orchestrated by this organisation, aimed at tapping into and potentially mobilising the populist racist stance. These leaflets were reportedly delivered in the research area and beyond in Feb 2006 and followed, in March 2006, by distribution of a locally-produced leaflet making (unsubstantiated) claims about the building of a new mosque in South Moor (resident, South Moor, personal communication, 9th March 2006). The distribution of such literature is potentially a threat or barrier to social cohesion.

¹¹³ shalwar and kameez – form of Islamic dress, trousers and tunic

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] My friend came [from] London for a week for a visit. We were together, and somebody in a car (he was not brave enough to come personally)... shouted, "You are Usama Bin Laden". I just said, "Ignore him". But my friend was very angry. "Why are you living in a country like that?" I says, "You just ignore them"

As noted previously regarding asylum seekers, some of the above speakers identified media coverage of events and portrayal of Muslims in particular as factors which contributed significantly to inciting racial harassment (see Alexander, 2000).

2224: [student, resident, Iranian, male] This is something when the people are getting something from the media and the media are feeding the people some specific points. They say, "Ok, the people who are wearing the scarf or are Muslim, they are behind these tragic events."

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] For the first time my children ... had a level of abuse, even from other children who'd picked up things from the media... I was quite shocked at the level of abuse they got, going outside Safeway's, ... people stopping cars, winding down windows and shouting at them...

2230: [taxi driver, resident, Asian, male] If you are coloured, it makes no difference what religious background you have got, you are Muslim and that is someone to hate. And that hatred is led by newspapers, the media. It is just a scapegoat.

However, it would be difficult to claim that the media creates tensions that were not present and pre-existing any headline or notable events; rather the media representation of any issues which incorporate elements of 'race' or ethnicity is merely one, albeit pervasive, conduit for racialised thinking. This reiterates the importance of taking into account the wider social context when examining racial violence. In the research area, overt displays of racism/fascism, as demonstrated through far right activity by organised hate groups such as the National Front, the British National Party and Combat 18 were raised by a minority of interviewees, although the impact was, for some, physically and mentally profound.

1101: [councillor, resident, white, male] Of course there are small groups of fascists active, in the area, in South Moor there are a small number of active fascists.

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] The attacks are targeting asylum seekers...The first was a hammer attack. The second one was another attempted street robbery and the third was an actual assault where there was blood outside of the housing office on Moreland Grove. [Also]...there is a very specific National Front campaign opposing the [existing] mosque in Burbridge [political ward of South Moor], selectively targeted, not blanketed, selectively targeted individuals in the Burbridge Ward. There is a culture of violence established any way. It is on a well-established stickering¹¹⁴ route. It is very close to far right activists....I don't necessarily believe in any coincidence, there is a motivation here.

Similarly, a local community centre used mainly but not exclusively by visible minority residents was targeted by someone placing National Front stickers on the shutters and walls of the building. I arrived at that project on the morning after the stickers had appeared and the staff members were extremely distressed. Were they going to be attacked, watched, followed home? Would centre users be targeted? Accompanied by one of the workers, I checked other buildings and fixtures in the immediate vicinity, but no more stickers were visible, suggesting the centre had been singled out for attention. The impact of this specific incident contrasted with comments from a staff member made during a previous visit.

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] We've been lucky, we haven't been targeted. The security's quite good here. We've invested in security. We've got electric shutters. Electric doors that come down, we've got alarms we've got CCTV...I think it has made a massive difference so we feel secure on the building. But if we didn't have the six shutters and the panic alarm things, I wouldn't feel comfortable working here... without that, I think we would be getting vandalised all the time. We have had paint thrown when we first opened, kids doing graffiti – not racist graffiti just general. We've been lucky being the only black project in the area we not really targeted that much, we've been fortunate. That's not to say that there's not that hate in the community. We've had phone calls like, "You Pakis" and it's the usual thing that pops up "Pakis have got to go home now". It's usually whenever we do a leaflet

¹¹⁴ stickering – fascist organisations such as NF, C18 and BNP regularly place stickers with racist propaganda and contact details on lampposts etc in public places

drop or something that has the phone number in. And people in the community just read about activities at the centre and think “Oh we better ring up and stuff. Give them a bit of abuse”. I mean we shouldn’t have to put up with it, but it’s just a little thing.

The last comment is telling in that a certain degree of abuse is accepted, or at least noted, as the norm at the community level. Similarly, racialised othering is evident in a variety of institutional settings, for example in education (Mirza, 1992), health care (Luthra, 1997), and policing (MacPherson, 1999) which in turn has implications for inclusion and cohesion, in terms of social policy, in both development and in practice (Law, 1996). Such public expressions and manifestations of racism, when unchallenged, provide a vehicle for the continued transmission of racialisation and boundary construction, entrenched at the corporate or institutional levels, as illustrated by the example below, which may then be transmitted throughout the various communities.

In 2002 I attended the regional launch, in South Moor, of a racist incident report form. In his opening remarks, the then Chief Constable of the regional Police Force asked for 2 minutes’ silence in memory of all those who died in the World Trade Centre, adding “and let’s make no mistake about it, the bombing of the World Trade Centre was a racist incident.” There was no pause for discussion or objection – everyone present was then cloaked in the silence. I felt dismayed, angry and confused. On what criteria was this observation made? Which ‘racial’ group was the intended target of the plane crash? Hadn’t people of many nationalities, ethnicities and faiths (including Muslims) died in the attack? What images did this comment create? Who were the perpetrators? Who were the victims? Should I speak up and articulate my rage and by doing so contravene a much used/misused convention of respectful silence and reflection? Or should I comply in recognition of the awfulness of death and bereavement, but thereby unwillingly collude in what I considered to be an abusive situation? As I lowered my gaze to the floor, I muttered a defiant comment while my mind raced through the implications of that statement, for those present in the room, for the officers serving under this Chief Constable, for the communities targeted for racist abuse who were expected to participate in the reporting scheme.

Some answers came immediately as the meeting resumed. One by one, members of black and other minority ethnic community organisations stood up to express their deep sadness about the events of September 11th. The tone of the contributions was apologetic and conveyed shame. None of us there spoke up publicly to condemn this collectivising of blame, where to be black was enough to be culpable. No white person attending felt it necessary to apologise. Again, the selective, discriminatory apportioning of responsibility was mirrored in the accounts of interviewees contributing to the research, who noted that World Trade Centre incident was utilised as a justification or catalyst for the abuse of persons who were visibly identified as Asian and, synonymously, Muslim; as extremist and legitimate target:

2230: [taxi driver, resident, Asian, male] [Nods] I was bin Laden. I was in the taxi, "Oh we are in bin Laden's taxi!" I didn't have a beard or anything but I was coloured. I was coloured. I saw a Sikh lad walk past me and a lad went past and hit his turban. And yet he wasn't a Muslim but he was coloured. Muslim right now is classed as coloured. No matter what religion you are.

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] All of a sudden racism was legitimised, all of a sudden people had this permission and all of a sudden it was alright, everything that they were doing was alright and it was September 11th that did that. You actually felt unable to challenge that, because the minute you opened your mouth to argue, you were immediately aligned with the militant Muslims... You particularly felt much more vulnerable as a Muslim. That was a classic well-there-you-are, .. "What would you expect from a Muslim?" Ever since the terrorist attack.

2223: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] Last week we saw the first religiously aggravated charge which emerged from September 11th where ...a 30 year old secondary school English teacher berated 3 Sikhs for being Muslims and the Islamic response to events of 9/11, which is a nonsense because across the world, in Islam, people were horrified and disgusted by the events of 9/11 but equally were disgusted by the consequential reprisals against Muslims across the world because of these events.

As discussed so far in this chapter, the process of community demarcation involved association and disassociation on the grounds of 'race', ethnicity, gender and class. Furthermore, boundaries and boundary creation could be precipitated, and brought

into sharp focus, by specific national and international events. On a 'day-to-day' basis, the dynamic of a desire for justice was also interspersed through many of the given accounts of the views across community borders. Once again those comments were closely associated with debates on entitlement. The issues of justice and entitlement are discussed in more detail below.

Justice and entitlement

As noted previously, stereotypes may solidify into racism, and racism may be the fertile soil from which discrimination and exclusion grow, but the rationalisation for loathing or targeting any individual, who is then set up as a representative of the 'out' group, is frequently couched in the language of justice and entitlement, and of anger towards those deemed as undeserving of resources.¹¹⁵ Again, this was the case across communities in the research area.

A worker in an Asian women's project reported hearing frequent conversations both at work and within social settings in which Asian residents expressed opinions about asylum seekers taking jobs, being a drain on resources such as health and welfare benefits and being disrespectful to or sexually harassing Asian women. A local Sikh woman, who herself had experienced long term racist abuse, felt at ease telling me that our recently arrived neighbours who were asylum seekers (from Iran) angered her because they were 'scroungers', "always crying that they were hard up, but they could afford to use the public telephone in the shop to ring home"¹¹⁶ (personal communications, August 2002).

¹¹⁵ From the Elizabethan Poor Law through theories of the underclass to recent rhetoric about 'bogus asylum seekers' the debate continues about who is and who is not 'deserving' of assistance, particularly from the state (See, for example Fekete (2001), for critique of government's assistance to asylum seekers; see also Lee (1999), for discussion on 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, linked to place as well as people.

¹¹⁶ It could be argued that this stance requires the poor to display their 'scars' (poverty) more visibly i.e. more publicly, to be considered as 'legitimate' recipients of aid. There is a requirement for the 'deserving' poor to *demonstrate* their worthiness.

Similarly, as noted by the speaker below [1103b], there was a pervading sense of injustice in the belief that asylum seekers were more favoured by support institutions than the long term residents. The appearance of material benefits being allocated to newcomers in preference to disadvantaged existing communities was a point raised repeatedly by others during the research.¹¹⁷

1103b: [councillor, resident, white, male] When the other people come across, from Kosovo or wherever...what was getting up people's back, I don't know whether it was about where they come from so much or whether it was about what they were getting. They were getting like kind of priority over people who'd been trying to get things done for years... That's the only thing that came across to me, about all these people were getting everything given and given and I've lived here for years and years and years and I cannot get a thing like you know. That's come across to me.

Concerns were also raised by white residents about resources that were perceived to be used predominantly or exclusively by black residents. Again a sense of injustice was fuelled by claims of white disadvantage [2219], or unspecified or unreasonable benefit being accrued by black residents or Asian business people, presumably being motivated by greed or selfishness although the speaker [2216] declined to specify the basis of her concern.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] We should have something all the time whether white, black or whatever ... You see the [Community Centre B]... people think that is a black project. It's always black people or Asian, you see them all, go in and people have a tendency to say "Oh they haven't let [allow] *white* projects."

JH: Is it open to white and black people?

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] Yes, it is, it is open to white and black but the majority of people that go there is black. I think it was done by blacks and they have a tendency to keep blacks in that.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] We don't seem to get the Asian community on board unless its money like for the Asian landlord...and... it annoys a lot of people. The grants. You

¹¹⁷ See for example Chapter 4 for group of women [2220] discussing allocation of housing starter packs.

have to be a landlord to a certain standard to get these grants, but when you say that they need to fill in these grants, they come up and say, “We can’t speak English” and it annoys a lot of people, the white community, cos if they are landlords, right, how is it they are landlords, in the business world and they can’t speak English?[...] I think this is what causes friction. If you are a businessman and own all of these properties, why should you need a translator? You should be speaking English anyway.

JH: ...So what do you think they’ll get out of it, if they do that?

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] [Long pause] I think sometimes they play dumb. [protests] I’m not against an ordinary person that’s got one [property], an Asian person that’s got one [property], they may need a bit help in that respect. I am talking about the business man who’s been in business for some time...[long pause] I don’t know, I think you’ll have to ask them that. That’s the sort of thing you need to ask them. I don’t know.

However, even when funding or schemes were available, including those aimed at meeting the challenge of racial abuse, resources were not always permanent, due to, for example, short-term budgets and organisational restructuring within the local authority. When asked, “Do you know of any community responses to racial violence?”, a number of residents referred to a project offering support and advice to victims of racial harassment, which had been set up through time-limited grant aid. The project base had since closed down and the post holder had been moved to a more central and potentially less accessible location.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] There used to be one [support project] at one time. I mean Nazir [project worker] was there but he’s gone out of the area and ... the Asian community have to go out of the area to speak to him now. I think there’s a need for somebody that they can go and talk to in case there is something going on, but I wouldn’t say the community as a whole [would tackle racial violence].

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] That one [support project] across the road that was upstairs above the young people’s project. I know they used to do the racial stuff. But he’s a smashing fella him.

JH: I think it has shifted now.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] Oh has it? I didn’t know that. I didn’t know they had gone.

These two comments are significant because they point to commonly expressed but perhaps less obvious community responses to racial violence which potentially raise and sustain barriers to social cohesion. “They used to do the racial stuff” and “I wouldn’t say the community as a whole [would tackle racial violence]” indicate an expectation that responses to racial violence should be confined to the victims themselves. This positions racial violence as an individual ‘black’ issue rather than a structural, institutional or community problem, and perpetuates the notion of distinct racialised communities who may share a geographical space, but who do not benefit from a united or inclusive ‘community of concern’ for co-residents.¹¹⁸ The resulting separation of responsibility for tackling racist violence may not necessarily be motivated by any sense of malice, but nevertheless there is evidence of compartmentalisation which only serves to perpetuate chasms between communities, based on a lack of information and an absence of cross-communal engagement, between residents, and, often, between professionals.

JH: Do you know of any training for communities on racial violence?

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] No.

JH: How do you think white communities respond to racial violence in South Side?

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] Very difficult to say because I don’t work with them.

Superficially, it may be seen as understandable that workers who have a remit to work with particular sections of a community should remark that they are unaware of issues in other communities. However, this restricted focus removes the potential for inter-communal work and does little to remove existing barriers. Similarly, it may be expected that residents who are not experiencing racial violence would be unaware of or uninterested in the work of a racial harassment support project.

However, this again highlights a dilemma at the heart of the social cohesion agenda. If, as in this instance, presenting problems are seen as ‘racially’ specific, rather than

¹¹⁸ The distancing from, or withholding of support from, victims of violence on the grounds of ‘race’ is also noted in relation to domestic violence. See Chapter 7 page 257.

shared concerns for the wider community to address collectively, existing racialised divisions will continue. The desire for equity in allocation of resources appears hollow and to an extent provocative if it is not accompanied by an expression of solidarity in the face of adversity.

The suggestion that whites are treated unfairly is underpinned by an implicit appeal to the ideal that everyone should be treated equally, which on the surface seems a viable and unproblematic ideal. It appears to propose that all, regardless of background, should get equivalent rights - economic, housing, citizenship - and that wrongful behaviour should be treated with equal condemnation. But such appeals are far from universal. Rather they are bound in a context in which the debate about racism and racial inequality is frozen in the present, so that *histories of racism and disadvantage experienced by ethnic minorities are rendered inadmissible*¹¹⁹ [my italics] (Back, 1999:149).

Such an imbalance, in consideration and therefore in respect, may then serve to reinforce segregation within communities. As the following speakers pointed out, their sense of injustice was fuelled by an awareness of the power dynamic inherent in inequitable responses to racialised confrontations. The first person [1106] criticised inadequate interventions with racially or domestically violent perpetrators (as both individuals and members of communities), citing the example of community workers securing funding for trips and leisure activities, an approach that was interpreted as rewarding rather than challenging abusive behaviours and attitudes. The second person [1109] referred to a series of handwritten 'race' hate letters, containing death threats, put through doors of Asian families, including that of his uncle and sister's neighbours. He linked this to a serious racial assault on an elderly Asian man and noted with anger how neither incident was reported publicly at the time. The third speaker [2225], who examined the motivation behind her response to the vignette of Asian young men shouting 'racist' abuse at a white woman, pointed to her wish to render the pain of racism visible by reversing the experience of abuser and abused.

¹¹⁹ Accounts and histories that are 'rendered inadmissible' are then, to those who do not share or acknowledge such racialised insults and injuries, made invisible or irrelevant. It is then possible to claim, "this isn't about 'race'". A further extension of this de-racialisation is that, paradoxically, the 'victim' may be re-designated as 'perpetrator', accused of playing the 'race' card to gain unfair advantage over white protagonists.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] No one sees it [racism or domestic violence]. It's not on their doorstep. It's [publicly funded trips] still going on now, "Let's take them [perpetrators] here and take them there." No sit down and do some work with some people.

1109: [community worker, Asian, male] An elderly Asian gentleman...got attacked by four or five white youths on Wilson Avenue at about 7 pm. I think they kept it quiet purposely cos things get spread around straight way. People are going to be up in arms, "Asian guy been mugged on the way to the mosque." I mean the guy had to go to hospital. He had a fractured skull, he didn't get off lightly. But ... if it was an elderly white woman that got assaulted and knocked to the ground, if...she... was set upon by four Asian youths, it would be on the front page.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] [Pause] I would ignore. And maybe after I would feel guilty as to why I did that, you know because now I would feel I would be racist

JH: Why you would ignore it? And you can be as honest as you like.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] I think maybe in that situation, "Ok you have done lots of things to other ethnic [groups] now maybe you can feel how bad it would be!" [Both laugh]

These three representations of racialised injustice are significant aspects of the larger community cohesion debate. They encompass the tensions of unequal treatment and invisibility, of risk and actual harm, and a desire change the status quo (and perhaps get even?), themes that run throughout this chapter. In the following section, I draw together some of the main strands emerging from this analysis of community responses to racial violence.

Summary

During the course of this research, the dominant, presenting power dynamic marking community boundaries was that of assumed white ethnic superiority in relation to black and other minority ethnic individuals and groups. However, framing the

situation in these terms alone would be simplistic. While the attention of politicians, the media, communities and others is frequently focused on the relationships between predominantly white communities and black communities, such binary distinctions do not fully reflect community relations. During the course of the fieldwork, there were examples of border crossings that transcended mere categorisation in terms of 'race' or ethnicity. That is not to say that in those instances the concept of racialised difference had been dismissed or rejected: distinctions were still made between communities on these grounds. However, in certain individual relationships, or during positive collective activities, such as involvement in residents' associations, the borders were permeated. Yet although these specific exchanges were viewed as positive, they did not eradicate pre-existing, long standing 'memories' of 'racialised' injustices that would continue to form a lens through which to view community. In that sense, the white/ black binary remained intact.

I was also aware of other, inter-community, inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts, similar to those described in the section above, being played out during and after the time of the fieldwork and being raised through various personal communications which referred fleetingly to concerns about sporadic outbursts of fighting in a local school and more widely, between communities elsewhere in the locality.¹²⁰ Certainly the hierarchical othering of groups as an indicator of separation between long term settled black and other minority ethnic communities was being tentatively raised by senior policymakers and community based workers during the course of the fieldwork. It is a matter of some concern that although some agencies (Government Office, local authority) monitored the situation by assessing tensions indicators, there was little evidence of a cohesive or coherent approach by those bodies to analyse and address

¹²⁰ This included a 'friendly' football match held at a comprehensive school in South Moor. The annual five-a-side football tournament comprised teams from refugee and asylum seekers' communities, who were competing to represent the region in a national tournament instigated by an anti-racist organisation. A local newspaper reported that, "The event had to be abandoned after Asians [sic] clashed with Kurds....Tempers flared during a match between Kurds and Asians. The teams were disqualified and sent to cool down, but friends of the Asian players arrived and began beating the Kurds with sticks." *Daily Blur* 21st June 2005. This localised account is problematic in that it constructs an image of marauding, violent and vengeful Asians [non-specific] who are backed up by a community willing to use weapons. In other words the spectre of the 'uncivilised' Asian mob is perpetuated (Alexander, 2000).

those issues that some officials had identified. This is a topical theme that merits further research attention.

Nevertheless, any such research should not detract attention away entirely from the dominant black/white divide, which remained firmly in evidence. The continued characterising and caricaturing of communities as seen through the lens of 'race' supported overt and covert displays of racist abuse and assumptions of hierarchy. Racist attacks on individuals and communities make clear by words, actions *or inactions* that the target is outside the care of wider community and therefore has no claim on its resources, either material or emotional. In this context, the claims of injustice and preferential treatment of black residents and communities, raised by a significant number of predominately white respondents were troubling. Their perceived sense of injustice was racialised and this served to reinforce the community boundaries. The concomitant barriers created by repeat racialised victimisation that was unacknowledged and therefore to a large extent unchallenged, contributed to sustained isolation and separation of communities. Together the presenting dynamics appeared resistant to change; it was difficult to identify the hoped for 'common vision' that had been optimistically proposed by the government.

I now turn to the next chapter, in which I explore further the construction, interpretation and enactment of community and community boundaries as viewed through the 'lens of gender' by examining responses to domestic violence.

CHAPTER 6: RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY THROUGH THE LENS OF GENDER

Introduction

The previous chapter examined a range of responses to racial violence, at the individual and collective level, in order to explore the influence of 'race' in the social construction of community. It also touched on community perceptions of corporate or institutional reactions to racially motivated incidents, which then linked to a broader consideration of justice and entitlement. Throughout the chapter, there was evidence of persistent 'othering', and of the process of 'racialisation', permeating the construction and maintenance of community boundaries.

In this chapter I explore further the construction, interpretation and enactment of community as viewed through the 'lens of gender' by examining responses to domestic violence. Throughout, I also draw comparisons with racially motivated violence. The following themes emerged from the data:

Identifying domestic violence

Beginning with examples of forms of domestic violence, this section sets the scene for the chapter by highlighting some of the recurrent themes emerging from the data, including visibility, gender and community.

Visibility

This section considers the connection between claims of visibility and invisibility, and the constructions of community revealed in responses to domestic violence. It includes a reflection on class and visibility.

Worth the risk? 'Appropriate Victims'

In this section I identify some of the considerations of risk, raised by respondents about deciding whether or not to intervene when witnessing domestic violence, and compare this to bystander responses to racial violence. In doing so, the notion of the 'appropriate' victim is interrogated.

Domestic violence: A 'Private' Matter?

This section examines community perspectives on the positioning of domestic violence as a public or private concern.

The placing of community in responses to domestic violence

Following on from the previous section on the public/private dichotomy, this section explores the ways in which the concept of community is interwoven in responses to domestic violence, as indicated by the data.

Once again, I use interview data from the whole sample to illustrate these themes, highlighting differences within the sample as and when they emerge. As noted in the previous chapter, some of the data were generated by the use of vignettes, some by probing questions and some from the interviewees' accounts of personal experiences. The resulting data and analysis were augmented by participant and non-participant observations while carrying out the field work and by my own experiences as a resident, activist and researcher.

Identifying Domestic Violence

Various authors, including Cavanagh et al (1998), Dobash and Dobash (1998), Klein et al (1997), Mirrlees-Black (1999), Stanko (1998), have written at length on the extent of

domestic violence, the many behaviours and tactics used by abusers, and the impact on women, children and families. In common with racial violence, there were many accounts given, during the research, of actual incidents of domestic violence, including physical assaults, emotional abuse and economic abuse.¹²¹ The following examples, taken from the whole sample, illustrate some of the experiences of domestic violence identified, in which a range of controlling behaviours was presented:

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] ... the amount of times, I have seen lads (again) punch the wall at the side of the lass's head, or hit the wall or do something that is so overtly violent, not to her, but it scares the hell out of her.

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] I have seen these things [domestic violence in street] you know, and I have seen them in this area. They set one woman over the hedge you know and they are arguing and everything.¹²²

2213: [community worker, white, female] And what she [victim] said was, he [husband] wanted her family allowance book because he had been gambling.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] You see with him, he can go and do what he wants. But knows if he phones me every night, he expects me to be sitting waiting for him. I'll not be going any where. I'll not be doing anything with anybody. He will be controlling me that way with just a phone call. Cos he knows I will be sitting in waiting for him to phone.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] I have a friend they have a problem like that [domestic violence]. So I know about her problem for a long time but her husband doesn't know that I know about it because we feel that if he knows, he will cut our relationship.

¹²¹ This does not exclude other forms of abuse being experienced, such as sexual exploitation, but given the time limited contact and sensitivities involved, I did not enquire about, or receive first hand accounts of, sexual violence.

¹²² A woman was punched so violently by her male partner that she was knocked backwards over a garden wall and hedge. This violent assault took place in front of neighbours and the woman's children.

In the examples of domestic violence given by respondents, physical, verbal and emotional abuse took place both in the home and in public, at times in front of witnesses. There are similarities here between domestic and racial violence. The location of *domestic* violence in the home renders that home as a dangerous place to be; for families experiencing racial violence, the proximity and frequency of *racial* attacks to the victims' homes indicates that here too, home becomes an unsafe place.¹²³ Further, as with racial violence, domestic violence took place in *public* spaces. This may be counter to prevailing perceptions of the location of domestic violence taking place outside the public gaze (see Domestic violence – a 'private' matter? below). Also, during the research, examples of both forms of violence were given, which took place in front of children, indicating that the perpetrators did not hesitate to expose their violence to young, vulnerable witnesses.

Physical (domestically violent) attacks included many forms of bodily assault and injury and attacks on property, including one instance of a woman's home being set on fire by her partner. As with racial violence, examples were given of repeat victimisation, in terms of long term abuse of individuals and serial perpetrators who attacked subsequent victims:

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] One of the women ... her husband had some other marriage and also because of domestic violence, the other wife left...[In another case] they moved house, the husband and the children and she was pregnant, but because of the torture [domestic violence], the health visitor told her to leave and ...[said], "If you don't move then the nurse will have to take you out." So then there was an injunction and she got the access of the house. But [then] she had broken [break-ins] three, four times, she couldn't live in that house, so ...she had to move to another place. Then she came to [new area] but still then husband was trying to find her, to identify her and the husband even threatened her mother in Bangladesh.

¹²³ As Bowling's (1998:198) study of racial incidents records, "Nearly six out of ten incidents occurred in the immediate vicinity of the victims' homes. This included incidents which happened at the home address (23%), those that occurred in the street outside the victim's home (16%), outside or inside the building in which their home was located (12% and 4% respectively), and near their garage (4%)."

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] This is difficult one because I know of an actual [case of domestic violence], a couple in the street. I was very, very friendly with them. I just found out he's a wife beater. I just learned recently that his previous wife used to get beat and that. He used to blame his beating up on her and throwing things at her.

Actual physical assault was not the only form of controlling behaviour reported; often the *threat* of violence was used to intimidate and frighten women. Sometimes the woman herself was threatened; sometimes she was told her family, including her children or, typically, her mother would be targeted with violence. Again, as with racial abuse, not all forms of domestic violence were so overt that they might be identified immediately by witnesses; more subtle but nevertheless powerful tactics of control were employed, included isolation from friends and family, economic deprivation, and checking up on the whereabouts of women. Isolating women by limiting their contacts and association with others reinforced the dominant position of men to control the relationship, the women's actions and movements, and kept women from any potential source of support.¹²⁴ This was sometimes re-enforced by in-laws in extended families.¹²⁵ Frequently, as with racial violence, there were multiple forms of abuse taking place on the same occasion.

The research also identified a number of distinctions between domestic and racial violence. For example, knowledge of or familiarity with the perpetrators varied between the two forms of violence. The significance of this is discussed below, in a reflection on proximity and distance.

¹²⁴ This has parallels with cases of racial violence, in that isolation from the wider community, and potential avenues of support, results from the violence of individual racist perpetrators, who may be perceived as representative of a 'perpetrator community' (see for example Chapter 5 page 160).

¹²⁵ This again mirrors the experience of racist abuse in that individual perpetrators *and their family members* were reported to be involved in systematic abuse of victims. Also, as noted by 2217 in Chapter 5, page 145, one white family repeatedly attacked and threatened an elderly Asian couple, and also encouraged their friends to participate in the attacks. This was followed by another white family who continued to racially attack the Asian family. This runs counter to the view that acts of racial or domestic violence are perpetrated by lone, deviant individuals and points to the violence being more structurally embedded and supported, within the family and, importantly for this study, within the community.

Proximity and distance

Domestic violence, by definition, occurs between partners who are or have been in a relationship, and clearly this holds many implications for the person being attacked, including, possibly, matters concerning children, property and finances which may necessitate continued contact. The significant difference here between racial and domestic violence is, in the latter case, that the perpetrator may exploit the personal connection to emotionally pressurise the victim into remaining in the relationship. There were, for instance, two examples given of men who threatened to self harm when their partner challenged the domestic violence by reporting the abuse or by considering leaving.

This is not to say, however, that the perpetrators of racial violence were always unknown to the persons targeted. In the racist incidents cited in this research, it appeared that the violence was committed both by strangers and, at times, by neighbours or by people known by the victim to live locally. This resonates with the findings of Bowling (1998:205), who found that, "In just over one incident in ten the victim knew all or some of the people involved" although he goes on to note that, "...where they were known, they were not known well, most often by sight only". The involvement of neighbours in racist abuse has also been documented by others, including Burney and Rose (2002), Chahal (1999), and Sibbett (1997), although the extent to which neighbours are involved in this abuse is disputed.¹²⁶ This leads me to question the significance of the distinction made between proximity and intimacy when considering both forms of violence, which in a broad sense portrays racial violence as abusive acts between relative strangers in public and domestic violence as abusive acts between intimate relatives in private. To focus primarily on the relationship between perpetrator and victim has the effect,

¹²⁶ For example, an analysis of recorded racist incidents in Northern Ireland, from 1996-1999, claimed that in 1 in 5 (20%) of cases, identified perpetrators of racial harassment lived close to injured party, and that figure rose to almost 1 in 2 (47%) when taking into account the location and type of the incident, such as broken windows or missiles thrown at homes, where perpetrators had not been seen by the victim. www.research.ofdmni.gov.uk/racistincidents/perpetrators.htm accessed 23rd January 2005.

potentially, to reinforce the public/private distinction while obscuring the place of 'community' *both physically and metaphysically* as a relevant factor in both racial *and* domestic violence.¹²⁷

Perhaps this is due in part to the more visible, often multiple, physical presence of racist perpetrators. In this research, respondents reported a number of incidents of racial abuse in which groups of people, as well as individuals, were involved in racially abusing victims, with examples given of known families, groups of known young people and groups unknown to the victim or bystander.¹²⁸ In comparing both forms of violence, the data indicated that the presence of multiple abusers was cited more frequently in the case of racial violence compared to the domestic violence cases that involved family members as well as the victim's partner. On the surface, this may appear to reinforce the view that domestic violence is primarily a form of abuse between *individual* intimates, whereas racial violence may involve more than one perpetrator including, in some cases, acts perpetrated by organised racist and fascist groups.¹²⁹

However, the salient consideration here goes beyond quantitative data such as the number of perpetrators directly involved in violent incidents or indications of organised racial or

¹²⁷ I refer here to the actual or physical presence of community, in terms of people, resources and territory and the more abstract, interpretive or metaphysical construction of community, in terms of stories, personal narratives, and symbols supporting claims of insider /outsider identities.

¹²⁸ Again this echoed the findings of Bowling (1998:205) who found, "The majority of incidents experienced by both Asian men and women involved groups of young white males ... Very few incidents targeted at Asian women were one to one confrontations, with 85 per cent involving more than one perpetrator. More than one third of the incidents involved a group of four or more perpetrators. Four out of ten incidents directed at Asian men were carried out by a group of four or more. Asian men and women were harassed by a group of males in two thirds of the incidents. Also in two thirds the perpetrators were aged 16-25, and in one quarter were school age."

¹²⁹ It could be argued that, unlike racist and fascist groups whose targets include people from minority ethnic communities, there are no groups which organise specifically against women. Conversely, it could be argued that the Fathers 4 Justice group, for instance, have at least elements that are overtly misogynistic, as evidenced by attacks on female politicians, court officers and ex-partners. See for example attack on Jodie Dunn Lib Dem Candidate in Hartlepool at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/3759736.stm> and attack on Ruth Kelly at trial of F4J activist for prior assault outside court in February 2006, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/4688090.stm> See also *Real Story*, BBC documentary, aired 22nd November 2004, in which some prominent F4J activists are shown to have a history of domestic abuse to female partners.

gendered violence. The influence of the 'community' as a *symbolic, collective presence*, previously discussed in relation to racial violence, may be detected also in relation to domestic violence. In subsequent pages, I develop this theme further, using the data to explore my claim that community responses to domestic violence are imbued with gendered nuances and these gendered considerations are woven into the construction of community. As such, the responses are relevant to the exploration of social cohesion in that they may be viewed as an aspect of the interpretive framework employed to delineate the boundaries of 'us' and them'.

Gender considerations are evident in further similarities identified between domestic and racial violence, which were highlighted by respondents' observations on and experiences of perpetrators of both forms of abuse. As with racial violence, perceptions of a 'parity of perpetration' were raised in the claims of domestic violence 'working either way', as discussed below.

Gendered violence: 'works either way'?

In instances of racial violence, the majority of cases cited involved white perpetrators targeting black and other minority ethnic victims. In the case of domestic violence, with few exceptions, the majority of domestic violence perpetrators referred to in this research were men who attacked women with whom they had an intimate relationship, past or present. Yet, as in the previous chapter, there were comments on gendered, as well as racial, violence 'working either way'.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] I mean domestic violence is *wrong*, completely, but it's not always a man hitting a woman, it's sometimes the woman hitting the men, or the parents hitting the children or the children hitting the parents. *It can work either way* [my emphasis].

Further exhortations to widen the parameters for identifying domestically violent situations were made, to include incidents other than those involving male partners. In the following examples, other family members, either male or female, were cited as abusers, sometimes across generations. The violence was condemned, but the speakers were insistent that their views on who was domestically violent should be acknowledged, in order (or so it appeared) to counter the perception that violent acts were gendered i.e. mainly perpetrated by men upon women, or restricted to partner abuse.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] It could be husband or living together, but among the ethnic minorities, living together is not quite common. It could be living together as an extended family system but not as a partner. Sometimes, the mother-in-law is the one [who is violent] but brother-in-law or father-in-law, they are not physically violent.

2220e: [resident, white, female] It doesn't matter what you do. If you are violent, you are violent. I mean if you are hitting a man or a woman, you are still violent.

While this thesis takes the stance that domestic violence *is* gendered (see Chapter 2), there were repeated references during the research to women as abusers of men, some of which are given below. However, unlike the previous examples of black/Asian 'racial' violence related in Chapter 5, women's violence was not, for the most part, regarded with fear or with vehement condemnation by the speakers. The accounts may have been given, in part, to counteract the stereotype of woman as passive victim, to be replaced by the image of women as aggressors too, but the tone of the storytellers was different; the anecdotes were recounted humorously.¹³⁰ This suggests a pertinent distinction made between 'race' and gender as contested sites of power and abuse, as identified through responses to both forms of violence.

¹³⁰ This is not to minimise the impact of violence by women towards men. However, as Dasgupta (1996:212) points out, "Only when a systematic pattern of conduct that provokes constant fear and subjugation in the victims exists, do we recognize the condition of battering. The person who creates the situation is then the batterer."

It could be argued that the stories below [2220; 2219; 2217] were given to represent a more balanced or 'fairer' discussion on domestic violence. It is also important to note here that there were no other references made during the research to a sense of *injustice* about women's portrayal as targets for gendered violence. This stands in contrast to comments made during the course of interviews both on the subject of racial violence and in broader discussion on cohesion and community. 'Race' was seen as a site of white disadvantage by a number of white respondents; minority ethnic individuals and communities were frequently cast as unfairly privileged or favoured in comparison with white communities (see also Hewitt, 1996; Nayak, 2003). In the case of gender, there appeared to be less 'passion' about unequal treatment of men and women and more discussion on whether or not to intervene (see subsequent pages in this chapter). This corresponds with the discussion in Chapter 4 on the relative absence in the research data overall of a gendered perspective of community and community borders.

2220d: [resident, white, female] Some men walk away as well, cos it's not just women that suffer it; it's men as well. They need anger management as well.

2220b: [resident, white, female] She hits him! [Points to sister] She chins him! She does!

JH: That's a good point. But [describe various types of violent relationships] but it's still mainly men who are violent to women?

2220c: [resident, white, female] Aye but a man's worse. He asked her if the police could do anything!

2220e: [resident, white, female] Aye and then he comes and tells me.

2220c: Aye but then he's a twat though, isn't he?

2220d: Aye!

2220b: You know what it is with men? They like it their way! That's what it is, their way.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] Hell has no fury like the woman scorned, me mother used to say. [laughs] I'm bloody sure she was right. I've had a few clobberings off wor lass! [laughs] No, there's nothing as savage as a woman when the nails come out.

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] Sometimes a woman's tongue can be very sharp. It is our language saying, "When she talks, she cuts". I read this book once, this man he was a very big boxer, originally American. Somebody asked him, "When you had so many fights, were you were hurt so badly? He said, "I was never hurt in a fight. But my wife's tongue was so bad. It hurt me for my life." I read four or five times, that. You see the woman is very clever bringing the tears and her story, but you don't know what the real life is like in the house. Some women keep the husband like slave. They train him to do everything. You follow what I mean? Once I read in the paper, "I bring the money to her and she takes me wage packet and I pass all day in my allotment. And I took ten pence and I am writing you the whole story." So don't think the woman are angels, love! [Laughs]

It has been argued that women and men are equally prone to use violence in abusive relationships, and that violence is therefore gender neutral (Strauss, 1979, 1993; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980). This suggests both people involved should take equal responsibility for the abuse, a view which was identified in the data as illustrated by the following comment:

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] I'm just thinking about [male relative] and [female partner] and all the times when he's give her hidings and all the time he starts phoning and you know what's going to come off because *they are both as bad as each other* [my emphasis]... So you go down and they still fight when you are in the house.

However, just as in the cases of racialised acts by an Asian man and children cited during the research,¹³¹ the context of and background to the violence is crucially important, rather than a reliance on numbers or counterclaims alone.¹³² For example, during one interview [2221] a young woman became angry during a discussion on hate crime legislation, and a debate on whether domestically violent perpetrators should be given

¹³¹ See page 263 for the former and pages 149-150 for the latter.

¹³² See for example the Home Office website at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/?version=1> for details of statistics on and responses to domestic violence (accessed 3rd January 2006). It should be noted that although the home page states that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime, indicating that more women than men will be abused, this does not uncover the effect, longevity or severity of the abuse, where there are considerable gender differences (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; 1998).

enhanced sentences if convicted. Her comments suggested that she was trying to minimise the impact of male violence; it later emerged that she and her mother has been exposed to long term domestic violence. There was a similar context in the account below:

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] She was talking about another event where her husband had hit her across the face and poured boiling mushy peas all over her. Well being mushy peas it burned all her chest and everything and she said that had happened at the dinnertime. Later on that evening she was in the kitchen doing carrots and she felt him coming towards her. And she didn't know what he was going to do, so she just turned round and stabbed him in the arm, and laughed. And she was hysterical when she told us this story. Really laughing and talking about it as if "Ee do you remember when?" And it was so horrific. And she told it just as if she was telling a bit of gossip. It's things like that when you could see, she had the upper hand. She relished it.

The significance and relevance of context in relation to domestic violence is reinforced in the following excerpts which refer to gendered, i.e. male, networks as vehicles for control of women and suppression of challenges to domestic violence.

Male networks

There was repeated reference during the research to the wider context of domestic violence and the power of male networks in particular to hinder or prevent responses to domestic violence. This prohibitive barrier was found to operate between male friends; it was also observed within through male networks in the workplace.

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] A lot [of women] are told by their husbands, "Don't interfere [in neighbour's violent relationship]. You are going to make it difficult for me man, next time I see him." ...So even women who do *not* consider themselves in relationships that are controlled...dominated by the man, they *are*, because they are being told not to intervene. ...It may be the people next door who are having the big fights, where the domestic violence is taking place big time, but so many women *peripheral* to that relationship are still dominated and still controlled by the man. And

...there was ... a woman who ... was doing something that he [husband] deemed she shouldn't be doing and she got a taxi to the place, thought nothing of it, taxi driver got back to the cousin, back at the base, cousin passed it on to the husband. Found out that way. There was another guy who was a lawyer, who was being abusive to his wife... She was that scared, she went where she thought she would be able to go and not have any stigma and not be judged - she went to the police. It got back to her husband, who is a lawyer, and he used his professional powers to get out of that situation and humiliate her, so the next time she went to the police station, "It's that bloody stupid woman again."

Male dominated networks were also cited as barriers to effective responses at the political and policy levels, by a number of interviewees. Below are extracts which are representative of that view, the first [1106] linking both racist and sexist power bases, the second [2222] illustrating some gendered tactics in practice. In both cases, it was claimed that the gendered power structures were utilised in an attempt to silence the voices raised against the abuse.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] [What should happen is] like racism – this is what we are going to do to people who are racist. This is what we are going to do to people who commit domestic violence [emphatic], but the people in power are part of the perpetrators. And no one is going to say that about the police or the about the government or about the Councillors or about politicians because they are part of the oppression, including the community leaders.

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] When we were exposing these issues [of domestic violence in the community], they [male community leaders] used.. every trick. I would have people contact my father... trying to curb my activities... Then, when I got married, people would contact my husband through all sorts of networks, saying "Have you got any control over your wife?"... Ultimately, it was all about control of women, even workers, through the male powers within the community.

The above excerpts support the claim that community responses to domestic violence resulted in personal and professional interference and attacks, not only because of the

identification of domestic violence *per se* i.e. making the issue publicly visible, but also because of the broader challenge to male dominated gender networks. The speakers below [2222; 1110] pointed to an informal yet powerful system of social control, whereby male community leaders established personal positions of social status and influence through delivering favours that conferred a duty of obligation on recipients. The strength of these male networks, the speakers claimed, was engaged in an attempt to block issues that didn't fit in with the community leaders' priorities, which in some part included the maintenance of the men's positions of power. Further, [1110] below alludes to a wider context of 'collusion', wherein the power of male community leaders is not challenged, by communities or by existing political structures:

1110: [health policy officer, Asian, female] And the other thing we are talking about is sanctioned collusion ... We still have the [social and political] system that operates on colluding with and condoning the behaviours of community leaders, of *self-proclaimed* community leaders who are still very important gatekeepers, and we can laugh at them or mock - we can emasculate them behind women's organisations and say they are not actually a big deal and work around them and we do that but the reality is that they still wield a great deal of influence, in [political circles] as elected members and as religious gatekeepers as well.

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] They [male community leaders] didn't want us [female workers addressing domestic violence] with a voice ... because they were seen as the people who did favours to people. Now workers were coming along who weren't doing any favours to anybody. They were paid professionals possibly doing the work, so ... I think it threatened their status both within the community and within the council. You have, then, *workers* raising issues. Where was the place then for *them* [community leaders]? Somewhere their authority and their status was diminished within the community and I think that was part of it, again coming back to issues of power and control.

The issues of power and control are central to understanding the relevance of domestic violence to gendered power in individual relationships, in the enactment of community, and, therefore in the pursuit of social cohesion. The data in this section on identifying domestic violence have direct implications for social cohesion. If gendered and

racialised interpretations of society are not recognised or acknowledged, within the construction of community and within the wider context of society, power structures remain unchallenged. To view each violent incident as a discrete episode, occurring only in the present, or as 'equally balanced', obscures the presence of a continuum of violence, occurring within a framework of power and control within the relationship, *and* that relationship itself being situated within the societal context of male privilege, power and domination.¹³³ This has parallels with racialised violence, occurring within a broader framework of white privilege, power and control: both forms of violence are underpinned by ideologies of racialised/gendered superiority. Despite the claims to the contrary, overall the examples given in this research pointed to the acts of violence, being either racialised, non-black on black and/or gendered, rather than equally distributed between residents from across ethnic groups, or, in the case of gender, between men and women. As such they reflect racialised and gendered power structures not only at the community level but at the societal, corporate and political levels, some examples of which are touched upon elsewhere in the thesis. The following section now considers how notions of gender and community may intersect to influence perceptions of the *visibility* of domestic violence.

Visibility

On enquiring about community responses to domestic violence, a further distinction emerged in relation to awareness or acknowledgement of the two forms of violence. In the previous chapter, I noted that perceptions of the extent and forms of racist violence and abuse varied greatly among respondents, leading me to debate the issues of visibility and invisibility in relation to racially motivated acts. By comparison, all of the respondents from the whole sample acknowledged that domestic violence *per se* did occur. However, most significantly, the *location and direction* (as discussed previously)

¹³³ See Dasgupta (1996) for a detailed counter-argument to the assertion that domestic violence is gender neutral.

of domestic violence was disputed, both empirically and conceptually. In effect, domestic violence was made *partially invisible through a selective process of both denial and relegation*, i.e. *denial* that domestic violence is present in all communities, and *relegation* as a form of distancing, locating domestic violence in the ‘private realm’ of the home or, indeed, in the realm of the ‘other’, in communities seen as different and outside that of the observer.

This process is evident in the data for this research, which reveals indications of selective denial that domestic violence was happening, an assertion based on views expressed across the range of respondents, by individual residents both male and female, irrespective of ethnicity; by decision makers and fund holders, and, sometimes, by women who were, themselves, experiencing violence. The following examples, which illustrate this ‘selectivity’ at work, also lead to a reflection on some of the differing power dynamics underlying claims of ‘no domestic violence here’.

Invisibility and power

It is possible to speculate about the reasons underlying statements such as those below, in which men claim that within their (faith) community, domestic violence does not occur. It may be that they genuinely believe this to be the case; it may be that they do not want to acknowledge that domestic violence takes place because it brings the community ‘into disrepute’, particularly with those outside of that community. Whatever the reason for the denial, the outcome is that the public claim of ‘no violence in this community’ positions domestic violence firmly as a deviant act perpetrated by others, by ‘other’ communities:

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] You see in our religion, the truth I tell you I never heard of violence to our woman, but here sometimes the people come from different parts and sometimes it happens, but never I heard of a man beating a woman in our religion. It is a very bad thing. You cannot dream it.

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] We put [forward] issues in terms of developing work around [domestic violence] ... to that [local authority] committee. They [councillors and officers] wanted more evidence, because these men were from the community, [and they] were saying, “These women are not telling you the truth”, and “They’re just making up these stories. These things don’t exist within our community. This is a distorted perspective they’re giving you of the communities”.

While both these statements [2217; 2222] have connotations of denial and invisibility based on a certain presentation of community, there is an important distinction to be made in the position of the claim-makers involved. Key is a consideration of power that is both symbolic (linked to interpretation of own and other communities) and structural (linked to access to resources, decision making and social influence through networks). In the first example above [2217] the speaker was an individual resident who had stated previously that he did not believe he would be in a position to intervene personally in cases of domestic violence involving people from the ‘white community’.

JH: You are walking around here on the terraces and you see a young man and young woman who are about 16, 17 years old, They are a white couple and they are arguing. The man hits the woman, slaps her on the face. You don’t know who they are. What would you do?

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] If the things are so bad, if possible, I would go to the telephone box and tell the police. *You see being a coloured man, you know and I have no right to say something*, [my emphasis] but if she is too upset and he is going to hit her and shouting and balling, then it’s possible I’d send the policeman.

In this scenario, the speaker [2217] clearly identifies a hierarchical relationship premised on his ethnicity and that of the perpetrator and victim, in which he is not *entitled* to intervene. His voice is, publicly at least, silenced, although he does not discount the possibility that he would encourage a third party, the police, to intervene if the violence, in his judgment, reached an unacceptable level. This contrasts with his next response, to the same scenario, with different protagonists:

JH: And if you saw a young Muslim couple? [in domestic violence incident]

2217: [laughs] Well, I don't do anything I just walk. You see, they are a different kind of religion. These people when the woman matter is come, they are very, very possessive!

Here, unlike his previous response, he [2217] states that he would not intervene at all, on the basis that the perpetrator and victim were of a different faith group to his own, and further, suggesting that gendered violence is culturally embedded in that group. In this instance, there is no reference to entitlement; rather there was a complete distancing, with no stated obligation to intervene, either directly or indirectly. Symbolically, these responses to domestic violence reflect a view of community where borders are permeated with gendered considerations linked to ethnicity, and entitlement. Because of this, any potentially tangible evidence of 'border crossing' (in this case a response to a violent situation), was prohibited and even prevented by the interpretive framework employed by the individual actor. In this way, the social, *symbolic* construction of community is *enacted*, which in turn *may* impact on or influence the localised potential for social cohesion by reinforcing the separation, the difference, between communities premised on the grounds of 'race', gender, and ethnicity.

In the previous instance of denial above [2222], the men who rejected the evidence of violence were in positions of structural power. They were so-called community leaders, and elected councillors, who had decision-making authority about allocation of funds and resources, and their denial would potentially threaten opportunities for women and children to find appropriate support, thereby risking their safety and well-being. This in itself was a concrete and overt demonstration of patriarchal control, utilising male-dominated networks to, at best, not acknowledge or challenge abuse of women and, at worst, to perpetuate it. More subtly, perhaps, the concept of community was utilised to marginalise the women who publicly exposed the gendered violence. Not only did the men in positions of power attempt to block support for abused women, but they also attacked the reputations of women who raised the issue of domestic violence, branding

them liars who were damaging the reputation of the community. In doing so, the men were designating the role of 'guardian of the community' to women, yet ironically, the reputation of the community required the silence of women and the invisibility of the violence, in order for the public representation of internal community cohesion to be maintained.¹³⁴

Another strand of denial, raised at times during the research, came from women who were themselves exposed to violence in relationships. It should be noted that although the existence of serial abusers was identified during the research and repeated incidents of violence were given in personal accounts, the abuse was not always recognised, or at least not named, as domestic violence by the women involved.¹³⁵ Again, there may be a number of reasons for this, including normalisation of such behaviours within relationships, a desire to maintain privacy or, perhaps, to prevent possible judgement by the researcher; as a coping strategy or out of loyalty to the partner. It may be that there were fears about the possible outcomes of agency involvement with the family where abuse was taking place. The following speakers refer to the external pressures on women to remain in violent relationships, in the first case [2227] citing a range of reasons including family or kinship ties, in the second [2229], peer group pressure and the potential loss of social status for women.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] I found that there was so many [cases of] domestic violence. And women sometimes deny domestic violence because they are in fear; they don't feel confident to leave their home. It could be that they are not confident or because of the family pride or because of the family ties, so many things. There are so many conditions that they do not leave their own homes. They even deny when the social workers goes to their house, and it is referred by different organisations perhaps. The children go to school or not, or it's the health visitor that reports, and sometimes they [abused women] acknowledge and sometimes they say, "Forget about it."

¹³⁴ This is an example of defensive internal cohesion, described in Chapter 4.

¹³⁵ This corresponds with the North London Domestic Violence Survey. Mooney (1993:221) notes that, "We found that some women who had said to the interviewer in the first stage of the project that they had not experienced domestic violence, went on to report that they had on the supplementary...self completing ...questionnaire and vignettes".

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] Constant pressure,... you can't just be who you want to be... Getting mixed signals all the time from other young women... about what constitutes a relationship. As long as you are in one it doesn't matter what it's like.

JH: Even if it is abusive? Or is it not seen as that?

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] You see, I don't think the women identify it as such. Because I don't think they look at it long enough. Because a lot of the times they are that relieved that they have got someone who gives them the status, that gives them the self worth having someone else there. It doesn't matter that they hardly ever see him; they can say they have somebody.

In the former case [2227] 'family pride' or honour (*izzat*) and social standing was a factor inhibiting action, in the second [2229] social standing and personal worth were derived from 'having somebody'. In both instances, the women's social standing was derived from their maintenance of a heterosexual relationship, and to the conformity to the family/couple structure, regardless of the damage or danger to themselves. Again, in terms of visibility, it is that structure which remains visible and unquestioned, while the violence is hidden from full view. The pressure in both instances was to preserve an image of solidarity, loyalty and belonging in order to retain an identity based on being an insider, a person who conformed to social expectations and therefore had some worth, personally and socially. Similarly, as illustrated in the cases described above [2217; 2222] the preservation of the projected image of 'the community' required an inwardly non-critical or non-reflective gaze; in that way, with the gaze turned outwards, violence would be visible only in 'other' communities. This is another facet of the insider/outsider dynamic.

A salient issue here, raised by the speaker [2222] below, was the observation that acknowledging that domestic violence takes place invests an obligation to respond constructively. She claimed that this has particular implications for Asian communities:

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] First of all within those communities ... everybody knows domestic violence takes place. I think one must take a clear view. We all have friends, we all have families and in the context of even of our personal relationships, we

know that it takes place, but I think at a collective level and even at the individual level people don't acknowledge it, because in terms of acknowledging it, it means you have to take some level of responsibility to do something about it. I think that's an issue for people. And as long as it's something which is not ignored, we all know it happens, as long as we don't talk about it, as long as we don't address it, we don't have a responsibility to deal with it. And I think that's one of the issues within the communities. I think it's within white communities as well but even more so within the black and minority ethnic communities.

It should be noted that the majority of the above commentaries [2217; 2222 and 2227] and others subsequently draw specifically on the views and experiences of Asian men and women. They touch on the role of community and 'community leaders', and of family ties as constraining influences in acknowledging, let alone responding to, domestic violence. This is *not* to suggest that concerns of denial, invisibility or domestic violence itself are problems specific to Asian communities [see, for example, 2229 above]. As discussed elsewhere, abuse of women by partners is to be found across all social groups and potential divides, including class, ethnicity, culture, nationality and so on. (Johnson, 1998; Kelly, 2001; Simon, 1996) However, there were issues raised by numerous respondents and other contacts during the time of the research that pointed to particular internal and external pressures and tensions facing Asian communities, especially women, who experience, witness and/or challenge domestic violence. These will be considered in more detail in subsequent pages; the resulting debate may also add to considerations of the social construction and maintenance of community itself, as seen by those within and without.¹³⁶

One further contrast that emerged from the discussions on racial and domestic violence was that class, mentioned occasionally in regard to racial violence, was not raised specifically by respondents in reference to domestic violence, although the related subject

¹³⁶ See Chapter 7 for further exploration of these themes.

of economic constraints was a consideration, as noted in the following section on class and visibility.

Class and visibility

Within the literature of domestic violence, there is still an on-going debate about the relationship of class to the prevalence of domestic violence (see, for example, Hague and Malos, 1998; Kanuha, 1996; Mooney, 2000). While most studies agree that domestic violence occurs in all communities, regardless of socio-economic status, the debate becomes problematic when faced with claims that incidents of domestic violence are more likely to be concentrated in working class communities, perpetrated by working class men i.e. men in the lowest socio-economic status groups. To focus primarily on the violence in relationships where the perpetrator or victim are living in relative poverty and/or social deprivation risks stigmatising the working class while rendering invisible gendered violence in other socio-economic groupings. However, to deny the specific tensions and restrictions inherent in relationships where poverty is a major factor potentially minimises the possibility that both the violence *and* the economic disparities will be addressed (Evans, 2005). A further consideration, raised by Chancer (2004) is that to concentrate on dealing with poverty or economic disparity alone would not challenge violent behaviour which is hierarchical and gendered; in other words the *power dynamics*, other than those of class, remain unexamined.¹³⁷

As noted above, the data on domestic violence shows that, unlike class and racist violence, the relation of class to domestic violence was not referred to directly as a matter of concern by interviewees. What *was* raised during the research was that the gendered financial control of the household budget, by men, was a significant factor for women

¹³⁷ Similarly, the correlation between socio-economic factors and domestic violence had been questioned by others, for example Walby (1990:133), who asks, "Why [do] such men...not attack their more obvious class or race enemies instead?"

experiencing domestic violence. This restricted opportunities and choices for women who may otherwise have left the violent man. The impact, though varied in detail, cut across class, and had wider implications for all women who may have to leave existing supportive networks in order to escape the partner's violence.

1108: [community worker, Asian, female] Once the husband left the home and the wife didn't know what to do and they had to reconcile. It came through; it was not domestic violence, physical violence. It was abusive, economic violence.¹³⁸ Some things are done intentionally to control that woman.

1106: [community worker, resident, Asian, female] It's about *escape*. It's because your whole network has to go and if they've been in control of the finances and the purse strings, there's a lot you have to let go. We had one woman who was a wife of a doctor. She said, "I can't give them [children of the marriage] the life that he can give them" and she did, she had to go back to him.

This finding would appear to be borne out by recent Home Office Report 276 (2004), which makes further comment on evidence associating risk of domestic violence with income and class. Its authors note that while women were more at risk of interpersonal violence due to a lack of access to financial resources, there was not a significant or disproportionate correlation between abuse and any particular social class (Walby and Allen, 2004:73-78). It would appear, therefore, in the cases cited above and in other examples given elsewhere herein, that a key factor underlying women's experience of violence, and of being restricted in choices available to address the situation, was control of income, rather than class alone. It also begins to highlight the need to consider inter-related dimensions of disadvantage and oppression in order to recognise the complex strands of control and marginalisation affecting abused women in differing circumstances. The implication here for social cohesion is that a narrow focus on one facet of women's social identity in violent circumstances e.g. class, or ethnicity, can risk negatively stereotyping all women who would broadly be encompassed by that label. So

¹³⁸ In this case, the speaker [1108] talked about the financial control of the household budget by the husband, which he controlled in such a way that his wife was denied access to any of their joint disposable income.

the working class abused woman is seen as more 'prone to violence' than her middle class counterpart; the Asian woman is seen as more passive and resigned to violence than the white woman. This then feeds into the separation of women, and of communities on the grounds of class, and ethnicity,¹³⁹ by emphasising the differences between the social actors and groups, rather than focussing on the *violence* and its impact. In this way, the boundaries of community are maintained and reinforced by class and ethnicity and the violence becomes a secondary, less visible consideration.

As with any border, whether physically or socially constructed, durability is dependent on continuous fortification and by repelling attempts to demolish or change. This process could be said to be evident in the repeated assertion, despite the influence of feminism and the Women's Movement, that domestic violence is a 'private matter'. The data indicated that this was a commonly held, though not universal, view. Before considering the public/private dichotomy in more detail, I will now turn to another factor influencing community responses to domestic violence, namely risk, beginning with some observations on the similarities and contrasts between responses to domestic and racial violence.

Worth the Risk? 'Appropriate Victims'

An initial overview of the reactions to incidents of domestic violence showed that responses were almost evenly balanced between those who would intervene in some way and those who would not. Among those interviewees who claimed that they would or would possibly intervene, the view was expressed that this would be atypical; it would *not* be the case that *most people* witnessing such violence would get involved. Slightly fewer interviewees in the sample stated they *themselves* would not intervene when

¹³⁹ Abused women may be marginalised and made invisible also by a process of stereotyping and distancing on grounds of sexual orientation or 'disability', thereby privileging the experiences of heterosexual and/or 'able-bodied' women (Ristock, 2002).

witnessing domestic violence. In common with responses to racial violence, previously discussed in Chapter 5, considerations of risk, to both bystander and victim, and possible outcomes resulting from intervention, were again alluded to by respondents as important factors when deciding on which course of action to take (see Midlarsky, 1968, cited Laner and Benin, 2001).

In comparing the responses to *both* forms of violence, it *broadly* appeared that more people claimed they would be likely to intervene when witnessing gendered violence, i.e. violence towards women by ‘known men’, compared to fewer people indicating that they would respond to racial violence, directed against males or females. On closer inspection, the reasons given for intervention or non-intervention in instances of domestic violence differed depending on the presenting age, ethnicity or sexual orientation of the social actors involved, and in some cases, as discussed below, depending on the expected or predicted reaction from the protagonists. In that sense, categorising or labelling both perpetrator and/or victim became the primary consideration, rather than the violence itself. Interwoven with some of the responses to domestic violence were more general reflections on relationships and interactions between individuals and communities, again raised in terms of differences based on characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity and culture. Given the discrepancy in potential response rates, this finding perhaps begins to point to the notion of ‘appropriate victims’ (Dobash and Dobash, 1979), that is to say persons who are deemed to be ‘un-worthy’ or undeserving of intervention or support, and that lack of worthiness is, in part, premised on gendered assumptions of expected behaviour and stereotypes of those designated as ‘Other’. The following accounts, therefore, raise issues that are pertinent to the consideration of social cohesion, and while I offer them cautiously given the numbers of respondents involved, I nevertheless consider them significantly indicative of commonly expressed views that are of further research interest.

Risk and repercussions for individual bystanders

In the first depiction of domestic violence, interviewees were presented with the scene of a young white woman and man, aged about sixteen or seventeen, who are observed arguing. The violence took place in public space, in the local streets where the respondents themselves lived.

JH: [...] They are arguing and the man hits the woman, slaps her on the face. You don't know who they are. What would you do?

The majority of interviewees in the whole sample said they and others would not physically intervene in this situation. Of those who would become involved, the main intervention to be proposed was verbal, either directly, or indirectly, by ringing the police. In all cases, the most frequently cited reason for non-intervention by witnesses was the fear of reprisals, with the potential for violence to be redirected at the person challenging the abuse.

1103b: [councillor, resident, white, male] Well I think they [witnesses] walk on by [when witnessing domestic violence in the street] cos everybody's frightened.

2220b: [resident, white, female] If you say something like "You can't do that" you could get hit, you know what I mean?

2220f: [resident, white, female] Aye, well, but that's a chance you have to be prepared to take, isn't it?

2220g: [community worker, white, female] Yes, exactly. I would. I would have to say something.

2220e: [resident, white, female] Well you might get a bat in the mouth but, if you say something.

Reactions to the situation remained varied when the age of the couple (who were not known to the respondent) was changed, with no overall consensus or dominant response emerging. It appeared that risk was deemed more likely if intervening when young

people, particularly young men, were involved.¹⁴⁰ Parallel to this was the indication that intervention was *less* likely when those who were witnessed arguing were older than the bystander. However, in the case of the latter situation, this decision not to become involved was based more on an assessment of the *appropriateness* of intervention than on a prediction of negative outcomes. Both 2217 and 2225 (below), for example, point to the expectation that responsibility for resolution lies mainly with the couple themselves, rather than with others outside the relationship, thereby placing violence in the private domain. The exception to this was 2220d who expressed an obligation to intervene to protect an elderly woman from abuse, because she was seen as more vulnerable by virtue of her age and gender and therefore more in need of communal protection.

JH: OK, it's the same area, and you see this man and woman arguing. They are older than you, both white. You don't know them. What would you do?

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] The first example they were teenagers, they could create a lot of problems, but let them [older couple] sort themselves.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] Maybe try to help the lady. Maybe shout at the man and say "What are you doing? [Laughs] Are you crazy? If you have problems you can solve your problem in home or in court."

2220 [women's group, all]: [laughs] The same [non-intervention, as with young people]

2220d: [resident, white, female]: But it would be different if it was an elderly woman, cos you would have to, wouldn't you?

2220all: Aye [all agree]

¹⁴⁰ This mirrors responses to racial violence, where many respondents referred to the fear of physical attack from young men if they tried to intervene. The perception of risk was heightened by concerns linked to drug or alcohol abuse by young men. The representation of young men as dangerous has assumed the status of 'folk-devil'; this casting is of particular relevance to the social cohesion agenda, as mentioned in Chapter 3.

Age, then, was a factor in decision making when witnessing both domestic and racial violence, but the age-related responses were more nuanced when the violence was directed by men towards women, where there was an assumption of a relationship between them. In the cases of racist violence, incidents were recounted where both victims and perpetrators were to be found across a range of ages, from childhood, youth, and adulthood to senior citizenship. In those accounts, age and gender were cited as *prohibiting* factors in regard to the decision to intervene, most frequently in relation to young male *perpetrators*, who were viewed as potentially dangerous to the bystander. In comparison, while the first speaker [2217] above confirms the fear of repercussions from young people, both male and female, in instances of *domestic* violence, other contributions suggest that the age and gender *of the victim* potentially influenced the bystanders' decision to intervene, with intervention being more likely *in support* of older women.

That said, support for women experiencing domestic violence was not universal. For a number of those interviewed, anticipating the prospect of reprisals was based on previous negative experiences of witnessing and intervening in a violent episode, either by ringing the police, or by personally challenging the aggressor. The speakers below pointed to the further possibility that both victim and perpetrator would turn on the bystander, indicating an expectation that the victim would protect the violent partner.¹⁴¹

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] Me husband did that [intervened] when we lived in Burbeck [political ward in South Moor] And it's a very difficult situation to do for the simple reason, what happened was, he went across and stopped him [man, in street] from hitting her [woman, in street] and the next time she turned round and hit him [speaker's husband] And she was pregnant. So it makes you very wary.

¹⁴¹ See pages 199-200 for further discussion of some respondents' views on the reactions of women who experience domestic violence. See also, for example, BBC's 'Hitting Home' series on domestic violence, transmitted between 15th -23rd February 2003, including, 'Just a Domestic'.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] I reckon most people would ring the police, they wouldn't get involved. They wouldn't get involved because generally a *domestic like that*¹⁴², if you do get involved, they both turn on you. That's what I generally find what happens. [Shouts] "Don't hurt my boyfriend" or something like that so I just ring the police, I say there's such and such going on.

2230: [taxi driver, resident, Asian, male] I said, "I'll go and stop it [violence between partners in public], cos this is wrong," And as soon as you get out, they say, "What has it got to do with you?" And then you feel let down; they are going down the lane cuddling. You think, you know, I have a family here. The last thing I need is some idiot attack me. I have seen policemen trying come in to break it up, save the girl, getting a whole load of abuse from the girl. "Why are you arresting my boyfriend? What's it got to do with you?" You know, she is bleeding, she has been hit and you think, "What can you do?"

Again, the message conveyed from these experiences is that domestic violence is a private matter. In addition, it may appear, superficially, that the victim minimises or accepts the violent situation: *her* presenting aggression towards the bystander may then be used as justification for non-intervention at a later date.¹⁴³ An alternative interpretation of this scenario, raised less frequently, and by women rather than men, was that intervention may prove dangerous for the victim in the long term, as explored below.

Risk to victim

As the following speakers point out, the perpetrator may cite intervention as a justification for further or increased violence.¹⁴⁴ A plea for non-intervention by the

¹⁴² The phrase 'a domestic like that' may suggest a minimising of the violent acts, and resonates with dismissive attitudes latterly exhibited by police officers, which were criticised by women's movement and others.

¹⁴³ This situation begins to point to the expectation of conforming to certain roles or behaviours: the victim should not become the aggressor. In reacting aggressively, the victim's violence becomes the focus of condemnation, and justification for non-intervention, rather than the violence of the primary aggressor, the man.

¹⁴⁴ Dobash and Dobash (1979:115) note that although the presence of others sometimes inhibits a violent assault, it is also the case that the man's violence may escalate if he perceives the bystanders as either "supportive of his actions or if...he feels humiliated in their eyes."

woman in the circumstances described may then be re-interpreted as a safety strategy, or an attempt to limit the likelihood that the violence would escalate, rather than a form of collusion.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] But you could make it worse because he could kick off. He might just have given her a little slap¹⁴⁵ and he might beat her black and blue and he might say, “Oh you have got people knowing now have you?” and he could beat her up all over.

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] ... You don't have to go steam-rolling in, going, “Get off her! What the hell do you think you are doing?” Just make your presence be felt. That another woman is there. You don't have to be saying anything, you can just be standing and stop and have a look. Let him see you are taking notice of what is going on and that will stop him. And that was one of the biggest learning curves. Cos I am the sort of person, if I am walking down the street, I will get angry, and say “Hang on a minute, what you are doing is not right. Can you stop it?” But talking to a lot of women who have suffered, they have said, “That is the worst thing that anyone can do. It just gets them more angry and when he gets in, you are going to get it all the more. *And it's going to be worse, because it's inside.*” [my emphasis]

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] I did intervene. And I was told in no uncertain terms, off the woman herself, to mind me own effing business. [Emphasises words] So obviously she didn't want anybody else involved in that. I did consider phoning the police but the way I looked at it, if I did phone the police, she was going to get more than she had already gotten. So I mean we are in a very, very difficult situation as how to deal with that, and *I don't think as yet we know as a community how to deal with it.* [my emphasis]

As indicated by the comments above, intervention carried with it the risk of escalation, particularly when the violence was removed from the public gaze, and this posed a dilemma, for both individual bystanders and the community, about taking action. The data also pointed to other factors, beyond considerations of individual risk, which

¹⁴⁵ The phrase ‘just ...a little slap’ hints at an acceptance of some violence as the norm. It is not clear at what level it becomes unacceptable. See also 2229 (above), and the phrase “...a domestic like that...”

influenced responses to domestic violence, including the positioning of domestic violence as a 'private' matter. It is to this that I now turn.

Domestic violence – a 'private' matter?

Within the research area, some starkly contrasting views emerged about the occurrence and prevalence of domestic violence, and its location as a public or private matter. This was, in part, a matter of semantics: discussions showed that there were variations in the identification and definition of domestic violence. In one instance, the use of the term domestic violence itself was challenged when referring to incidents in public spaces, indicating the supposition that this specific form of abuse is confined to the 'private' realm of the home.¹⁴⁶

1108: [community worker, Asian, female] But then that is not domestic violence, is it? [in the street] It will be violence towards a woman by a known man.

Although violence to women by male partners can take place in any setting, including the home and more publicly assessable spaces, such as in the street, there still appears to be a prevailing view that domestic violence takes place in the home.¹⁴⁷ This perception may be supported in part by the direct assertion that the abuse is confined to 'indoors', again signalling the notion that domestic violence is invisible or obscured from view.

[B]y its intrinsic nature, domestic violence is an elusive research topic: it takes place behind closed doors; it is concealed from the public eye; and it is often unknown to anyone outside the immediate family (Smith, 1993:6).

¹⁴⁶ The debate on the limitations and tensions inherent in the term 'domestic' has been noted by various authors, including Yllo and Bograd, 1998.

¹⁴⁷ Even when there is access to the realm of the 'private' by non-family members, there are claims about the invisibility of domestic violence. See Frost (1999), for example on health visitors reporting difficulties in identifying domestic abuse despite regular contact with women in their homes.

This view may be perpetuated also by more subtle means, through minimal reference to the location of offences while focusing in detail on many other aspects of the violence, including actual acts of abuse, risk factors and profiles of both victims and perpetrators.¹⁴⁸ During this research, accounts of domestic violence were given by women who had extensive contacts in the research area, as residents and as workers within the communities. Their observations challenged a number of misconceptions, including claims that domestic violence occurred only in some, not all, communities, that it took place in the past but less frequently now, and that the violence was confined to the home rather than public places.

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] I've seen it myself, I've seen women beat up in the lanes, and I've seen them actually nuted¹⁴⁹ by their husbands and kicked as they are down.

1103b: [councillor, resident, white, male] Yes but not lately, a long time ago.

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] Well not that long ago, actually. And I actually did intervene.

It may be, therefore, be counterintuitive (and contrary to evidence presented in many studies of domestic violence) to note that many examples were given of domestic violence witnessed in public places, as illustrated by 2230 and 2220f below.¹⁵⁰ With the exception of two respondents (1103b and 1108), no-one challenged the discussion on domestic violence taking place in public spaces as implausible or improbable, which may

¹⁴⁸ See for example Mirrlees Black's (1999) report on domestic violence using data from the British Crime Survey Self Completion questionnaire. In 126 pages, the only reference to the location of domestic violence was, "Domestic violence was defined as those incidents involving partners, ex-partners, household members and other relatives, regardless of where they took place." (Mirrlees-Black, 1999:8)

¹⁴⁹ Nuted – head butted

¹⁵⁰ During the fieldwork, as on other occasions, I personally witnessed a number of instances of domestic violence, one of which I reported to the police on seeing a man driving a car at his partner and child while a second child was in the car screaming with fear. This incident took place in broad daylight in a supermarket car park. The woman escaped injury when the car screeched to a halt just before it made contact, and she took the child with her into the shop.

indicate the prevalence or at least a degree of normalisation of violence to women in public places.¹⁵¹

2230: [taxi driver, resident, Asian, male] Eh yes, [laughs slightly]. I mean I picked up this guy and his girlfriend and they were in the car and they were arguing away about this and that. And you drop them off and he was pushing her physically, you know what I mean?

2220f: [resident, white, female] I once saw that [man assault woman in street]. I was driving past and I was dying to go over in the car and *interfere* [my emphasis]. It was early in the morning an all.

A key word used by the last speaker [2220f:] above is the term ‘interfere’. Despite the violent act, which took place in full view, the witness hesitated, coding a potential intervention as intrusion, again suggesting that partner abuse is perceived as a private matter. The claim of violence being a confidential, non-public matter is also curious in the sense that even when abuse occurred in the so-called ‘private’ arena of the home, the violence was still known to be taking place, because the perpetrator’s violence and the victim’s reactions were heard by neighbours. This was a frightening experience for some witnesses; it was also, for others, a spur to action.

2218a: [resident, white, male] I was watching the match, with them [neighbours in flat upstairs] fighting. He must have hit her and smack [claps hands] and that must have been it!

2218b: [resident, white, female] But they were fighting and we said, “We cannot stand this” and I went out and went back in again and called the police cos they wouldn’t stop. He must have hit her and she just stopped rattling so that was the end of that.

2213: [community worker, white, female] The woman lived downstairs from the project and we could hear her screaming. Zora [co-worker at local community project] and I ran in and he [woman’s husband] was just going like this [shows her fist, raised] and we were like Charlie’s

¹⁵¹ I noted, for example, that the Colorado Bar Association reported that 22% of domestic crimes in Denver occurred in a public space. See <http://www.cobar.org/group/display.cfm?GenID=4598> (accessed 2nd May 2005). Public spaces were the 2nd most common location, next to the home. (Data collected from 1993-1998).

Angels, me and Zora and he just walked off. She [victim] cried so much and he walked out... But what we hadn't realised was that we hadn't secured the back door. So he walked back in. But he just walked straight back out again when he saw someone else was sat with the woman.

The latter reaction was the exception to most other responses. Contrary to previous replies on violence in public spaces, the approach to violence in the home was, in the main, more muted and reflective. It was more likely that intervention, if it took place at all, would be delayed, until a pattern of abuse was established. There was also evidence of the normalisation of violence occurring in the home, or a sense that intervention was unlikely, inappropriate or impossible [see 2225; 2216]. Less frequently, as noted in the third extract [2220] below, it was stated that contact would be made in the given situation, although this was met with some scepticism by other members of the [2220] group.

JH: Right. I want you to imagine you are living next door to a man and woman and you hear them arguing and you hear banging noises and you hear the woman crying. What could you do or what could anybody do?

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] ... I think from my own community, if they are elderly and woman is crying, maybe if it is not the first time but 2,3, 4 or 5 times... You know in the case of violence in racial attack, you can do something for that. You can go with your friend, you can do something, but in the case of domestic violence...90% of the time you cannot do anything because the man who attacks you is in your home, in your room, in your bed, so you can't do anything.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] I think what we need to is, if it is a one off thing, no I wouldn't do anything, for the simple reason that me and me husband have our arguments and I've seen me cry and I've seen him thingy and that's a one off thing. But if it was going on quite a lot, I would maybe's ask someone for advice.

2220a: [resident, white, female] I think he [violent partner] should go inside [prison], me, I do. If you do that in your own home. If it's in your own home I think you should be stopped.

2220d: [resident, white, female] *It's different in your own home* my emphasis]. I mean sometimes something as little as a spilled bit of tea can start a kick off, can start a fight, can't it?

2220c: [resident, white, female] I know but it's different if you are getting a hiding. They might still be hitting a person, but if you live in the same house, you can't say anything.

2220b: [resident, white, female] I'd put a glass to the wall and listen, me!

2220g: [community worker, white, female] Oh, Tracey, you are such a pig!

[All laugh and comment on previous remark]

JH: You realise that the man is battering the woman. You hear it happening again and again...

2220a: [resident, white, female] [interrupts] I'd gan in! I couldn't just listen to that and do nowt.

2220c: [resident, white, female] Is that the truth? [Incredulous]

2220a: [resident, white, female] Oh aye!

For some respondents, the pretext for domestic violence was an important element when deciding whether or not to intervene, again suggesting that, to a certain extent, some violence was deemed acceptable or justifiable. For others, the context of the violence was an influential factor. While the data showed a degree of debate about possible intervention when the violence took place within the home, there was evidence of one particular circumstance that made intervention much less probable. When the couple involved were married, there was an expectation of non-intervention, even when violence was known to be present. The data strongly indicated that violence within legally sanctioned intimate relationships was seen as a private matter, and that the 'inviolable' status of that relationship was a more primary consideration than risk to the woman, or the bystander. The following extracts confirm the prevalence of this standpoint, and emphasise that it was the status of the social relationship that took precedence, regardless of the visibility of the violence and whether it occurred in the home or more publicly accessible places.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] It depends. Like if he was hitting her – if he was hitting her I would say something, if you

heard what he was saying. If they were having just a petty argument then *I would keep out because they could be a married couple* or something [my emphasis].

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] I can give you another situation ... I had been away with some lasses and I come back late. My man had come down the bus stop and we were arguing. He wasn't physically thingyng and this lad had been drinking and he started *interfering* [my emphasis] and we had said, "It's all right. Don't worry. *We are man and wife.*"[my emphasis] But he wouldn't leave it alone. And at the finish, my man got done [charged]. But, I think what you've got to do is, wait and see how the situation pans out.

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] I mean I've talked a lot with the older generation in my family and a lot of the groups we have worked with, we worked with women who are over 50, and their views on domestic violence. And so many of them say, "Why it's just the way it is man, you don't want to get involved. They'll sort it out themselves. *They're married, man*[my emphasis]."

Other respondents also referred to a reluctance to intervene, on the grounds that the violence would 'sort itself out', again suggesting that repeat incidents of violence interspersed with temporary episodes of relative calm were seen as the norm, as expressed by [2217] below. The second speaker here [2230] gives an example of known violence within a marriage but stressed there would be a point where it would no longer possible to remain silent about it. Nevertheless, there was still an indication that a certain level of violence was tolerated:

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] I won't *interfere*. [my emphasis] You see it happens. They fight like cat and dog, you know, and the next day they are cuddling, you know. [Laughs] You see, dear, you find it in every community. It's awful on the children but it is a way of life for them you know. Shouting. Balling. And after that they are friends.

2230: [taxi driver, resident, Asian, male] I would knock on the door and say, "What's wrong?" I mean ... you can't barge in every time somebody has an argument, but if you hear banging and smashing, you either have to knock on the door or call the police, cos then you are

getting disturbed in their process. I had this uncle - like we weren't really close – but they used to love fighting and he used to love throwing things and they loved each other like but their arguments were picking things upon and chucking it and all their dishes use to be smashed, but that was them. But they went in their little corner, you got used to them and you thought let them get on with it because next moment they would be happy. But if both of them argue and there is damage you have to say something... You would probably get a load of abuse, but *if they were disturbing me* [my emphasis], I would have to have my say too. If they brought it to my door, you know what I mean, they haven't got the decency not to argue then I would have to have my say [laughs].

The last speaker [2230] refers to a 'tipping point', where the violence, already known to be ongoing, yet tolerated on the grounds of privacy, becomes so overt and persistent that it affects the neighbours' quality of life. In this example, the social expectation or obligation of maintaining a non-interventionist stance in the marital relationship was superseded by the right to challenge anti-social behaviour that negatively impacted on the witness, "if they brought it to my door". In other words, if the family life of the speaker was compromised by the actions of his extended family, he would become entitled to intervene.¹⁵²

This, and previous accounts of familial violence above, highlight the structural nature of domestic violence in that the abuse does not take place in a vacuum, as an isolated act of a deviant individual. Rather it occurs within the institution of the family, as a systemic component of the hierarchical dynamics that constitute familial relationships.¹⁵³ The

¹⁵² During the interview 2230 talked at length about his family and his community, and how both were closely connected to his sense of identity as an Asian man (his description) of dual heritage (my description) and as a Muslim. He was keenly aware of the scrutiny and *judgement* of the community, on him, his family and his actions, giving examples of this. This adds weight to his comments here, which he would not, presumably, make lightly. This also raises wider ranging questions about why intervention may take place, or, more precisely, what the interaction may have to say about the social actors' understanding of self, of social identity, and therefore of place and status, all of which are woven into the construction and enactment of community (See for example Goffman, 1969; Jenkins, 1992; 1996).

¹⁵³ Levine (1999) highlights the deep-seated reluctance for bystanders to intervene in what they perceive to be familial relationships. He reflects on the 38 witnesses to the abduction of Jamie Bulger, who did not intervene when they saw the frightened, injured 2 year old boy with 2 older children who later murdered him, because they assumed they were his brothers, whose parents had left the older boys *in loco parentis*.

‘family’ in turn, is a component of the wider community, from which certain expectations of behaviour are derived. While communities may condemn violence per se, nevertheless there are certain rules of conduct, obligations and assumptions placed on members of the community in their allotted roles within the family, as mothers, fathers, daughter, wives and so on. The family, and the individuals within that unit, may be judged by the wider community on the basis of a *public* presentation of well-being. Similarly, a community may be judged by those ‘outside’ on the basis of conformity to culturally defined expectations. Therefore, people in intimate relationships, families *and communities* may project, or at least claim, an image of cohesion for consumption by those who are ‘outsiders’ in order to maintain a veneer of legitimacy in the eyes of the beholder: sustaining symbolic high status paradigms of family and community cohesion becomes paramount in order to deflect negative judgments. In doing so, those groupings that appear outwardly cohesive may conceal violence in all its forms.¹⁵⁴ *This evidence adds support to my claim that social cohesion is not always a benign concept.*

In the following sections, I examine respondents’ views on the relationship between the community and responses to domestic violence. The section below encompasses a range of data, including reflections and debates about who comprises the community, and on the appropriateness of ‘community’ intervention. This begins with an examination of two statements that point to attitudes towards domestic violence as a policy matter.

The place of community in responding to domestic violence

The data shows that respondents’ positions on domestic violence vary, as do perceptions of *attitudes* to domestic violence. The first speaker below [2222] presented a view of the

¹⁵⁴ Paradoxically, this veneer of cohesion may be cited as a source of resentment by those outside of the community looking in. In a study by Nayak, (2003), young white people voiced their envy at what they perceived as the strength of tight-knit Asian families. More frequently, the stereotype of the close knit minority ethnic family as a source of support leads service providers to assume that certain communities ‘take care of their own’ (Chahal, 2004). This mind-set prohibits access to service delivery and resources, and in the case of domestic violence may cut off avenues of support, leaving women and children in dangerous situations.

extent and nature of domestic violence that was uncompromising, informed by her years of work within and across communities. Few responses to domestic violence completely mirrored her unequivocal stance although there were elements of that statement present in many replies. The second respondent [2215a] thought that societal attitudes to domestic violence were, already, universally condemnatory.

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] Domestic violence exists within the white communities and black communities as well...Domestic violence is abuse and it shouldn't be taking place, it's a *crime*...It's not acceptable... It's a *breach of individual's human rights* and ... nobody should be subjected to that abuse.

2215a: [senior civil servant, regional remit, white, male] Well I thought racism was patchy but I would have thought domestic violence is a bit like drunk driving. *Surely these days it's completely unacceptable for any evidence of domestic violence to take place* [my emphasis] in that ever form or line, whether its work line, leisure line, I mean that's my impression. Surely violence towards somebody else is instant dismissal, it's ostracised, it's - you know.

The significance of these remarks is that the first speaker [2222] was a practitioner engaged in challenging domestic violence through training and community engagement. As such, she saw domestic violence as a current and on-going policy issue. The second speaker [2215a] had a remit to oversee regional and local development and delivery of governmental policies and programmes. His organisation was responsible for ensuring a multi-agency, partnership approach to presenting policy issues was employed, to meet local needs. His stated perception was that domestic violence was universally condemned, and that sanctions were in place to deal with perpetrators, no matter where the abuse was recognised. The questions must then be asked, "*To what extent would domestic violence be identified as a current, priority policy issue*", particularly if this stance was mirrored by others within the organisation? This again has implications for the social cohesion agenda; the need for *on-going*, reflexive work on domestic violence must be viewed as a priority, not least 'to meet local needs'. This, I would argue, would be an essential contribution to the government's stated aim of ensuring "strong and

positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods” (Home Office, 2004).

The research shows that reactions to domestic violence are less clear cut than the latter [2215a] statement above suggests. When asked, “Do you know of any community responses to domestic violence?” the majority of respondents answered, “No.” Further enquiry revealed a range of negative attitudes to the idea of community initiatives to tackle such violence. The reasons given for these stances were varied, as were the circumstances in which the comments were made, as shown in more detail below.

For some, domestic violence was seen as a matter to be dealt with within families. In this example, the family was synonymous with the community and was viewed as a potentially supportive structure. The social standing of familial elders placed them as a possible source of enforceable sanctions on violence in relationships. Yet in a sense, the violence remained private in that the abuse could remain hidden from the possible condemnation of the wider community and potential avenues of escape or support.

JH: Do you think communities can do anything about domestic violence?

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] In every community, the problem is getting help from the elder ones. For example if I have a problem with my husband, my Mam or Dad or Grandmother or Grandfather on my side or my husband’s side, they can have a meeting with each other and say, “What is your problem?” So they, *community* [my emphasis], have the power to *coach you* [my emphasis] and stop it but it is not enough in some cases. Maybe there is no family here or they take the side of one of them.

In the above statement, the family as community was cast in the role of teacher and arbiter ‘*to coach*’ the couple involved to stop the violence. Others used a broader definition of community that incorporated family and neighbours. Yet from this perspective too, it was deemed inappropriate by some respondents to have community

involvement, on the basis that domestic violence was a private matter for *individual* rather than *collective* action.

JH: So do you think communities can do anything about domestic violence?

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] Well [exhales] ...I don't think communities themselves should be doing that, because I don't think it's communities – I think *it's interfering* [my emphasis] in that respect, cause communities are not there to be the end all and be all, they are not the police. They are not saying what you should be doing and should not be doing. Only as individuals, if it gets too bad, you should maybe have someone you can go to get it sorted out but *the community's not there as the police* [my emphasis].¹⁵⁵

Alternatively, there was the view that a community based initiative would be ineffective, due to lack of widespread support, which had also been noted in respect of other attempts to encourage local participation, particularly in area regeneration initiatives. In this instance, the respondents alluded to a general condition of apathy or lack of desire to engage in communal activity, rather than a direct unwillingness to tackle domestic violence.

JH: If some people set a group up here and they said, "We are going to talk to people, to community groups and put leaflets through doors", how do you think the community would react to that?

2218b: [resident, white, female] You know what? Just throw the leaflets out, wouldn't they?

JH: Ok. Why do you think that?

2218a: [resident, white, male] Because people don't want to get involved in anything, They just want a nice quiet life.

2218b: [resident, white, female] It's the same people [who do become involved in the community] It's the same one's who turn up every month.

¹⁵⁵ Previously the respondent [2216] had discussed the need for collective involvement on other issues taking place in the community, including youth disorder. Her stance on community challenges to domestic violence is in direct contrast with those previously expressed views.

Others did not rule out community responses to domestic violence but insisted that the person experiencing violence had to decide to act, to leave or seek help. The community was seen as peripheral, at least in the first instance. In one sense this respects the agency of the individual, and acknowledges the risks involved in leaving a violent partner, but in another it locates responsibility for addressing the violence, if at all, on the individual victim.¹⁵⁶ A primary focus on the necessity of the woman's actions as the catalyst for challenging the violence may mask the consideration that the violence is taking place, not in isolation, but rather, within the context of a community. This stance may then obscure the possibility of 'supported agency' via the community. The first speakers below [2214a; 2214b] made a distinction between possible intervention to support the victim of violence and the impossibility, as they saw it, of the community stopping the violence.

2214b: [young resident, white, female] At the end of the day you can be there for them to talk to but ... you can't stop the violence. You can't yourself go against the violence between them. I couldn't become your friend and stop the violence and say, "Stop the violence between you and your boyfriend". Cos unless you turn around and say, "I have had enough" and kick him out or walk away. I would say, "Stay at mine."
[speaker's home]

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] It has to be. Either the woman or the man has to leave which ever is not the violent partner. The victim has to walk way cos the violent one's not going to.

2214b: [young resident, white, female] All the community can do is - *At the end of the day the community cannot stop the violence* [my emphasis]. I don't think it can. No matter what. You can only offer support. Like sit in the house with them if they don't want to be alone or say, "Do you want to go down the town?"

JH: Do you think then it would help at all if there was a group of people, say like a community group where they said, "We have some information, do you want to come and talk about it?"

2220d: [resident, white, female] It would because she would know that she had someone there.

¹⁵⁶ This also avoids the consideration that agency may need a supportive, rather than an isolated, environment.

2220a: [resident, white, female] But even though she's got someone there, it's getting the courage to get up and say, "Right I need help". You can only help so far. They've [the woman] got to take the first step by themselves.

2220b: [resident, white, female] And talking to them and saying "Naa, this is wrong, that's wrong" does nae good. It might be worse off than actually up and off and leaving them.

2220d: [resident, white, female] They [women] might be scared to leave them [men].

2220b: [resident, white, female] Even if they do leave them and say go to the refuge, the gadgie¹⁵⁷ finds out where they are and they [women] come back straight away.

2220e: [resident, white, female] She needs to make the first step by herself. She's got to do it herself.

The above comments [2214a/b; 2220a-f] acknowledge that support alone would not necessarily stop the violence or benefit the woman, noting the possibility that the woman may be left isolated and in danger of further attacks.¹⁵⁸ Again, the speakers point to the probability that, even if formal or informal community networks and structures were in place to support women who challenged the abuse, this leaves the (predominately male) aggressor and his use of violence unchallenged by wider society, as illustrated by the extracts above. They also reflect a broader sense of frustration or helplessness expressed by victims and bystanders in the whole sample. The question, "What can you do?" in relation to both individual and communal responses to domestic violence, was a common occurrence. Nor were all challenges to domestic violence necessarily to be advocated. In responding to an on-going situation, one individual debated, with no trace of irony, a gesture which mirrored that offered to a victim of racial violence.¹⁵⁹

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] I says, "I am in two minds whether to go down and belt him [wife abuser] one or warn him off. For all we don't talk to each other now, something's got to be

¹⁵⁷ Gadgie – man, male partner

¹⁵⁸ It has been noted that the risk of escalating violence increases when the woman challenges the violent partner. This is a particular risk factor for women who leave violent relationships (Kantor and Jasinski, 1998; Wilson and Daly, 1993)

¹⁵⁹ See page 158 for similar offer of help for 2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian, male].

done". I told her [partner of abusive man], I says "I'm watching". I says, "If it happens again, I will go down and I will thump him.

In this case, as in the example cited in the previous chapter, violence was proposed in response to violence, not as a defence or retaliation for an injury or insult to self, but on behalf of a victim. The offer of violence (although not taken up), was interpreted as both a gesture of condemnation and retribution for the original act, and as a mark of support and respect for the aggrieved.¹⁶⁰ The importance of this is that *violence is both condemned and advocated*: again the distinction being made is between a 'legitimate' and 'non-legitimate' target, deciding who is designated as the 'appropriate victim'. This is comparable to the distinctions made between public and private positioning of violence, through which it is deemed appropriate or not to intervene (see below).

For other respondents considering direct intervention, despite personal risks to themselves as bystanders, verbal contact was proposed as a means of suspending the situation to give the woman an opportunity to make decisions on her safety or subsequent course of action, thereby acknowledging the potential agency of the woman, as an individual. In their responses below, the two young women not only make it known that the violence was visible, but also, by their intervention in this instance, they challenge the boundaries of public/private space and assumptions of public/private relationships. In doing so, they indicated that, for them, domestic violence was a matter of public concern which merited a community response *when that violence occurred in a public space*. This stands in contrast to their previous comments on being unable to stop domestic violence *per se*, and to their subsequent comments on violence in the 'private' realm.

¹⁶⁰ This has echoes of the recent offer made by the IRA to the McCartney sisters, whose brother, Robert, was stabbed, in front of witnesses, by known members and associates of the IRA, on 30th January 2005. He died the following day. In a statement released on 8th March 2005, the IRA stated, "The IRA representatives detailed the outcome of the internal disciplinary proceedings thus far and stated in clear terms that the IRA was prepared to shoot the people directly involved in the killing of Robert McCartney". For the full statement, see BBC news website http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4073012.stm accessed 12 March 2006. The McCartney family declined the offer.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] I would gan ower¹⁶¹ and say “Are you all right pet?” ...or “What are you doing? Are you all right?” or something.

2214b: [young resident, white, female] I think aye you would, you would shout... You don’t have to get physically involved but you could say something.

2214a: So that they are aware that...

2214b: That you have noticed them that you have seen them arguing. Like if you are across the other side of the road you could shout “What you doing that for? Or, “There’s no need to hit her”... Or just something like that just so they are aware that you have seen them.

JH: Why would you do that? [shout]

2214a: In case she needed help, then she could say, “Oh help me, help me”. Like if she didn’t want any help then obviously she wouldn’t say but maybe you could tell by the look on her face.

2214b: Or maybe she would say, “Oh we are just arguing”. So you’re giving her a chance.

As the interview continued, the young women [2214a; 2214b] began to expand on the symbolic and actual presence of community in their decision to intervene. Although the couple who were arguing were not known to them, the incident was set in a place where the ‘witnesses’ had stated previously that they ‘fitted in’.¹⁶² This gave them the confidence to intervene, again pointing to the significance of community; they acted because they were on their ‘home’ territory *and there was an expectation that the community would support their action, because they were known in that community where the incident happened.*

2214b: If you went to someone else’s community you might feel a bit weird about saying something because you know you haven’t got your community to back you up. If you were arguing in my street I would feel fine. I would gan “Bloody hell what are deeing” Diven’t shoot at her like that”

2214a: Aye if it was in your street you would feel more confident to approach them.

¹⁶¹ ‘Gan ower’ - go over

¹⁶² See Chapter 4, page 123 where the speakers state they ‘fitted in’ to ‘their’ community but note also the discussion in subsequent pages about ‘not belonging’.

2214b: But even somewhere in [same area, few streets away from speaker's own home] it's just up the road and I would there and I would say something because there are people in my community there, people that I know. It could be any where in [locality-political ward] as long as you know someone. But if I went to their [any other]community I don't know if I would jump in so quick I might say something but I wouldn't like jump in, "Hey, what are you doing, you radgies? blah blah blah."

On the surface, this could be interpreted as a straight-forward link to community as an 'expression of territoriality', imbued with an assumption of a right (or at least of assumption of approval by co-inhabitants), to intervene in the situation, conferred by residence in that locality. A related key factor here, as noted in previous chapters, was 'knowing and being known', stressing again the importance of the local context and localised interaction. Yet these statements presented a paradox. Previously, 2214a and 2214b had talked at length about their relationship with the community. Their definitions of community were wide-ranging, with 'their community' described variously as family, as friends, as the place where they lived currently, as the place where they were born and grew up and at one point, the college they attended together. They gave numerous examples of situations where they had 'got along', where they had appeared to be insiders, had been accepted, and had avoided conflict. But eventually, in the range of circumstance they described, they came to see themselves as outsiders.

2214a: That's when you realise that you are not part of that community. Because you are different. You have different beliefs and some things about you are different. But yet I fit in. I fit in really well. We both do. We get on with anybody and everybody

2214b: But we don't feel as though "You belong there", do you?

2214a: uh huh. [agrees]

This now suggested that the concept of community could be imagined or fictive *and recognised as such* yet simultaneously have an observable impact and presence. Community could be evoked as factor influencing decisions *even when the social actors did not always personally identify with others supposedly sharing a specific common bond*. The concept of community could retain the power to enable, entitle or justify

people to act even when they themselves felt marginalised, that they did not belong, because there was still an assumption of 'back up', of reinforcement from 'their' community. Here, there is an expectation of a broad-based, two-way recognition or familiarity between the community and the speakers themselves which transcends their personal sense of difference. It suggests an anticipation of 'loyalty to one's own' which, in turn, would generate protection if the speakers were endangered by their intervention in the violent situation to help someone who was *not* from their community.

JH: So has she become part of your community?

2214b: She has but she hasn't, because you are backing her, but just because you are backing she doesn't mean she is part of your community.

2214a: Because you don't know her.

2214b: Because you still don't know her and you don't know her views in life and stuff like that.

2214a: You are just there for her because she is there in your community.

This has implications for social cohesion in that it indicates the 'presence of the community' as a consideration, even when presented with what appear, at first, to be individual decisions to act. In this instance, the influence of community was positive in that there was an assumption of a supporting framework, which contributed to the likelihood of intervention: in other examples given previously the community was cited as a reason for not getting involved, as in cases of racial violence.¹⁶³ It could be argued therefore that a positive intervention may be interpreted as border crossing in that it involves helping someone who is not classed as a part of a given community, in effect a communal stranger. Conversely, non-intervention could be perceived as boundary maintenance in that the person targeted is positioned as outside the intervention or care of the community.

¹⁶³ See 2219 page 161

The presence of community in violent situations

The significance of community in relation to domestic and racial violence, and in a broader context, to other forms of violence, was a recurring theme during the research. The following accounts reveal the importance of the ‘community’ and the symbolic understandings attached to the collective presence. As the excerpts below show, the physical presence of a crowd can lend support to individuals to assert dominance, by force or threat, as in the first case [1109] of racial abuse and attack, or to right a perceived wrong, as recalled in the second case [1103a], involving a stolen bicycle, a notoriously violent family and a woman who overcame her fear of assault to seek justice:

1109: But what I did realise was, was that there were groups of people hanging around - I think it was Friday night or Saturday night so there's a lot of people around from the pubs and that. And they were kind of jeering him [Asian victim] and stuff. And you could hear people in the *audience* [my emphasis] saying, "Aye, send the Pakis back!" and stuff like that. So obviously he [white attacker] was like whipping up a kind of *crowd* kind of thing but you *could see the thoughts of people coming out* [my emphasis]. You could hear what they were saying.

1103a: So I knocked on the [neighbours] yard door, no answer. I says, "Right." Kicked the yard door open and I thought, "*No, I won't put up with things like that, because once you let them win, that's it* [my emphasis]." So I kicked the yard door in and they [neighbouring family] are standing there with the spray paint. And the kid [neighbour] ran to get back in his house, so I put my foot [in the door]. And the mother came and they [family] were HUGE! Absolutely HUGE! I thought I was going to *wet* myself, cos I thought, "Christ I am here, by myself." But I was that frustrated because they had took his [speaker's son's] bike and then had the cheek to spray paint it in the bloody back yard! So anyway, a few of the women [other neighbours] had come out and were standing in the back lane. And they were shouting, "Aye, Heather, get them told! Get them told!" But they [neighbours] were *there*. [Pauses] *And it gave me the courage* [my emphasis] cos I thought, "Well they [neighbours] are there and if they [alleged thieves] are going to grab me, they [neighbours] are going to phone the police and I'm going to be saved." So anyway, she [neighbour] says. "Eeh, listen pet, we found that." I says, "No you didn't find it! You took it

out of my yard. You were seen.” I says, “I actually seen you. That’s [my son’s] bike” “Na, Na, Na, this is a bike we found.” They were saying they found it! But I knew it was [my son’s] bike. I knew it was the bairn’s bike. So I got hold of the kid [neighbour’s son] and I hoys him. I says to [my son], “Get your bike...Get a hold of the bike.” So he [speaker’s son] took the bike, took it up the lane. Not a peep out of them since. Do you know what I mean? Because I stood up to them. And it is frightening.

In both these instances, the balance of power was established by the physical presence of the ‘crowd’ or ‘audience’, who did not intervene physically themselves but who vocalised their collective support. In doing so, the crowd also established the *symbolic* boundaries of community. In the former instance, the speaker [1109] described the situation almost as a form of street theatre, with an ‘audience’, and audience participation, in the calling out of racist abuse. As a bystander,¹⁶⁴ he described the event as both visual and auditory, “you could see the thoughts of people coming out.” It was almost as if the words themselves took on a physical form, to mark and reiterate the boundaries of the racialised community.

In the second scenario, the collective presence gave the speaker [1103a] ‘the courage’ to pursue her efforts to right the injustice she and her son had experienced through the actions of another resident. She assumed the witnesses would call for help if she was in imminent physical danger, and continued to argue her case, finally physically retrieving the bike. Her story ended with the report that there had been no negative repercussions for her or her family in the aftermath of the encounter. The family in question had been, in effect, ‘silenced’; there had been “not a peep out of them since.” In this example the community presence supported her actions as an individual in what constituted an internal regulation of community, by establishing and publicly reinforcing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

¹⁶⁴ 1109 was a bystander who intervened by speaking to the victim, offering support, and by contacting the police to report the incident. See page 168.

The speaker [1103a] went on to describe (below) her experience of community, in a model based on support for those in need, which she, as a previous beneficiary, reciprocated.

1103a: I was brought up in that kind of environment and that's all I've ever been used to. But I will say, if I ever needed help, help was there even if people had nothing, help was there for me. So that's why I would always give back to them. And I know the rules. You are brought up, you know yourself [to JH], *you know how far you can go and you know when you have to stop* [my emphasis].

Her final statement above points to a key factor in the maintenance of community, and therefore, potentially, in the development of community cohesion. The speaker's [1103a] construction of community is one in which individual behaviours are framed by an understanding and observation of the "rules" of 'membership' of the community; the implication being that the community will monitor and judge those individuals who constitute the collective. This is significant, in part because it assumes a common cultural map for all those within the bounds of 'community', but mainly because it points to *the community as an arbiter of the parameters of acceptable behaviour*. In contrast to Sibbett's (1997) model of the perpetrator community, and in contrast to some of the non-interventionist stances to domestic violence identified earlier in this chapter, this points to the possibility of the community as a source of support for those facing violent situations. This point is picked up on again in Chapter 8.

Summary

In this chapter on community responses to domestic violence, a number of inter-related themes emerged. These included issues around the visibility of domestic violence, considerations of risk, questions about whether domestic violence was a public or a 'private' matter, and, throughout, intimations of the presence of the community in responses to domestic violence.

The research showed that there were many forms of domestic violence identified by respondents as illustrated by the data. Yet paradoxically, there were claims that in some communities, domestic violence did not occur. This was despite the evidence in the literature, which was supported by the, albeit limited, research data, that domestic violence was to be found in and across all communities, regardless of age, ethnicity or class. The gendered nature of domestic violence was disputed by some respondents, again despite evidence in the literature and the research data. Some of the respondents who did refer to gender and domestic violence also pointed to the utilisation of male dominated social and political networks which they claimed were utilised to circumvent or prohibit individual and collective attempts by women to escape from or counter domestic violence.

Although all respondents acknowledged that domestic abuse did occur, there were differing views as to the location of the violence, both physically and conceptually. There were numerous accounts given of domestic violence witnessed in public spaces, which runs contrary to the notion of this abuse taking place in the 'private' realm of the home. Further, whether witnessed in public, or observed or overheard in 'private', there were a range of views expressed about the possibility and appropriateness of intervention. Bystanders referred to the personal risks involved in confronting violent men or supporting abused women. As in the cases of racial violence, there were particular expressions of fear or concern about retaliatory attacks if the perpetrators were young men. Some respondents also referred to the possible risk of the violence to the victim escalating if bystanders were to make direct challenges to violent men.

A key consideration related to intervention that was raised repeatedly was that respondents did not want to 'interfere'. Intervention became coded as intrusion, particularly when the violence was known to be taking between intimates in the 'private' realm of the home. This stance was reinforced in references to married couples, where a number of respondents cited the legally-sanctioned status of the relationships as a reason for non-intervention. It is unclear whether or not that notion of 'privacy' was also tinged

with a sense of ‘ownership’ of the woman by the male partner in the relationship; what was evident from the data was that there was a reluctance to intervene in incidents of domestic violence even when the violence was witnessed i.e. was *overtly* visible, in public spaces.

Throughout the discussions on domestic violence, the presence of the community was identifiable. For some respondents there were claims of ‘no domestic violence here’, thereby positioning that form of violence as an abuse that was perpetrated by ‘others’ in ‘other’ communities. Examples were given of the condemnation of and attempts to discredit women who brought domestic violence in communities into the public gaze. There also some examples given of a reluctance to intervene ‘across community boundaries’, where the protagonists were deemed to be from a different community to the bystander. This was framed variously as a lack of entitlement to intervene, or as inappropriate, because the violence was culturally embedded.

Even when gendered violence was acknowledged, the situating of domestic violence as a ‘private’ matter relegated the abuse as a matter of individual, rather than community, concern. Some interviewees expressed a sense of helplessness or uncertainty about the role of the community in responding to domestic violence, not least because they held the view that the abused woman should ‘make the first move’ to challenge the abuse or seek support. Yet, whatever decision was taken on intervention, as outlined above and elsewhere in this chapter, the ‘community’, as a consideration, and as a context, was present in responses to domestic violence. Further, at times the boundaries of community, in terms of gender, ethnicity and insider/outsider dynamics, were brought into focus by those responses, as indicated the data. In the following chapter, I explore those community boundaries in more detail by examining the intersections of ‘race’ and gender, and consider how these two concepts may be said to influence the construction, interpretation and enactment of community.

CHAPTER 7: INTERSECTIONS OF ‘RACE’, GENDER AND COMMUNITY

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined the workings of gender, evident in community responses to domestic violence, at the individual, community and to an extent the corporate level. In this chapter, I look at the intersections of ‘race’ and gender and consider how these two concepts may be said to influence the construction, interpretation and enactment of community. I also explore how the interwoven themes of ‘race’, gender and community may help or hinder the development of social cohesion.

As in previous chapters, I used interview data from the whole sample to illustrate the themes, highlighting differences within the sample as and when they emerge. Again, some of the data were generated by the use of vignettes, some by probing questions and some from the interviewees’ accounts of personal experiences. The resulting data and analysis were augmented by participant and non-participant observations while carrying out the field work and by my own personal experiences as a resident, activist and researcher.

The following themes emerged from the data-

Visibility and vulnerability

Women and children from minority ethnic communities were identified as frequent targets for racialised abuse. This raised the issues of visibility and vulnerability to attack linked to both ‘race’ and gender. In this section I consider the significance of such attacks in relation to notions of community and belonging.

Trading old for new?

Within the literature on ‘race’ and ethnicity, there are claims that ‘old’ (biological) forms of racism have been superseded by the ‘new’ (cultural) racisms. In this section I will consider that debate, drawing on the experiences of children and adults of dual heritage, and on accounts of interactions between asylum seekers

and longer term residents. In doing so, I further interrogate the previous themes of inclusion and exclusion, and the significance of 'race' and gender in the symbolic construction of the boundaries of community and belonging.

The Ins and Outs of Boundary Construction

In this section I use the data to illustrate the ways in which community can be both inclusive and exclusionary from within as well as without. Once again, the boundaries of community are infused with racialised and gendered perceptions and demands.

Entitlement

In this section I examine how 'race' and gender assumptions may influence decisions to intervene when witnessing violence and how this springs from and contributes to constructions of communities of difference.

Within the bounds of community

In this section I explore further role of 'race' and gender in the maintenance of community barriers from within.

Visibility and vulnerability

In chapter 4, some respondents stated that their sense of community, of belonging, was geographically linked, i.e. they expressed a commonality with others living in the same area. Others talked about the importance of knowing people and being known. A third strand identified 'their community' as those sharing other common bonds, such as kinship, friendship, common goals, backgrounds or experiences. In all these instances, the bonds were cited as positive factors indicative of belonging – i.e. being included and accepted as 'fictive kin'. Inherent in that designation of 'community' was an expectation of mutual support and care. However, as the accounts below illustrate, these criteria for inclusion were not always evenly applied.

The research indicated that presumptions of commonality, through shared gender and shared location, were not always evident. Certainly, they proved to be insufficient

protection against *racist* assault. Physical and verbal attacks on black women and children were frequently cited, taking place in full view of others in shared public spaces where there may have been an assumption of safety – at school, in the park, at the post office.

In all the following cases, simple, everyday activities such as shopping, dropping children off at school or playing with a young child became dangerous for both parent, particularly mother, and child.¹⁶⁵

2220a: [resident, white, female] There was the [Asian] woman at the post office once.

2220c: [resident, white, female] She was with her bairn, wasn't she?

2220a: [resident, white, female] Aye, she had just got her money and this lad come over and out his hand in her pocket and tried to pinch her money and he knocked [emphasis] her pram over, the bairn got hit, and not one person tried to help her.

2220d: [resident, white, female] And everybody knew what was happening.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] There was this incident in the actual park ..., a pregnant lady, coloured. She had her young son with her in the park, on the swings and she got knocked to the ground. She wasn't doing anything at all and she just got knocked to the ground...

JH: Who did it?

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] I think it was a gang of girls. Sometime the lasses round here, they are worse than the lads.

1107: [racial harassment case worker, white, male] The Iranian community [were] suffering racist attacks, particularly when taking children to school or collecting of groceries.

¹⁶⁵ The accounts given here mirror the findings of Bowling (1998) in his study of the North Plaistow project in East London, which looked at police responses to, and the social context of, violent racist attacks. He recorded the perceptions of a range of local agencies, including housing, social workers and teachers, that Asian women, particularly with children, were most likely to be racially attacked, both at their home and when travelling along fixed routes, to work, school or shops. This was corroborated by further research in 1999 conducted by Chahal and Julianne for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The consensus in 1998 was that the perpetrators were most often white men and boys from the same or nearby estates as the victims. Police data largely confirmed the views of events, the victims and the perpetrators.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] I took my son first to a school in the area and it happened to me two or three times that the lady with pushchairs tried to push the chair into your leg and did it deliberately do it. So it is a problem. Also, somebody ... shouted to me, "Go back to your own home, you black Paki." ... I have been four or five months in that school's area. They have lots of problems in that area, economic situation, all things. The children know not to speak to that family or that family. They [perpetrators] are horrible, just they are horrible. For example we had two three four times, smashes the car, things like that.

These (and other accounts given during the research) were counter to the claim that the most regular victims of violence are young males, explained by their more frequent use of public space, which therefore increases the risk of being targeted. As such, they are significant for a number of reasons, at both individual and community levels.

To be attacked as an individual may evoke, on a personal level, a range of emotions from fear to anxiety, from rage to sadness. To be racially abused and attacked as a family unit, *as parent and child*, may bring into play other dynamics closely linked to familial and gendered roles and expectations. The role of parental protection towards the child is undermined or negated by the attack. Unable to protect either the child or themselves, the mother is exposed as vulnerable, or even, potentially, weak.

The location of the attacks is also relevant, given that they took place in public, in front of others who, in the cases cited, did not intervene. Not only does this render public places unsafe, but it emphasises that the community can not be relied on to protect the vulnerable. For a parent or child to be racially abused and attacked when in each other's company is, therefore, potentially a 'psychic', as well as a physical or verbal assault, and may have repercussions for parent/child *and* community relationships. How can the child look to the parents for protection if they, as adults, cannot protect themselves? How can the child turn for protection to a community that witnesses the child or parent being abused, yet does nothing? The spiral of isolation is tightened, and may contribute in part to a withdrawing from the wider community that does not afford care or protection to the family (Chahal, 1999). This has parallels with discussion on the effects on children who witness their mothers being abused by

domestically violent men (see for example Saunders, 1995).¹⁶⁶ It also points, yet again, to the ‘Millsonian’ observation that the personal is not only a private trouble but should be a matter for public concern, not least because there are implications for the wider community.

The public significance of these assaults is that that the attacks were not only racially motivated and targeted at individual women and children, but as hate crimes they conveyed the message to the wider community that anyone from a black or other minority ethnic community could be targeted for violent abuse. Regardless of any characteristics shared with the perpetrators, the bystanders or the community, such as gender, parenthood, geographical location, or common activities such as using leisure facilities, shops or schools, to be black and visible was to be vulnerable to racist abuse. Furthermore, being identified as a visible member of a minority ethnic group *and* being female appeared to deepen the possibility of harassment, suggesting that the violence was, often, simultaneously racialised and gendered, and that *it is at the intersections of those constructs that hatred intensified*.

Could it be, then, that the contempt evident in the violent incidents, related above, is, in part, a product of a perceived ontological affront, in which to be black *and* to be female is, of itself, viewed as an aberration of an assumed norm of white masculinity? At first sight, the evidence from this research might point to this assumption.¹⁶⁷ Clearly, ‘race’/ethnicity and gender persist as socially constructed markers of difference, and as sites of hierarchy and domination (Dworkin, 1981; John, 2001; Solomos; 1996; Walby, 1990). As such, they are frequently maintained, and through the use of force, enacted, not only against individuals, but also communities and nations, by specific acts of violence, including rape, against women (Brownmiller, 1975;¹⁶⁸ Fryer, 1993). What then emerges from the literature on racial violence and

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter 6 on domestic violence.

¹⁶⁷ During this research, the majority of violence cited was by majority ethnic perpetrators (white) against minority ethnic targets (Asian), and by males against females (in this case minority gender against majority gender, which opens up a whole new debate on numbers i.e. presence and on power and control).

¹⁶⁸ It should be noted that Brownmiller’s (1975) work, which was widely acclaimed as a “pioneering scholarly contribution to the contemporary literature on rape” was also critiqued by Davis (1982) as

on gendered violence is that both forms of violence often co-exist, in an almost symbiotic relationship, a point that is less frequently acknowledged or analysed (Einsenstein, 1996; Ware, 1992).¹⁶⁹ In order to explore this relationship further, I now reflect on the interpretation and subsequent ‘application’ or performance of ‘race’ and gender, as witnessed and experienced by respondents, with particular reference to those who were deemed to have, in some way ‘crossed the boundaries’.

Trading old for new? The Persistence of the ‘Blood-line’

In her article on academic classifications of ‘race’ and racism, in which she critically evaluates contemporary anti-racist responses in view of increased levels of racial violence and harassment across Europe, Lentin (2000) states that

The current proposal to draw a line between ‘old’ biological racism and ‘new’ cultural racism denies the point that aversion to difference *per se* and not particular biological or cultural traits leads to the persistence of racism over time (Lentin, 2000: 104).

While I interpret this as a rejection of claims of immutable biological of cultural difference, it could be said that the emphasis on ‘difference *per se*’ is also problematic, in that it makes invisible the intersectionality, perhaps even co-dependence, of both ‘race’ and gender as sites of oppression and distancing. During my research, it appeared to be the case that the ideology of both ‘old’ and ‘new’ racism was evident, and utilised concurrently as justification for both racialised and gendered abuse. This was evident in cases of racist violence cited elsewhere in this thesis¹⁷⁰, and again in incidents discussed below, involving children of dual heritage, and /or their parents. In the first example below, a policy officer noted particularly vicious attacks on children whose parents were from visibly different ethnic backgrounds. In doing so she states that the abuse (and its impact) is both pernicious and subtle. How can this

one example of many works that both “succumb to the old racist sophistry of blaming the victim... [and facilitate]...the resurrection of the timeworn myth of the Black rapist” (Davis, 1982:181-182).

¹⁶⁹ This points to the conclusion that pursuing a narrow focus on binary oppositions along a black/white, male/female duality would not full encompass or explain the dynamics of a ‘racist patriarchal ideology’ (Ware, 1992:17 citing Pratibha Parmar, ‘Hateful Contraries, Media Images of Asian Women’ in *Ten.8* no 16). This complexity was reflected in accounts given in this research and is explored in more depth below (see The Ins and Outs of Community).

¹⁷⁰ See Chapter 5.

almost contradictory statement be valid? A closer examination of both the overt and coded messages contained in the second case, below, where children of dual heritage were targeted, may begin to answer that question and contribute to unravelling the power and complexity of racially gendered abuse.

1110: [health policy officer, Asian, female] There are some really horrific cases where people are, especially mixed race relationships, where their children have been attacked, where women are taking the lead in getting the police involved, getting Racial Harassment Support Group involved, but there is a real fear of taking perpetrators to court. There's a real fear of reprisals and it's really pernicious Jackie. It's very, very subtle.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] My neighbour that I told you about [female neighbour is white and husband is Iranian]¹⁷¹, because in the area everybody knows that her husband is from minor ethnic group, .. they had problems ... Some families, they argue with their daughters, "You have got a black head and your Dad is a Paki" something like that. "Are you hiding Usama bin Laden in your home? We will call the police to come and search your home." Something like that.

The abusers (above) vocalised their hatred of the girls by referring to appearance, to skin colour and that colour was 'black'.¹⁷² That they see the children in terms of their (Iranian) father's appearance shows the immediate (biologically) racialised contrast they make between themselves as white and the norm, and the children they have designated as black and other. This also renders the mother's ethnicity invisible or perhaps unspeakable.

The attackers further stress the embodiment of racial hatred in the comment, "You have got a black head." This serves to dehumanise the children in a number of ways. The children are not seen as whole individuals; they are reduced to body parts. The head, the face, which is the focal point for interaction, is labelled black. It is also,

¹⁷¹ I am aware, as I write that this signifier is, itself, problematic, In order to set the scene for the subsequent commentary, I at first referred to the woman using racialised terminology 'white' yet referred to the man by nationality, 'Iranian' assuming the reader will recode that as 'of Asian appearance'. I inserted the word English, but struggled with prefacing Iranian with Black, or Asian, Yet this last description is an over simplification also. See Aspinall (2002) for discussion on contentious terminology.

¹⁷² Black is a negatively charged word, frequently used to denote evil, death, misfortune etc, for example Black Widow, Black Wednesday. It is not used merely to denote colour in a literal sense.

through use of the term ‘blackhead’, linked to disease, to infection, to dirt and therefore reinforces the need for distance to prevent contamination. The racist abuse then widens, drawing on concepts of nationhood –“Your Dad’s a Paki”. There is no attempt or need for the abusers to link to children to their father’s actual country of origin.¹⁷³ ‘Paki’ is used as a generic term of racist abuse “of people with a visible degree of melanin in their skin by people whose melanocytes are not so active” (Fryer, 1993:27). The children are *not* perceived as British, despite being born in the area and despite their mother’s nationality. Once again, their mother becomes invisible, and the children are seen only in relation to their father.

The third layer of (cultural) racism draws on international politics and representation of the ‘other’. The children are now linked vicariously to acts of violence and ‘terrorism’ by associating them with a millionaire Saudi national, who is portrayed in the media as the elusive leader of an international network of killers: with that connection comes the associated Islamophobic sentiments that are encouraged by repeated references in the media to the professed faith of suicide bombers and the homogenisation of Muslims.

In yet another layer, the white abusers link the children to criminality. On the surface, a suggestion of harbouring a well-known figure hunted by international law enforcement agencies underscores the pervasive themes linking black men, particularly in this instance, Muslims, with lawlessness and danger. It also resonates with the portrayal of woman as harbourers, as protectors of those men.¹⁷⁴ The outsider status that has been constructed up to this point is finally consolidated by the symbolic threat of involving the police, to invade and search the children’s home. In effect, they are guilty by association and the state, represented by the police, will act on the word of the white aggressor. There is to be no private, ‘safe’ space for ‘black’ children.

¹⁷³ At the time of the interview, Iran was not a current or prominent target for sustained political or media criticism. It may be of interest to note if the utilisation and incorporation of nationality into epithets of racialised abuse would encompass Iranians as the contemporary positioning on nuclear proliferation intensifies.

¹⁷⁴ News reports often refer to women, as partners or relatives, being taken into custody during investigations into men’s acts of violence e.g. London bombings, July 2005; the murder of a policewoman in Leeds, 18th November 2005

Similarly, public space is also dangerous for those who are deemed to have crossed the boundaries of 'race', gender and sexuality (Mahtani, 2002; Tyner, 2002; Wright, 2003). In the following example, a white mother of children of dual heritage is subjected to abuse. Here the mother's ethnicity is no longer invisible: she becomes a target for 'racism by proxy' (Franks, 2000):

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] I was walking up the street and there was this woman – she's white but she wears the Asian clothes cos her husband is Asian and her kids are. So these lads started shouting at her and laughing at her for wearing the Asian clothes. So I stepped in because I thought well she is just like me because I am a bit of both¹⁷⁵, you know, so I said something but I knew the kids that were calling her up the street so I said, "Stop taking the piss! She's not done owt to you. It's nowt to do with you what she's wearing."

Despite the speaker's intervention, the young men abusing the white woman clearly did think they had a right to comment, and to ridicule. In this instance, the superficial focus was on the clothes the woman wore, but the stimulus and premise for the abuse was both her gender and her ethnicity *and her perceived transgression of racialised/gendered expectations*. As a white woman, she was wearing *shalwar* and *kameez*, clothing associated with Muslims, or even as cited elsewhere, by people generically allocated the label of 'Pakistanis'.¹⁷⁶ Closely allied to that appearance is the stereotype of the Muslim woman as passive and submissive. As Franks (2000) notes, in her study of white women Muslims who choose to wear the *hijab*:

"Many non-Muslims appear to believe that a white Muslim woman cannot have made a dynamic choice for Islam and that they therefore clearly match the 'subdued and oppressed' model. The veil hides their femininity and they are regarded as *a traitor to their race* (my italics) because it is deemed that they have denied their superiority (Franks, 2000:924).

Although the woman here was wearing a *dubutta*¹⁷⁷ rather than the *hijab*, nevertheless, her appearance, her clothes, placed her as 'other', as outside her ethnic and cultural

¹⁷⁵ Note here that the speaker identifies with woman she describes as white, while describing herself as 'a bit of both'.

¹⁷⁶ Note that the term 'Kosovan' became, for a while, synonymous with 'asylum seeker', following the civil war in Yugoslavia.

¹⁷⁷ Long scarf, which may or may not be worn to cover the head and therefore not necessarily perceived as 'a veil'. This suggests that it is not necessarily veiling *per se* that exercises 'critics' but dress as the outward symbol of perceived boundary transgression.

community, especially in a predominantly white area, where she was very visible.¹⁷⁸ However, the ‘betrayal of race’ alluded to by Franks (2000) is not only associated with the outward appearance *per se* but also by the significance of that dress as a marker of her relationship with an Asian man, and as a mother of children who are deemed to be ‘non-white’. The assumed boundary violation here draws on a more biologically essentialist construction of ‘race’, and the persistence of miscegenation fears¹⁷⁹ (Bland, 2005; Ferber, 1998). During the research, this was articulated most overtly by white respondents in relation to asylum seekers.¹⁸⁰

1103b: [councillor, resident, white, male] What I am on about, I’m led to believe – I mean you know it’s only hearsay, but I know they had some remarks, the girls and different things like that, but I’m led to believe in their [asylum seekers’] country from about 12 years old they might get married or whatever I haven’t known and it’s different here. It’s not like that, are you with me like?

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] [councillor, resident, white, female] Well going back to the asylum seekers and specifically [hostel for asylum seekers], which is full of young males. I do a lot of work with young people and I’ve got to say that there are not many positive things that I hear. Like about their [white males’] girlfriends... At Briardene pool, they [asylum seekers] were all getting free swimming. All the young girls I had spoken to had stopped going swimming because it was sexual things that were happening in the swimming baths. The young [white] males were getting more hyped up about this because their girlfriends were going to tell them what was happening, so they see these young males a threat to their women...Of course some of the girls are getting to know [men who are asylum seekers], because

¹⁷⁸ In the current climate of Islamophobia, some form of ‘Islamic’ dress may be interpreted as ‘un-British’, even dangerous by association, because of the emphasis on the construction of the ‘Muslim terrorist’.

¹⁷⁹ As Bland (2005) notes, referring to (Young, 1995), “The term ‘miscegenation’, from the Latin *miscere* (mix) and *genus* (race), was coined in 1864 by two anti-Abolitionist journalists who, during the American Civil War, wrote a hoax pamphlet entitled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races Applied to the American White Man and the Negro*. The pamphlet implied that Abolitionists sought to free slaves because they sexually desired them and wished to amalgamate the two races.” (Bland, 2005:29). The term is used here to refer to ‘inter-racial’ or ‘inter-ethnic’ relationships. It is also used pejoratively in connection with children of dual heritage and their parents.

¹⁸⁰ Could it be that it is deemed by some to be more acceptable to make racist comments about asylum seekers compared to other BME residents because of the legalised ‘outsider’/ stranger i.e. non-citizen status? Demonstrably outside entitlement of ‘care’ by the state associated with citizenship (not least through policies on immigration and asylum), asylum seekers become ‘legitimate targets’. Similar remarks about ‘inter-ethnic’ relationships were seldom mentioned except in relation to asylum seekers. This doesn’t mean that that the censure described here was absent in relation to other ‘mixed’ relationships– it just wasn’t so overt.

some of the girls are starting to get involved with the boys from [the hostel housing asylum seekers].

JH: Do the girls get any hassle?

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] Well they do, off the community because it's "What are you with that..." Well basically they call them 'blacks'. That's basically what they are called - or asylum seekers. So the young girls are getting it in that respect, but I know there is still a lot of anger with the young people and I am talking about young people ages 14 plus. And Men. I've talked to men who are high as a kite over it.

The first speaker [1103b] raises the spectre of irreconcilable cultural practices, charged with a hint of sanctioned paedophilia. The second speaker [1103b] gives a more complex account of tensions between asylum seekers and the local white community. The reference to free swimming for asylum seekers had been mentioned by other respondents during the research as a cause of resentment among local residents, who saw this as an example of preferential treatment. This specific 'insult' was linked to pre-existing, often quoted, accounts of asylum seekers receiving free mobile phones, expensive cars, designer clothes, and television sets with satellite connections. It may be of no great surprise that the longstanding dispute around allocation of resources should encompass the claim that "'they' are taking 'our' women'".

Nevertheless, some women did experience sexual harassment from some men who were asylum seekers or refugees. As recalled by the speakers below (and by other personal communications during this research) there were first hand accounts of inappropriate, offensive and sometimes even violent behaviour.

1103a: [councillor, resident, white, female] And I've had comments myself from the lads at [hostel]. So I'm not just saying somebody's told me. I've actually had comments, sexual comments, which is not nice. If I had a daughter (which I haven't) and my daughter was talked to the way I was talked to I would have punched his face in. I am being honest with you. They are very sexist. "I wouldn't mind a bit of that". But they say it to your face. They say it as they are coming [towards you] and they are very, very intimidating. Like if you have a group of those lads, at the swimming baths.

2214a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] [animated] There was a mister man and I was dressed to the skin with a top on cos it was

hot and you know that place for asylum seekers and there was one man standing staring blatantly at me. Well you know me, I started being cheeky to him and Martin [boyfriend] was going to me, "Shut up! Shut up!" And he thought it was because he was an asylum seeker. But I was saying, "Look Martin...if it was a white man standing staring at me ... I am going to tell the fucker, "What you looking at?" I don't care how I am dressed or what I look like, it doesn't give no man or woman a right to stare...So I was standing there giving him grief and he was still looking so I said "What you fucking looking at?" You know, swearing a bit, showing me anger and Martin was saying, "Shut up! Shut up! It's shan¹⁸¹! It's shan!" But it wasn't because the man was not white, *it was because he was fucking looking at me* and you would do the same for any white man or woman looking at me.

These accounts above are significant in that they highlight an important tension, which may only become apparent if viewed simultaneously through the lens of 'race' and gender, at the point where the borders overlap. In the examples given, there was evidence of women being sexually harassed. Women identified those incidents as issues affecting women's safety and choice. For some, the acts of gendered disrespect resulted in loss of freedom to use public facilities/ space, for others it reinforced the prevalence of gender stereotypes associated with appearance. There did, however, appear to be a gendered difference in the responses to the situation.

The emotionally charged scenes described above are, ostensibly, a result of disrespect shown to young women by some young men. In the cases of abusive behaviour, the women were angry about the sexualised threat to themselves. By comparison, the reaction of the white males to this situation was not restricted to condemnation of the harassment. The animosity towards the male asylum seekers included a reported rage against consensual relationships with white women. The original 'insult', that of gendered abuse, becomes almost secondary when linked to a racialised threat to white male dominance. In her study of white supremacist literature and websites in the United States, and the associated construction of hierarchical identities, Ferber (1998) notes:

Gender is central to white supremacist discourse because the fate of the race is posited as hinging on the sexual behaviour of white women ... [suggesting that women are]... either breeders of the race or...traitors.... [A]ll discussions of interracial sexuality revolve

¹⁸¹ *Shan*- embarrassing, shameful, unjust

around images of white women and black men, so interracial sexuality also represents a threat to white male authority, usurping his control over both white women and black men (Ferber, 1998:59).

As both the accounts 1103b and 1103a, above, demonstrate, the racialised and gendered stereotypes of black men as sexual threat to white women and girls were evidently reproduced in ‘everyday’ conversations and not confined to extremist racist and fascist rhetoric; rather they were examples of a continuum of emotive images invoked to justify the subordinate position of all women, and of black men (Jahoda, 1999; Nagel, 1999).¹⁸² As such, the narratives were imbued with connotations of biological and cultural separatism, and exposed the challenge or perceived threat to white masculinity, in terms of both sexual *and community* ownership of women, posed by ‘inter-racial’/ ‘inter-ethnic’ relationships.¹⁸³

The relevance of these examples of racialised and gendered encounters to social cohesion is that they reveal levels of on-going tension, which may lead to incidents that are interpreted as either racially motivated incidents or inter-ethnic conflict based on cultural differences. The events are framed by a process of boundary drawing between individuals, and by association, groups of people classed as ‘other’. This creates an environment that has the potential for violent confrontation, which then becomes justified through claims of insult or injury to self, and to those designated as members of one’s own group. Yet, although there was a claim of anger or righteous indignation at the treatment of women, as in the case of the swimming pool incidents, other observations would suggest that ‘gender defence’ or protection of women from violence and abuse is only an issue within racialised boundaries, and that ‘protection’ was conditional on women conforming to male-determined constraints on their behaviour and relationships.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² The observations made in the US study are also evident in the rhetoric of British far-right extremist groups. For example, from mid 2005 onwards, the British National Party has augmented its Islamophobic rhetoric with an orchestrated campaign portraying Asian men, particularly Muslims, as paedophiles preying on young white girls in what it designated an ‘anti-white, racist, paedophile’ assault on ‘our ‘White Roses’’. See also section on Justice below.

¹⁸³ It would appear also that, interwoven in the displays of anger about ‘inter-racial’ relationships, are subtle hints of that miscegenation ‘folk devil’ – the threat to the purity of the bloodline through physical intimacy whether by force or consent. This is considered again in subsequent pages.

¹⁸⁴ See also *The Ins and Outs of Community* below for further discussion.

Significantly, the harassment of women was only highlighted as an issue of community tension, of potential threat to community cohesion, when it was linked to a *public* display of disrespect by men deemed to be representative of a non-dominant, minority ethnic group of males towards women from a majority ethnic group.¹⁸⁵ This suggests that claims of outrage and offence were not so much a plea for respect for women, but rather another example of old time patriarchy, and a competition to re-establish the power to control women's behaviour. The pertinence of this observation to the social cohesion debate is that the boundaries of community, which at first appeared to be racialised, were also gendered.

Yet, as seen previously, in chapter 4, government vision statements on social cohesion did not refer specifically to gender or gender relations, and nor did most respondents: there was evidence within the research of the normalisation of gendered violence, sometimes in comments from women who were themselves abused, often from people in the wider community. Gender and power, in both private and public relations, was rendered invisible.

Could it be that abuse of women and in particular domestic violence as a gendered violence, is not perceived by the public or by government as a fragmenting factor in communities and in society? If this is the case, then, despite initiatives and policies instigated to tackle the abuse, *and despite the legislative and political recognition that domestic violence is a public not a private matter*, the association of domestic violence with the realm of the individual and the 'private' remains, in as much as the focus of concern is the violence itself, and not the context in which it takes place.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ During this research, the racist incidents cited predominantly involved abuse by white residents directed at Asian and other minority ethnic residents, although there were some exceptions, noted elsewhere in this work. The perceived insult to self and own group or community, which is racialised with overtones of gendered insult, is evident in the recent disturbances in Lozells, Birmingham during the week leading to 23rd October 2005. Following allegations that a 14 year-old black girl, thought to be 'an illegal immigrant' had been gang-raped by Asian men, existing tensions between some African-Caribbean and Asian residents led to days of riot, disorder and attacks that led to the death and injury of a number of men from 'opposing' communities. See www.news.bbc.co.uk accessed 5th March 2006.

¹⁸⁶ The government's *Domestic Violence: A National Report* (2005) mentions gender 3 times, two of which are included in the word transgender. Heterosexuality is not mentioned, nor is there any reference to the family as a site of structured and performative gender subjugation, except obliquely in the case of forced marriages. The wider societal impact of domestic violence is narrowed down to economic considerations, with annual costs of £23 billion nationally (2000:2): the costs to communities of women potentially being denied a wide range of social, civic and economic opportunities (i.e. forms of active citizenship) due to male violence and resulting isolation is not evaluated.

The importance of contextualising violence, through an analysis of hierarchical power relations, including those of 'race' and gender, is raised by Hill Collins (1998). She refers to the power exercised by individuals 'controlling authoritative social institutions' to sanction and therefore legitimise violence, compared to non-sanctioned violence that is vilified.¹⁸⁷ She further points to the ubiquitous stereotyping of black and other minority ethnic men and women, and to the routine, sexual objectification of women, linked to portrayals of violence. Similarly, the domestic abuse of women and children is so prevalent that it rarely merits detailed attention in the press, even when women and children are killed, yet when a man is abused or killed by a female partner, the incident may attract the prolonged gaze of the media.¹⁸⁸ It is in this climate that the ideology underpinning the violence become invisible, leaving the power of race and gender abuse intact and unchallenged.

Patterns of legitimated and non-legitimated violence, violent acts and verbal violence become routinized in a series of micro-interactions across an assumed separation between public and private spheres of everyday life. In both these spheres of social organization, systematic violence has become so routinized against less powerful groups that its everyday nature ironically fosters both its invisibility and acceptance. *Hidden in plain sight* [my emphasis], the routinization of violence in the workplace, government, media, streets and other social institutions becomes so prevalent and racially and gender encoded that most people have difficulty in identifying routinized violence as violence at all (Hill Collins, 1998:922).

It is ironic, yet perhaps predictable, that greater attention is paid to the points where that normalisation is confounded: domestic and racial violence become visible and shocking when the protagonists challenge the hegemonic borders of 'race' and gender by acting 'out of character' or against the grain. A range of border crossings

¹⁸⁷ A contemporary example of this could be the British and American involvement in the war in Iraq, versus the New York attack on September 11th and the London bombings on July 7th 2005. A further example would be the current debate on the development of nuclear capability by Iran.

¹⁸⁸ The media fest that surrounded Mike Kenny in 2004 is a case in point. Following claims that he had suffered a continuum of escalating violence perpetrated by a female ex-partner, Kenny appeared on local and national television and radio and in local and national newspapers. He set up a website www.itdoeshappen.org purporting to offer help and advice to victims of domestic violence, and links to this site were added to domestic violence information and advice websites nationally. Extensive media coverage was given to the refuge for battered men, which Kenny claimed to have set up. It later transpired that the refuge existed only in the mind of Mike Kenny. Subsequently, minimal and cursory coverage was given locally to his ex-partner's, and police, rebuttal of his claims and his trial for attempting to obtain property and services by deception. Compare this to the national coverage of women whose claims of alleged rape by footballers are rejected.

identified in this research serve to illustrate this point: the unwelcome attention given to the white women wearing 'Asian' clothes; the abuse of children of dual heritage and their parents; the denigration of the Asian women who challenged male power networks by speaking openly about domestic violence and setting up lines of support for victims (see subsequent pages). All are examples of the construction and reinforcement of community boundaries, underpinned by both biologically and culturally essentialist notions of 'race' and gender. The extent and impact of this thinking on internal and external constructions of community is explored in more detail below, in an examination of responses to domestic and racial violence.

*The In's and Out's of Boundary Construction*¹⁸⁹

On first examination of community responses to domestic violence, it appeared that there was universal condemnation of male violence to women. This was evident in discussions on proposed hate crime legislation, during which most respondents supporting enhanced sentencing for men who abuse female partners, compared to tariffs for violence generally.

2218a: [resident, white, male] Yes he should [receive enhanced sentencing].

2218b: [resident, white, female] Yes I agree with that.

2218a: [resident, white, male] You shouldn't hit a woman.
[Emphatic and sure]

2218b: [resident, white, female] Cos women can fight worse than men [laughs] Well, when they were fighting one day upstairs. I says to him, "What would I have to do to get you to hit me?" He says. "I'd never ever hit you, it's the wrong attitude"

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] I hate that, women being beaten up like that. I think it's totally uncalled for. It's not a man who does that, it's a coward.

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian male] Lock the buggers up!

¹⁸⁹ As noted in the Introduction, it is not my intention to present an interpretation of the construction of 'community' premised on a set of immutable conflicts between the binary dualisms of male/female, black/white, insider/outsider status. The concepts, and their interactions, are fluid, dynamic and complex. However, because the tensions are more *visible* at the borders, the contrast between oppositional constructs becomes more stark.

However, it soon emerged that this apparently unequivocal stance against violence towards women became more complex and more nuanced when ‘race’/ethnicity was introduced into the domestic violence scenario. It was at this point that antipathy towards gendered violence became subsumed by considerations of racialised difference. If not quite invisible, gender and gendered abuse was no longer the primary concern. Overwhelmingly, the dominant considerations cited as reasons or justifications for non-intervention were those of ethnicity, culture and religion. It was here that the boundaries of community, as delineated by these linked factors, became most obvious. I now turn to a closer inspection of those demarcation lines, beginning with the accounts of outsiders looking on.¹⁹⁰

2218a: [resident, white, male] To be honest I am not being racial but I think it is their culture, they don’t like you to get involved.

2219: [community activist, resident, white, male] Now the [Asian] women, in their family, they have to do as they are told, basically it’s their religion. So I don’t honestly see, I cannot see any white couple getting involved. Because they [white people] know they [Asian women] have got to respect their husbands and do as their husbands say whether he’s hitting them or not. Because I have known a few Asian women get belted and I’ve seen them walk along [local main street] in tears, ahead of their men and he’s saying “[Growls] Get home! Ur ur ur!” in their language, you know and she’s in tears but she knows that’s their religion, you have to respect the man and do as you are told. And I think that’s the way people see them.

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] I think it’s very, very common that the whole attitude is to look the other way when it is someone who is Muslim or whatever... We did three performances [play on domestic violence]... The white women laughed at how the Asian woman was treat[ed]. P’raps did go, “Ah what a shame”, but were very flippant about it. [Yet] exactly the same thing [violence] was happening... was exactly the same story. But when it was the other way, they were very flippant about it. And I mean... obviously it is racist, but *it’s about finding this is my little community and that is their little community and I have enough coping with mine and I don’t want to cope with that as well* [my emphasis].¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ The discussion in this section draws on comments from respondents from various communities. It is important to note here the status of each respondent, i.e. as an insider (member of community, self-scrutinising) or as an outsider (member of another community, looking on).

¹⁹¹ This echoes the comments of 1103a in Chapter 4 page 107.

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] Sometimes, certain communities close ranks. I think sometimes the Asian community close rank on this sort of thing [domestic violence], as long as it's sorted out.

JH: Why do you think they would do that?

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] Because they don't want the bad publicity to cause - any bad publicity to them.

These replies illustrate some of the nuances involved in the reactions to domestic violence as viewed from 'across the borders'. The first speaker cites the gendered violence as culturally situated: as such, intervention would be unwelcome.¹⁹² The second speaker's explanation for non-intervention is that the woman herself would expect violence be used to enforce her husband's wishes: again, intervention is deemed pointless, because violence towards women is sanctioned, within the family, by patriarchal religious and cultural practices. Despite the individual act of violence taking place in public, the matter is private.

Contrary to his earlier stance, the speaker now suggests that violence to some women is not so problematic for the bystander. Further, his observation that white people would not intervene in this situation suggests that, from this perspective, both Asian and white communities view violence to Asian women, if not as the norm, then at least as unchallengeable. In that sense, then, tacit support would be given to the continuation of domestic violence, not only by individuals but by communities across ethnic borders. Sometimes this perception was bolstered from within communities. Reference was made during the research to an abuser who attempted to use the claim of culture as defence or justification for domestic violence. In this instance, he appeared to be playing on the racist stereotypes held by white workers. When this ploy failed, in the face of a challenge by an Asian woman worker, the man attempted to discredit her social, cultural and professional legitimacy and authority.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] Sometime I work with the social worker and provide the support and also I advise then because sometimes they [domestically violent men] use religious

¹⁹² The speaker seeks to distance himself from being labelled as a racist by prefacing his views with 'I'm not being racial but...' This comment suggests that the speaker *does* link the acceptance of violence to a culture other than his own, and that assumed acceptance marks out a boundary of difference. His concern is not that this perception would be deemed inaccurate, but rather that he is not judged to be a racist for holding this view.

culture and want to hide under their own religion and culture. Because the social workers, they don't know so much about our culture, so I tell them, "No. This is not this way. It should be happening this way even like I went to visit a family with one of the social worker and he was saying. "Oh, in our culture, as a Muslim family, we don't do this, we don't do that" and I was responding to him –(he's not from Bangladeshi family) and in the end he said, "Are you a Muslim?" I said, "Yes" And then he said, "Oh you are not a good Muslim! [Laughs]

Nevertheless, this example does not excuse or explain the wider context of racialised assumptions or lack of empathy for BME women experiencing domestic violence. The third speaker above [2229] noted that when women from a range of ethnic and national backgrounds presenting a dramatised account of personal experiences of domestic violence, there was a lack of empathy shown from white women towards Asian women, despite their common gender and experiences. Importantly, this speaker attributed this apparent trivialisation of Asian women's experiences, in part, to the pressures the white women had to deal with within their 'own community', which left no emotional space to engage in the distress of women from an/other community. This had echoes of the statement made previously by a local councillor, referring to the resentment expressed by long term residents who found they were living alongside refugees and asylum seekers. The implication is, in both cases, that, within communities, care and compassion were themselves resources which are in great demand because of stressful circumstances. To allow resources, whether emotional or material, to leak across the border to those seen as outside the community could therefore be interpreted as prioritising the needs of others above 'our own'. To be from another community is to be outside the range of care and entitlement, and by association outside the scope for reciprocity.

A further dynamic emerges from the account related by 2229 above. In this encounter, the experiences of domestic violence were not viewed as the 'personal troubles' of individual women alone. If they had been, then perhaps it would have been possible to collectivise the experience of abuse through the lens of gender, by making sympathetic links 'from one woman to another'. It appears instead that the connections that could have been made are prevented when community is constructed primarily along ethnic divides. In this way, the women, the violence and the context

in which the violence happened, the 'community', become bound up into one homogenous mass that is too big and too different an entity with which to engage.

The final speaker above refers to the bringing together, the solidifying, of a community, but this time it is proposed as a sign of strength, a shoring up of the boundaries to allow repair work to be carried out internally. Yet, once again, she is talking about the critical gaze of the outsider, and attributes that gaze with the power to cause the observed to erect defensive barriers. In this example, domestic violence is portrayed, at first, as a community concern: this stance is then qualified – it is the *reputation* of the community that is paramount. Again, from the outside looking in, gender was less visible while ethnicity was posited as the primary mode of collectivity.¹⁹³

In the above examples, diverse groups of people were ascribed homogeneity by others who labelled themselves as outside that designated grouping, looking in. Negative traits and attitudes were then assigned to the racialised group, and these negativities were then utilised by the onlookers as confirmation of difference from themselves. The transfer of the mode of differentiation from the biological to the cultural not only reiterated the positions of 'us' and 'them', but also removed from the bystander any obligation to intervene. By association, challenging the violence would equate with challenging the culture and risk the charge of being racist. Further, the reification of the culture of 'the Other', as essentialist a stance as that of biological determinism, served a dual function: it rendered 'whiteness', as an ethnicity, invisible and therefore devoid of scrutiny and it confined acceptance of power abuse inherent in gender relations to the realm of the racialised.¹⁹⁴ Closely allied to this stance of non-intervention is a further power dynamic, linking ethnicity, gender and *entitlement*

¹⁹³ It should be noted at this point that most of the white respondents, including those above, did not question the vague term 'Asian'. No distinction was made between different faith groups or communities: to be labelled Asian was to be seen as part of an amorphous mass, united through a common stance on violence towards women. The prevailing view was of a general cultural acceptance in Asian communities, which *as* 'culture', could not be challenged. There was no parallel reflexivity on white or non-Asian communities, nor was there reference made to a culture of male violence regardless of ethnicity. This is a significant factor in relation to social cohesion because it highlights again the process of distancing precipitated by stereotypes that are simultaneously raced and gendered.

¹⁹⁴ This is a crucial dynamic, which reveals the potency and intersectionality of both racism and sexism. The power of race and gender combined to reinforce existing power structures, hierarchies and abuses, at the individual, inter and intra-communal and national levels, is illustrated in Oprea's (2005) article, *The Arranged Marriage of Ana Maria Cioba, Intra-Community Oppression and Romani Feminist Ideals: Transcending the 'Primitive Culture' Argument*.

to intervene. It is to this that I now turn, in an examination of responses to both racial and domestic violence, this time drawing on examples illustrating the interactions between those looking across the borders of 'race' and gender.

Entitlement

When considering entitlement and 'otherness', it should be noted that distinguishing between 'own and other culture' was not confined to speakers from any single community, as the following interview excerpts show. In these examples, the first speaker would not intervene if he witnessed domestic violence involving a couple who were, unlike himself, Muslims. In the second case, the speaker intimated that she would make contact with the woman at a later time: similarly, the third speaker referred to possible gendered cultural sensitivities, when considering her response to witnessing a young Asian woman being abused by young white men. All respondents identified themselves, as bystanders, to be from a community other than that of the protagonists: all three refer to gender considerations linked to ethnicity.

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] [laughs]
Well I don't do anything I just walk. You see, they are a different kind of religion. You know, these people when the woman matter is come, they are very, very possessive. You see, I told in Islam, woman is treated differently. And we don't marry three women – [laughs] Islam says four! We are more relaxed. In our religion [Sikhism], woman had got equal rights, according to our Holy Book, just the same.

JH: And if the [Asian] couple were not from your community?

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] In this case, because it is dependent on their culture, you know some cultures find it so rude to let people know what has happened. I would maybe contact the woman [on a later occasion].

2216: [community activist, resident, white, female] I would show that young lady support. To show she's not on her own... I think my husband would do the same, but I think it's something a woman can do that a man can't do, because they don't feel threatened by that. A young Asian woman would feel threatened by a man coming to her, but if a woman comes to her they wouldn't feel so threatened.

The significance here is that the *choice* on whether or not to intervene remained with the bystander, based on their evaluation of the cultural context of the social actors involved. Whether or not the speakers would respond, the question of *entitlement* to intervene was not raised. Also implicit in the above statements was the concept of knowledge or awareness of other cultures. Regardless of the accuracy of the assumptions made, decisions were influenced by consideration of the contrast between self and own community, and the difference and homogeneity of the 'other'.

As noted previously, one factor that appeared to support intervention in instances of domestic violence was knowledge of, or familiarity with, both the individuals involved, *and* the community to which they belong. In the following quotes, this was a key factor in the decision to intercede: within that decision, an assumption of entitlement to intervene becomes apparent.

JH: Ok, so if you saw a Sikh couple and you knew them and they were arguing?

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] [laughs] I would look at them. If I know them, I would say, I talk to the man, you know, and say, "Stop! That's not right. Go to the house and sort things out"¹⁹⁵

2230: [taxi driver, resident, Asian, male] I would step in. If I knew them I would step in. I'd normally know how our society has brought them up, where they come from and I would step in. Because you know you would not get that much abuse back and you would be stopping something.

Importantly here, familiarity was not only concerned with knowing the individuals involved, but also about knowledge of the wider social context. Both speakers above *would* intervene if the couple were of the same religion as themselves because they assume they have the same the cultural map, the same terms of reference as the social actors involved (see Cohen 1998; Geertz, 1975). As the second speaker notes, predictability of outcome was a key precept underpinning his decision to intervene, not only because he knew the individual actors involved, but also because of a broader set of expected, culturally situated responses from those persons, who were

¹⁹⁵ In this example, domestic violence is still viewed as a private, personal matter, to be dealt with away from public scrutiny.

seen as representative of his own community. This points to a key dynamic, namely the internal policing of the community boundaries in order to maintain order or cohesion through conformity to an expected display of behaviour, including that involving personal relationships. In this instance, that community censure may be viewed as benign: in other examples given in subsequent pages, the impact of community maintenance, in which expectations were heavily gendered, was potentially (and paradoxically) destructive.

A further aspect of entitlement that is both raced and gendered involves the status of those involved in, or reacting to, instances of domestic or racial abuse. In the following detailed exchange, two of the speakers appeared keen to provide a 'balanced' view of racist incidents, and drew on their own experiences to claim that some Asian men provoked arguments which were racially motivated. In the discussion that ensued, others in the group considered alternative reasons for the man's actions.

2220b: [resident, white, female] Sometimes though, the Asian men cause some of the arguments with white men.

2220c: [resident, white, female] Aye look at that coloured fellow.

2220b: We were going...to the park last week, and one of them [speaker's children] throws a stone off his [Asian resident's] gate. And he...come out, looked, waited until he got back in his gate and shouted "You white bastards!" To a six year old. A six year old! So I turned round and said, "Here man, who are you fucking talking to?"

2220c: He said, "Fuck off you white bastards" [each word said slowly and deliberately].

JH: Why did he react like that?

2220d: [resident, white, female] Maybe he's heard people saying that as well.

2220c: But he should've waited before he shouted [shouted].

2220a: [resident, white, female] But they get it as well so why shouldn't they give it back?

2220b: There was only us three.

2220g: [community worker, white, female] Aye, but you have all got fellas. He doesn't know what your fellows are like. For all he knows, you could go home and gan, "That fella's just called us this", get your fellas to come and smash his windows and chin him.

2220c: But he started it, he called us white bastards.

In this example, the women who reacted angrily to the verbal abuse identified the man as the primary aggressor, whose 'villainy' was compounded by his conduct towards white women and children. The presenting issue was that of racial abuse, with the women positioned as victims. Their claims of vulnerability were then enhanced through reference to gender: there were 'only' three women being faced with one angry man.

The suggestion was that the man had transgressed the norms of expected behaviour: by virtue of their age, gender and ethnicity: the women did not expect to become the 'unwarranted victims' of an Asian man (see Frankenburg, 1993). Paradoxically, the gendered man was portrayed as a coward (after all, he had hidden behind his gate before shouting at them: worse still, there was a young child present) while the racialised man was an aggressor. This one incident, employing the stereotype of the threatening Asian male, was offered as evidence of a wider pattern of provocation on the part of Asian men.

The above reactions, which point to an hierarchical social structure in which the expectation / norm is that the white citizen is above the critical or censorious gaze of the black or minority ethnic citizen, were also noted in parallel discussions on domestic violence, in which the protagonist and victim were white, and the bystander was black. For the speakers below, the anticipated anger directed towards themselves if they intervened, was not only was not only a possible response to the witnessing or challenging of the violence: the sub-text here was that anger would also result from the racialised 'subordinate' daring to judge the actions of the 'privileged' white protagonists.

2217: [retired business professional, resident, Asian, male] If the things are so bad, if possible, I would go to the telephone box and tell the police. You see being a coloured man, you know and I have no right to say something, but if she is too upset and he is going to hit her and shouting and balling, then it's possible I'd send the policeman.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] I think most people would ignore them. Maybe I would go knock on the family and see the woman but it would really drive them [white residents] crazy if I say I see that.

All of the above examples reinforce the power of a dynamic inherent in the social cohesion problematic- that of entitlement, and a parallel lack of entitlement, based on assumptions premised on race, gender or both. Here, the term 'entitlement' encompasses interlinked conceptual strands, imbued with hierarchical potency, including social status, belonging to community, identity, and inclusion and exclusion. Firstly, being identified, and identifying self, as a member of a community confers the bystander with the *authority* to intervene. In this way, internal boundaries of community, and accepted norms of behaviour, are tacitly acknowledged and, if action is taken, reinforced.

Secondly, being identified or identifying self as outside of a community in relation to the protagonists may remove the authority or a sense of *obligation* to intervene. In this case, the violence becomes a secondary concern, compared to the tacit compliance with raced and/or gendered boundaries. In this way, external boundaries of communities are maintained.

Thirdly, in this research, interviewees responded to incidents of racial and domestic violence taking place on their 'home' territory, that is to say in a specific, locally determined, geographical location. Previously, many respondents had referred to 'place' as the key factor associated with belonging and community. In contrast, it would appear that community premised on ethnicity, particularly religion and culture, and gender, rather than on place of residence, became the dominant signifier of entitlement to challenge both forms of violence. Again, this dynamic has implications for social cohesion, raising major questions about the *stability* of the construct 'community'. For example, to what extent do constructions of community, based on place, i.e. geographical location, or common interests, or the 'imagined community' of nation, remain firm when faced with conflict and violence? Is it these considerations that maintain community, and that delineate the borders of community?

Or is it in fact the persistent constructs and associated ideologies of 'race' and gender that inform and shape both community and notions of justice and entitlement?¹⁹⁶

Most of the discussion so far has highlighted the potential for 'race'/ethnicity and gender together to uphold external distinctions between communities. The inter-connection of ethnicity and gender in relation to community maintenance was also shown to be a powerful, internal, regulatory force, and it is to comments on this matter that I now turn, with a note of caution. During the course of this research, this particular intersectional dynamic was raised most overtly and frequently by, and in relation to, BME respondents and communities. In developing the following discussion, I do not intend to suggest that the links between prescribed gender roles and communal expectations are absent from white communities: it is merely that, for most interviewees, they presented less explicitly.¹⁹⁷

Within the bounds of community

The role of women in relation to community maintenance has been the subject of much attention: ironically much of this work of public importance is seen as taking place in the so-called 'private realm', for example as mother and matriarch (Elias and Scotson, 1994; Young and Wilmott, 1957); as homemaker, where tangible acts such as the preparation and serving of food becomes symbolic of the well-being and honour of society (Strathern, 1975; 1990). Women, then, are seen as reproducers of community both physically and culturally, and when that role crosses from the private to the public realm, for example in the sphere of economy and labour, this may be perceived as a potential threat to the ascribed role of cultural guardian, and to the community itself.¹⁹⁸ This tension was apparent, for example, during and after the miner's strike from 1984-85, when women not only campaigned to save their husband's jobs, but also remained politically active. The women's solidarity with the

¹⁹⁶ See Chapter 8 Conclusion for attempt to answer this!

¹⁹⁷ The lack of gender consciousness (see Chapter 4) and the invisibility of whiteness (see Chapter 5) combine to ensure the focus of the white critical gaze remains on minority ethnic women, and communities, rather than on the patriarchal structures within and across all communities.

¹⁹⁸ Forrest and Kearns (2001), referring to the work of Castells (1997), claim that the erosion of the patriarchal family dismantled the long established routes for 'transmitting cultural codes from generation to generation' so that men, women and children are forced to "find new ways of living" (Castells, 1997:354 cited in Forrest and Kearns, 2001: 2128)

men was not always reciprocated: women in the mining communities faced “opposition and hostility from some men who resented their new independence” (Bryson, 1999:70).¹⁹⁹

Even so, there is some evidence to suggest that when women are involved in crossing previously-held traditional gender lines, in politics or in work, *and have that agency recognised and acknowledged*, they may also continue to be cast in, or indeed choose to fulfil, the role of protectors and enhancers of community, in the private realm associated with the family and the home (Charles and Davies, 2005; Hall, 2004; Marshall, 2001). Whether by choice or through the designation of others, the significance of the role of women as cultural guardians is that it bridges both the private and the public realms, and in doing so it emphasises the links between gendered roles and expectations and the internal boundaries of community. Consequently, women’s behaviour and social ‘obligations’ are placed as central to the functioning of the community;²⁰⁰ to contravene these codes is to risk censure, guilt and exclusion, even when faced with male violence.

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] For these [abused] women, they think the refuge won’t take their kids and they think they have to get out tonight or he’s going to kill us. The kids are safe – he’ll not touch the kids. They [women] are not intending to leave them [children] there forever, but they know they have to get out because if they don’t they are going to die. Nobody goes, “That poor woman to be in that situation.” They go, “She left her kids. She’s heartless”. Society for so long has pigeonholed women so that when they do not conform to ‘being a good mother’, but what does that mean? A ‘good wife’? Nobody knows what that is. And again, the strain again that women put themselves under. Like when they feel the shame. When they feel the guilt. They are placing expectations on themselves that have been enforced by society over years, society, patriarchal, dominated by men. It’s always trying to be an ideal. And woman can’t do that. The ideal that women can be is be who they want to be. And feel fine about it.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] If the women think that there is somebody who will take some action [against abuser], they

¹⁹⁹ One song, emerging from that time, entitled *No Going Back*, captured the spirit of change and determination, as in the lines, “If you called me sister when I joined the picket line, you better be there for me, brother, when I fight for mine. No going back! There are no limits now! No going back!”

²⁰⁰ See, for example, McClintock (1993); Yuval-Davis et al (1989), for further discussion about the centrality of gender relations to the construction and transmission of community.

will not admit. They will deny domestic violence. It will be worse for her, especially say for Black and ethnic minority communities, because ...they think they will live together until they die and it is their [women's] responsibility. Some of the women think it is them who is the problem. They will fear that their husband will have to go to prison.

Expressions of guilt or self-blame are just one facet of a spectrum of reactions which may be experienced by women of any background who are targeted by domestically violent men (Stanko, 1985; Walker, 1984). Fear of the consequences of speaking out i.e. going 'public' in the sense of involving agencies are also substantiated, as witnessed through accounts of inappropriate or inadequate service delivery, particularly in the case of BME women who encounter institutionally racist responses to their situation (Almeida, 1993; Crenshaw, 1994; Kelly, 2001; Preisser, 1999). Locally, in 2003, a report by DIVA,²⁰¹ "Good Practice Guidelines for Agencies Delivering Services for Black and Minority Ethnic Women" highlighted the persistence of racist attitudes in a comprehensive critique of agency responses to domestic violence.²⁰² Similar attitudes were identified by respondents during the research.

2227: [community worker, Asian, female] Back home they [families] get extended family support. There is not very much extended family support here so and still there is the general perception that ethnic minority families live within the family support system.

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] I remember turning around from all the councillors, all the senior officers at that meeting when we presented [cases of domestic violence] And there was an absolutely horrific response in a sense. They [councillors and officers] were just absolutely horrified at these cases. And it turned round immediately on the men within the community ... "We didn't realise black men are so barbaric... so violent". I was saying, "Hang on ... hang on they're no more barbaric than white men or

²⁰¹ DIVA, Working Towards Non-Violence at www.diva.org.uk accessed 12th February 2005.

²⁰² The DIVA report (2003) included the following criticisms –

- a) Inaccessible and inconsistent service provision resulting from assumptions and stereotypical images of Black, Asian and other minority cultures in general and women in particular.
- b) Continuing discrimination, sexism and institutional racism resulting in inappropriate and unequal services provided from an overwhelmingly white and ethnocentric viewpoint
- c) Adoption of a 'colour' blind approach which ignores the particular experiences, circumstances and need of black and minority ethnic women and assumes their need are the same as white counterparts
- d) Lack of provision of racially, linguistically and culturally appropriate services.

any other men". It was some of those things that sometimes held you back as black workers as well, because what you've got was then sheer racism and attitude, and that issue being... sidelined, saying "We need to look at the issue of race", [when] what was coming out was very clear cut racism.

This exclusionary framework was matched by the presence of internal community sanctions, as illustrated by the respondents below. The expectation was that women would maintain the honour of both family and community by remaining silent about domestic violence or by seeking support within the family.

2228a: [local shopkeeper, Asian male] It's hidden cos lots of women don't want to report them that's the trouble, especially in our Asian communities. I know a lot of people who suffer in silence who have been beaten up by their husbands but it's respect at the end of the day for the family and that, you know the honour, they don't want to tarnish that you know.

2225: [student, resident, Iranian, female] Unfortunately...still our women are ashamed to say something is happening to them, a problem. She should be going in family to solve.

2229: [community arts development worker, white, female] When we talked to the women we worked with about performing the piece [on domestic violence] they did create, a lot of them said "No" because they were scared about what the local community, the other Iranian women and men, what they would think.

The linked concepts of honour (*izzat*) and shame, referred to above, are powerful barriers preventing women seeking support: they are also powerful bolsters to community maintenance, at great cost to women.²⁰³ When the locus of honour and shame is placed firmly upon women in the community, the violence of men becomes a secondary, almost marginal, issue compared to maintaining the reputation of both family and community. The accounts above confirm the presence of an understanding within the community that an obligation had been placed on women to conform to collective expectations of appropriate behaviour. The community is then the arbiter of women's acceptability, and continued inclusion within society. This concern had

²⁰³ See *Against the Grain: A Celebration of Survival and Struggle 1979-1989* (1990) Southall Black Sisters; similarly, *Domestic Violence and Asian Women: A Collection of Reports and Briefing* (1994) Southall Black Sisters for further discussion on the concepts of honour and shame as powerful constraints on women, placing them as guardians of both the family and the community.

some substance, in that it was realised to an extent by the strongly negative reactions detailed below.

2222: [Asian issues worker, Asian, female] When we first started working on these issues, the main opposition initially, actually came from the so-called elected community leaders and representatives of the community to this issue. We'd talked councillors who gave this view, who knew some of workers quite well and we had discussions all the time. "These women are not normal women from the community, they're like prostitutes, they're running a brothel," ... so anything to discredit you... And they used, if they were women in white relationships with white men, they would use that saying, "Well, she's an outcaste from that particular community"", or that women [other women in community], "They don't have that perspective" It's all about discrediting everything. But I think eventually what they found was, that there were .. a few workers who were from very traditional, very established families and ... that was a great difficulty for them ... What we also found were... a lot of the women...and this is not public knowledge ... women again in terms of lack of support systems out there and their own respect and honour and their standing in the community were reluctant to come out.

The above statement is significant because it reveals again the intersectionality of race and gender inherent in the construction of community and cohesion. The act of speaking up publicly about domestic violence exposed an initial fault line of gender. Men in positions of power sought to silence women activists by labelling them as immoral and sexually deviant to isolate or set them outside of the community. This attack was further compounded by the second fault line of 'race', where women whose partners were white were deemed to be outsiders / traitors to their own community. The third strand returned to gender – the activists were cast as outside their gender – they were unlike other women.

Ironically, given the attempts to discredit those women pioneers by employing high order symbols of belonging, namely honour, gender, ethnicity and community, the tactics failed. Because some of the women workers came from well respected families, whose status rested in part on their adherence to accepted traditions, their challenges to domestic violence were not completely silenced. This did not mean that opposition melted away. In the research area, as elsewhere, black women who campaign publicly for the safety of women and children, by exposing and opposing

domestic violence are still targeted (see Southall Black Sisters, various; personal communications, various). The final sentence in the statement above also points to the silencing of other women, who for many reasons, including risk to their social standing, were afraid to acknowledge publicly the abuse of women.

In this instance, the dichotomy was that the concept of ‘community’ was used as framework to threaten women, yet in part conferred a legitimacy on some women of significant social standing to continue advocating change. At the same time, the threat of being ostracised was powerful enough to prevent other women challenging the status quo. One speaker labelled non-intervention in domestic violence because of these constraints as ‘sanctioned collusion’: she also acknowledged that gendered and racialised abuse of power was endemic within both community and professional / corporate structures.

JH: How can you challenge it ?[sanctioned collusion]

2211: [school governor, Asian, female] You do it at a big risk. You do it at a big big risk. There are networks within networks. I find that there is a lot of abuse of power, if you like, but you need to smell it, you need to recognise it you need to be intuitive about it. ... I am observing that there is a real lack of boundary when it comes to working with black communities. Ethically you can look at the same model and apply it to white communities and say well, you know, there may be white workers who are affiliated to church organisation to charities whose partners might work in the housing office or whatever, but in the black communities there are a lot more – I am not sure how to phrase this – but there is a lot more emotional [pause]... the currency of that relationship is very, very emotionally driven. It is very very powerful.

The outcome of non-intervention and suppression of challenges to domestic violence was a continuation of the dynamics inherent in ‘community’, especially the tension between the potential for community change and community maintenance. *It is this tension, with all of the racialised and gendered power dynamics touched on above, and elsewhere within this thesis, that is central to the community cohesion debate.* In the following and final chapter, I will draw together the interconnected strands of ‘race’, gender, community and cohesion and examine them in light of current community cohesion debates.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this final chapter, I bring together the various strands of this study. Beginning with an outline of the focus of the study, I move on to identify why this work was needed, referring to the identified gaps in the social cohesion agenda. This is followed by reflection on the merits of the methodological approach to this research. I then point to why this research is unique. This is followed by a brief summary of the foci of the previous chapters, which leads into the thematic conclusion of this study.

Focus of the study

The aim of this study has been to interrogate the social cohesion problematic and widen the parameters of the current debates on social cohesion. As noted in Chapter 1 of this thesis, this work began as an inquiry into the ways in which the boundaries and borders of community are constructed, interpreted and maintained, particularly through the lens of 'race' and gender. Fieldwork data were then used to examine the implications of the social construction of community for the cohesion dynamic. Further, the aim was to test the hypothesis that social cohesion is not always a benign concept. This work offers a complex and revealing exploration of some of the racialised and gendered nuances inherent in 'living community', as revealed by community responses to domestic and racial violence, in order to expand the dimensions of the cohesion debate.

The study was a result of personal, political and academic interest in the enactment of community and how the concept of 'community' can be evoked both to include and exclude individuals and communities, not least through the construction of community boundaries and barriers. While the government's social cohesion vision promotes the cohesive community as one in which diversity was valued and where strong, positive relationships were to be encouraged across civil society, it appeared less focused on the intricacies of social relationships as lived and *interpreted* at the

neighbourhood and sub-neighbourhood level. Of particular relevance here are the grounds on which communities construct notions of difference as well as diversity or similarity. It was that gap in recognising the interpretations of community 'at the borders' that I wanted to explore, in order to investigate some of the factors impacting on the possibility of achieving social cohesion.

This then led me to question the concept of community cohesion itself. The government's vision statement appeared to me to be promoting a somewhat nebulous, one-dimensional and static notion of cohesion, which did not tally with my experience of community as a dynamic, fluid and, at times, volatile entity. The findings of this study reveal a multi-faceted construction of cohesion operating at the community level, which was underpinned not only by the notion of belonging, as identified in the government's vision statement, but also by notions of justice and entitlement. These latter two concepts were absent from the 'official' cohesion debates.²⁰⁴

I now turn to a reflection on the data collection process that facilitated this study of social cohesion and community borders, followed by a brief exploration of possible future areas of study.

An Ethnographic Approach

This study is ethnographic and interpretive because this approach best suited my intended aims. As noted in Chapter 2, "Community cohesion is about the relationships between and within communities" (Beecham et al, 2002:6). I wanted to explore the relational dynamics inherent in the symbolic construction of community, as proposed by Cohen's (1998) work, in order to deconstruct the concept of social cohesion. This research was unique in that it connected two substantive areas of research and policy interest that are most usually approached as discrete subject matters, namely domestic and racial violence. By examining community responses to

²⁰⁴ This is a curious omission, given that the Home Office, who are responsible for cohesion policy nationally include in their corporate logo the words, "Building a Safe, Just and Tolerant Society". To date the only reference I have found to 'justice' in community cohesion documents has been in regard to the criminal *justice* system. This includes the Home Office (2005) document, "Community Cohesion: 7 Steps - A Practitioner's Tool Kit". See http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/reports_pubs/publications/race-faith/comcoh-7steps.pdf?view=Binary accessed March 16th 2006.

both forms of violence I also accessed indicators of the construction of community through the lens of 'race' and gender and in doing so, the racialised and gendered borders of community were brought sharply into view. This also led to an exploration of the intersections of 'race' and gender in relation to community. I then considered the implications and relevance of the borders and border crossings along the fault lines of 'race' and gender, and their consequences for the enactment of community, in relation to the concept of social cohesion. A unique aspect of the research is its examination of the gendered aspects of the social cohesion debate, which are absent from the government's policy documents and rhetoric on social cohesion.

The ethnographic approach enabled me to meet respondents in the places where they lived and worked, on 'their territory', the value of which is raised in the following points below. The approach helps to put respondents at ease by conducting interviews in surroundings familiar to the interviewees may encourage participation. Also, being seen as a person present in the community, rather than a complete outsider parachuting in to conduct interviews then leaving, contributed to 'recruiting' participants. My face became known and I was greeted in the street by people who later agreed to become respondents. Being 'present' allowed me to observe interactions between residents, and others, for example, councillors and paid employees with connections to the research area, outside of the interview situation, which presented opportunities for further reflections on community borders and boundaries as evidenced by both verbal and non-verbal communication.

The ethnographic approach also facilitates data collection throughout the time 'in the field' rather than restricting the gathering of empirical evidence to interviews or static sources of information, such as, for example, historical documents or reports alone.

In some instances 'being there' allowed me to become a participant in some aspects of community activities. This facilitates and eases further contact and provides opportunities for participant and non-participant observation. The approach also allows the researcher to become familiar with the physical geography of place. Not only does this assist the researcher to locate the places where people live and meet, but it also, as in this research contributed as a backdrop to the study of community as a symbolic concept. For example, I utilised the familiarity with place by

incorporating references to location in the vignettes of domestic and racial violence (see below for further comments).

The above benefits of the ethnographic approach, while not an exhaustive list, helped me to build a broader, more nuanced, rich or 'thick' description of the research focus, which is the symbolic construction and enactment of community. However, one potential 'pitfall' of the ethnographic approach, especially when I first began the fieldwork, was trying to work out what was relevant to my study: while I was spending time with one group of people, was I missing something crucial in another place? At first I experienced a form of sensory over-load, in that my mind was racing, trying to absorb every movement, comment, nuance, visual or auditory clue. I partly countered this by keeping a fieldwork diary in which I made detailed notes as soon as possible after being 'out there'. I also realised that it wasn't possible to record everything I saw, heard or experienced but that my observations, alongside the taped interviews provided a 'snapshot' in time as a base on which to *build my work*. Inevitably, a challenge during the data collection stage was identifying the 'story' to be told, and the data which told that story.

Areas of future study

A further strength of ethnographic research is its potential to generate new areas of enquiry because of the flexibility and openness of the approach, compared to, for example, a more structured, quantitative process of data generation. This study revealed several areas of further study, which would enhance understanding of how communities develop, are maintained and operate. For example, although I collected data on institutional structures and practices, and other matters relating to urban governance, they were not included in the thesis. These topics would provide the basis for future study which would build on this research by widening the context of in which the borders and boundaries of communities are constructed.

My primary concern in this study was to understand more about social cohesion by studying the potential for community borders to be delineated through the lens of 'race' and gender, as indicated through the study of racialised and gendered violence.

The findings, detailed below, reveal that ‘race’ and gender, particularly at the intersections, are powerful and persistent symbolic components of border and boundary maintenance at the community and micro-community levels. The rich data that emerged from the research was, in part, due to adopting an interpretive, ethnographic approach which facilitated a more nuanced analysis. For this reason, an examination of structural components relating to social cohesion, referred to above, would benefit from an ethnographic approach which would tease out the racialised and gendered elements of, for example, social capital or urban governance.

The methods of data collection that I used included open-ended, semi-structured interviews, participative and non-participative observations and vignettes, all of which produced detailed, qualitative data. In the case of the latter research ‘tool’, vignettes were a successful vehicle used to encourage open and detailed responses to the sensitive issues of domestic and racial violence. The incorporation of references to local geographical places provided a contextualised backdrop to the presenting scenarios of both forms of violence, which appeared to act as a catalyst for detailed narrative accounts that included references to actual incidents and subsequent responses which took place in the research area.

‘Race’ and Gender in Community

This study uses an ethnographic approach to explore the substantive themes of social cohesion, community, domestic and racial violence, themes which are rarely examined in conjunction with each other. These themes are examined together (Chapter 2) and separately (Chapters 5 and 6) before their intersectionality is explored (Chapter 7). Chapter 2 draws on a range of literature and other sources to highlight some theoretical and policy considerations on the substantive themes of social cohesion, community, domestic and racial violence. The chapter continues with an argument for adopting an intersectional approach to the study, by connecting the two forms of violence, usually considered as two discrete subject areas. This is followed by a reflection on the symbolism of violence itself. The methodological approach to the study and the methods used for data collection are discussed in Chapter 3, as is the process of data analysis. Drawing on the fieldwork diaries, this chapter also reflects

on the relationship between the researcher and the researched and presents some ethical and practical considerations identified during the course of the work.

Research findings are discussed in Chapters 4-7. Chapter 4 focuses on the nature of social cohesion, and connects this to understandings of community as raised by respondents. The data reveal complex and dynamic constructions of community, in which borders and boundaries are identified as fluid, yet powerful, indicators of inclusion and exclusion. The findings reiterate that the concept of community is relational, the boundaries of community can be both physical and metaphysical, and include aspects of both 'race' and gender. Further, the chapter indicates that constructions of community are infused with considerations of justice and entitlement. This aspect of community is reflected in the (tentative) typology of the forms of cohesion identified during the research and during other extensive contact with communities.

To further explore the construction and enactment of community through the lens of 'race', Chapter 5 focuses on community responses to racial violence. It begins with a consideration of risk in relation to intervention in incidents of racial violence and moves on to identify the place of community in relation to those responses. Three key themes emerge which are reiterated in the following chapter on domestic violence, namely visibility, notions of public and private, and justice and entitlement. Throughout, references are made to the implications of the findings for social cohesion.

Chapter 6 focuses on community responses to domestic violence to further explore the construction and enactment of community through the lens of gender. Throughout, comparisons are made between domestic and racial violence. Again, the 'community' is a presence in responses and decisions on intervention. The chapter includes a focus on visibility and invisibility, the 'public versus private' positioning of domestic violence and the related issue of entitlement. The findings have implications for a gendered perspective in the social cohesion agenda, a perspective which has, for the most part, been absent from academic, policy and government debates.

Chapter 7 brings together the two strands of ‘race’ and gender, and in this final data-led chapter, focuses on the intersections of these two social divisions to examine how they influence the construction and enactment of community, as a further contribution to widening the parameters of the social cohesion debate. Once again, the themes of visibility and entitlement are identified. This chapter cements the thesis together by adding a broader perspective of the intersections of ‘race’, gender and community.

All the chapters are infused with examples of borders and boundaries, highlighted by the construction, enactment and maintenance of community, which inform discussion on the cohesion problematic. There were also, at times during the research, examples given of border crossings, which themselves contribute to the understanding of social cohesion. The following summary of the foci of the preceding chapters charts the themes evolving from this research. It draws together the various strands of the study and considers the implications for the possibility of achieving social cohesion. The findings of this study are brought together under the thematic banners below, beginning with an exploration of ‘Community’.

Community

It is important to note that the notion of ‘community’ was an influential, ever-present concept throughout the research. Whether at the forefront of responses or in the background, community and interpretations of community were the context in which borders and boundaries were made. The study found that community was conceptualised through a network of inter-related themes. These included:

- Being ‘known’, familiarity
- Sharing of location and of resources
- Reciprocity and hospitality
- Loyalty and ‘fitting in’
- Justice and Entitlement.

These themes were then overlaid with considerations of ‘race’ and gender; both concepts were simultaneously constructions for delineating community and a context for decision-making within and between communities. Community itself was

contextual, in that it was lived and experienced in the present but the enactment of community was influenced by experiences of the past. This was evident, for example, in accounts of historical, sometimes international divisions, preventing women in an Asian women's group from connecting with each other; or in references to the hierarchical positioning of 'imagined communities', described as a 'chain' of 'othering' (Chapter 5).

Community present and future could be shaped by personal experiences, as in the case of both forms of violence, where non-intervention hypothetically put victims outside the 'boundary of care' of the collective. This was illustrated by the case of a local Asian family who suffered repeated racial violence and abuse. Tentative steps had been taken by the family and other residents to become involved together in community activities. This ended when the family continued to experience prolonged racial abuse (see Chapter 5). Despite being 'within' the community, there was no cessation of violence or place of safety. The resulting withdrawal by the family showed that individual acts of commission (acts of racial violence) or omission (failure to protect) may become symbolic of a collective whole, reinforcing the idea of a (racialised) perpetrator community.

Community was used as a justification for non-intervention (see 'Borders and Boundaries' below). Community was hierarchical. This was evident not only in the positioning of groups and individuals as 'other' but also in terms of 'hospitality' and care. Repeated references were made throughout the study to 'taking care of our own', and 'we should be first', in a sense a call for loyalty to one's 'own community'. This was raised not only in respect to tangible resources, such as funding for projects and initiatives, but also in relation to an obligation of entitlement to the 'care' of the community. This was often raised when respondents talked about asylum seekers, who were positioned as outsiders, as newcomers, and therefore not 'of the community'. There were also references to community or the troubles of 'other' communities as too big to be embraced by those, as it were, looking in. This has implications for social cohesion in that it suggests a form of distancing between communities that is not exclusively premised on difference, but on the *perceived capacity to cope*. It also has implications for notions of justice and entitlement as discussed below.

Community could be cast in the role of internal regulator, as a marker of acceptable behaviour, as indicated by the presence of the community, both physically and symbolically. The research identified instances where the physical presence of a crowd encouraged and supported individual acts of abuse, for example, by urging on a violent, racist perpetrator with shouts of racial abuse (see chapter 5), or restorative justice (see chapter 7 and the case of the stolen bicycle). Symbolically, the community was evoked as a united, homogenous whole, both by insiders as in the claims of ‘no racist or domestic violence here’, or by outsiders, as indicated by references to strong, coping ‘other’ communities (see Chapter 5). This symbolic construction of community as *regulator* is especially pertinent to responses to racial and domestic violence and to social cohesion.

If communities recognise both forms of violence *and* position them as a *community* rather than a private or personal matter, then the potential increases for communities to inculcate a collective condemnation of racialised and gendered abuse. Both forms of violence then become a public rather than a private matter, at the *community* as well as the *policy* level, and the possibility then arises for communities to actively work to stop both forms of violence. This is relevant too, to social cohesion, in that it addresses or at least engages with concerns raised in subsequent pages about visibility, justice and entitlement, matters which impacted on the potential for creating cohesive communities.

The research indicated that the concept of community could convey a duty or expectation of ‘care’ for those included within its boundaries, but paradoxically, it was also relied upon as a symbol of support by those who stated they did not feel that they fitted in or ‘belonged’. In Chapter 6, for example, respondents 2214a and 2214b referred to their belief that they would be ‘backed’ by their own community when intervening in violent episodes if the incidents took place where they were ‘known’, even if, as they said, they did not ‘fit in’ with their communities, i.e. they perceived themselves as outside and different. Nevertheless, they indicated an expectation of loyalty and care because they were ‘known’ to their community. In that sense, they were at the border line of community, simultaneously insiders and outsiders. They explained that this was possible because they did what they had to do ‘to survive’, as the following exchange shows:

2224a: [young resident, dual heritage, female] If you don't fit in, life is going to be a lot harder for you so you fit in with the people around you.

2224b: [young resident, white, female] *It's all about surviving. It's not about community* [my emphasis].

This raises fundamental concerns for social cohesion. Throughout the study, examples were given of the links between considerations of risk, intervention and community in relation to both forms of violence. To what extent, then, does cohesion rely on the outsider or the subaltern submitting to the will of the dominant group? Is cohesion possible, or is it a fictive construction, a case of smoke and mirrors, where an absence of *visible* violence or conflict is construed to be indicative of a united whole? This study proposes that there is evidence of temporary or expedient cohesion, and suggests that this form of cohesion must be acknowledged as a component of a more complex, multi-dimensional whole. The notion of fitting in also has echoes of the concept of 'passing', referred to in Chapter 4.²⁰⁵

Temporary cohesion is double-edged; it may be a springboard for further positive and perhaps sustainable activity, with a broader collective base, across communities. Examples of this were the South Side Asian Traders Association, or the swimming group that led to informal childcare arrangements as responses to racial violence, which in turn led to a residents' association that included and benefited members from across a range of ethnic communities (see Chapters 4 and 5). Conversely, if temporary cohesion tips over into defensive or siege cohesion, fuelled by perceptions of injustice it may threaten the wider cohesion project and potentially facilitate public displays of violent disorder, as in the disturbances in North West towns during 2001 and more recently, in areas of parts of Lozells in the Midlands in October 2005.

This study shows that community is a (re)marker of boundaries, an internal regulator, a fluid construction run through with notions of hierarchy, care, and belonging and, to

²⁰⁵ Passing can be a safety strategy. It can also be dangerous. "Marked by a discrepancy between what one professes to be (and what one professes) and how one is positioned, passing is a risky business, whether one risks being *exposed* as passing or being *accused* of passing. Such risks are...unavoidable, perhaps inevitable, for there is no occupying a position without passing" (Caughie, 1999: 25). The relationship between 'passing' and social cohesion is another avenue of further research interest identified as a result of this study.

an extent, a *public* presentation of solidarity. However, as Cohen (1998) notes, the parameters and dynamics of community become clearer at the borders; it is to the borders and boundaries of community that I now turn.

Borders and Boundaries of Community

When studying the relational aspects of community, i.e. observing the interactions at the borders, where differences came into sharp focus, it became clear that there were multiple sites of boundary creation and boundary maintenance. Boundaries were both physical and metaphysical. In the case of the former, there were references to community as all those within a given geographical location, and evidence of attachment to place. In the latter, the boundaries included the constructs of 'race', nationality, ethnicity including whiteness, youth²⁰⁶ and gender, discussed in more detail in subsequent pages. It was evident that, within the geographical and political boundaries of the research area, as elsewhere, place was both physical and symbolic, as discussed below.

Within communities there were physical markers of difference, perhaps indistinguishable to the outsider, but nevertheless associated by those inside the community as significant border points. This was noted, for example, in the case of residents in one 'community' who categorised each other as distinct in terms of social standing and attitudes, by virtue of their location on the estate; similarly, an example was given of a woman whose physical move to a house a few streets away was associated with a marked contrast (i.e. 'deterioration') in her lifestyle, which separated her both physically and symbolically from her previous 'respectable' associates (see Chapter 4).

²⁰⁶ The exception to the detailed discussion is the border of community as delineated by youth. There were references made during the research to the positioning of young people as dangerous, as outside of 'community'. The study of youth as a factor in social cohesion was outside the remit of this research, and given the majority of respondents in the sample were over 18, it would be inappropriate for this thesis to attempt to take a position on the subject. The tensions and paradoxes of transcultural border crossings, and mergers, between young people are highlighted in the work of Back (1996; 1999a; 1999b) and Nayak (1999, 2003) on the relationship between race, culture, globalisation, belonging and identity. Yet it appeared that young people were prepared to take the 'risk' of border crossing in ways that weren't identified in this study of mainly older people. It would be of interest in the future to compare the impact on social cohesion of generationally specific border 'negotiations' and crossings.

The study also showed that community and belonging were sometimes premised on claims of territorial allegiance that transcended 'race', a form of 'neighbourhood nationalism' (Back, 1996). This appeared to be confirmed in the claims by some that 'community' was delineated by the borders of the political ward. However, the study of community responses to both domestic and racial violence showed that the claims of unity were tempered by the persistence of racialised differences.

Borders were shown to be porous, too, with examples given of acts of neighbourly reciprocity that transcended community affiliations premised on national identities, as illustrated, for example, by local residents from the Iranian community who set up a resident's group, initially to meet the needs of their 'own' community. Their positive contribution to the well-being of the wider community was eventually noted, both by their landlord and by their neighbours and resulted in sustained inter-communal contact and activities (see Chapter 5). Key factors in this instance were timescales in that there was a lengthy period of positive activities within the Iranian community before borders were crossed. This perhaps points to the need for a long-term strategy to counteract existing barriers to cohesion.²⁰⁷

In the example above, nominal borders of nationality were transcended. During the research, it was also evident that community boundaries were reinforced by national and international events, both historical and contemporary. The most significant catalyst for the contemporary reiteration of racialised boundaries was the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11th September 2001. Many accounts were given by Asian respondents of the abuse they experienced in the wake of that incident. It was, as one respondent noted, as if the abusers had been given permission to be *overtly* racially abusive.²⁰⁸

The racialised boundaries of community were a persistent presence, as illustrated by the range and prevalence of racist incidents recounted. The racialisation of community was also a feature in community responses to both domestic and racial

²⁰⁷ The issue of the long-term view, i.e. the significance of an historical, as well as a contemporary context, is also discussed below in relation to justice.

²⁰⁸ This touches on the issue of visibility of abuse, which is discussed in more depth in subsequent pages.

violence.²⁰⁹ Examples were given of the reluctance of bystanders to intervene in either forms of violence when the victims were perceived to be of a different 'race' or ethnicity to the witness. In the case of racial violence this was sometimes explained as a reluctance to risk a backlash from the wider white community if bystander and perpetrator were both white. The perceived risk was that intervention may be viewed as an unacceptable breach of community boundaries.

The borders of gender and community were less defined, in this research, than those premised solely on 'race'. This was not to say that gender was absent in the construction of community. As discussed in Chapters 4, 6 and 7, gender is a key component in the construction and maintenance of community. Universally, across communities, gender violence can be utilised to regulate the behaviour of women, as in domestic violence.²¹⁰ This research also confirmed the boundaries of community are maintained internally by gendered expectations placed on women, who are cast as both the guardians and transmitters of culture and community. In Chapter 6, examples were given of male networks, including those of 'community leaders', being employed in attempts to discredit and silence women who publicly identified domestic violence in their community. The implication was that, in effect, women were expected to be 'border guards', protecting their community from the censorious gaze of other communities. To concur with claims of 'no domestic violence here' may have rendered challenges to the perpetrators, and the violence, less likely; significantly, the presentation of a cohesive, non-violent, community was less than benign. Attempts to render domestic violence invisible are potentially life-threatening for women and children. Yet as this study has shown, policy on domestic violence is not *incorporated* into the social cohesion agenda; in effect this form of gendered violence is rendered invisible as a component of cohesion strategies.

Externally, across communities, responses to both forms of violence were gendered, in that intervention was deemed more likely in cases of domestic violence compared

²⁰⁹ It should be noted that decisions to intervene were not premised on the grounds of 'race' or gender alone, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. The examples given here are used to highlight those instances where 'race' and gender considerations, raised in responses to the presenting form of violence, were also broader signifiers of the symbolic construction of community.

²¹⁰ Gender violence against women, including rape and mutilation, is also used to delineate the boundaries of nation in conflictual societies (Brownmiller, 1975, McWilliams, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 2002).

to racial violence. This view was qualified by public/private considerations (see below). In both racial and domestic violence, this study found that there was, at times, a lack of (white) gender empathy for black victims of violence. Gender here held no guarantees of solidarity across the racialised borders of community. In summary, rather than an *absence* of gender, I would argue that the data showed that the gendered construction of community was less *visible* to some of the respondents, or, to paraphrase Hill Collins' (1998: 922) statement in relation to violence, *gender relations* are so routinised that they are, for some, "hidden in full sight."²¹¹ The issue of visibility is taken up again subsequently. Meanwhile, I turn to a further aspect of borders in 'Intersections and Border Crossings' below.

Intersections and 'Border Crossings'

The study shows that the fault lines of 'race' and gender permeate the construction of and influence the enactment of 'community'. Sometimes this intersection can be benign, even when the same situation could be viewed through a different lens, depending on the dominant perspective of the bystander. This was illustrated in the case of a female asylum seeker who was left for three days without food for herself or her children (Chapter 4). As 'bystanders' the interviewee and I were moved by the injustice of the circumstances on the grounds of shared faith and gender respectively. In this example, our compassion and concern for the person involved was generated along different routes: our commonality was established by condemnation of the presenting circumstances. This dual approach to recognising a social problem may signal the potential, in the broader context of community, for disparate interest groups to form coalitions of support across diverse boundaries, and potentially encourage the strong and diverse relationships in a range of settings, as promoted by the cohesion agenda. The data on intersections also indicated that an opposite effect could occur.

This was brought into sharp focus by other accounts received during the research which highlighted the potential for malevolence at the intersections of 'race' and gender. There was, for example, evidence of a persistent stereotype of the male

²¹¹ It is also notable that class was rarely spoken of by respondents, especially in relation to the construction of community.

asylum seeker, variously portrayed as dangerous, sneaky, a scrounger, a coward, a thief and a sexual predator, and potential terrorist. Claims were made that families of asylum seekers were more likely to be included in a communal remit of care than were single, minority ethnic 'newly-arrived outsiders' suggesting that the family was still viewed as a positive institution, despite it being, for example, a primary site for the gendered abuse of women (see Chapter 5).

The study indicates that border crossings can be construed as positive and productive, as in the examples of community activities referred to above, and in the previous chapters; border crossing can also be construed as a violation or betrayal of 'race' and community. Yet as the data here shows, although border crossings may be presented as a traversal of the fault line of 'race', as in the case of the white woman wearing shalwar and kameez, or the asylum seekers who formed relationships with 'local' girls, the resulting abuse, violence and contempt was also firmly situated in the perceived rejection of *gendered* expectations. Once again, women are cast as guardians of the (racialised) community (Yuval-Davis, 2002). Similarly, the disturbances in Lozells in October 2005 were an exhibition of racialised gender 'defence' as well the more simplistic portrayal as 'race riots'.

As this last example shows, the relevance of the border crossings and intersections of 'race' and gender to social cohesion is the potential for one form of social division to take precedence over the other site of oppression and disadvantage. Currently the government's cohesion agenda lacks the gender dimension. Because of this, it risks concerns on 'race' relations taking precedence to the detriment of gendered, and intersectional struggles against oppression, violence and disadvantage, and thus is putting activists and campaigners in competition with each other, rather than encouraging a collaborative approach which acknowledges the intersections discussed in this study.

This study also identified a further site of boundary maintenance, this time found in the designation of matters as private or public concerns. This was particularly the case with domestic violence as discussed in Chapter 6. It was a matter of some concern, though not of great surprise to me that domestic violence was still construed as a private matter, whether the violence took place in the home or in public.

Intervention was much less likely when the abuse occurred between men and women in legally sanctioned relationships. This positions gendered violence as both near and far, a matter of proximity and distance. Even when domestic violence occurred in public, it was often interpreted as a private matter, between individuals. In contrast to the gendered constraints placed on women as guardians of community, this position effectively conceptualises male violence as a form of individual behaviour rather than a gendered act. This concentrates the gaze on the maintenance of the relationship rather than on addressing the violence itself.

Further, unlike other interventions in violence identified in the study, where the community was cast as an arbiter of acceptable behaviour, and contrary to Sibbett's (1997) model of racial violence as grounded in community, community responses in this research repeatedly confirmed the view that domestic violence was not, initially at least, a community matter. Emphasis was placed on the need for abused women to indicate that they wanted support. This did not exclude the possibility of the community as a source of support or redress; it did render the community invisible as both a context for women abuse and a primary catalyst for stopping male violence towards women. The government's cohesion agenda does not facilitate the inclusion of gender violence as matter of community responsibility. It is to the matter of visibility, and additionally the matter of justice, that I now turn.

Visibility and Justice

The issue of visibility permeates this study. The data shows that this is frequently linked to notions of justice. Key to these two concepts was the ability to recognise and *acknowledge* racialised and gendered abuse. There were, for example, numerous references to the invisibility of racism, claims that were made predominantly, but not exclusively, by white residents. As discussed above, relegating domestic violence to the realms of the private, in effect, makes gendered violence less visible.

Further, the invisibility of *context* was a crucial factor in creating a sense of injustice. Claims of unfair advantage and preferential treatment of black and other minority ethnic residents in comparison to white residents were partly due to a lack of

recognition of *contemporary* manifestations of abuse. Perceived injustices were then fuelled by a lack of awareness, or by dismissal of historic or previous racialised violence. This has echoes of the perceptions of domestic violence as discrete episodes of abuse, rather than both forms of violence being part of a continuum of abuse that is situated in a world that is both gendered and racialised. In effect, racism and racialised insults and disadvantage were, like gender abuse, 'hidden in full sight'.

Surely, for social cohesion to be possible and to be sustainable, this 'veil' must be lifted? 'Race' and gender are sustained and sustainable power differentials that are both structurally and symbolically embedded, as evidenced by this research, in responses to domestic and racial violence, and in the construction and enactment of community. How then can cohesion be achieved and change be implemented, if the claims of invisibility persist?

Some final reflections

This study points to attempts during the development of cohesion policy to render racism 'invisible' not least in the sense that the hierarchical power dynamics of 'race', inherent in the construction of community, are not satisfactorily addressed by calls for the appreciation of diversity or promotion of a common sense of belonging. As also noted at points throughout this work, gender was omitted from the cohesion agenda and that has serious implications, not least for the recognition of gendered, i.e. domestic violence as an equally destructive force alongside racialised violence.

As shown by the responses to domestic and racial violence identified in this study, if notions of community are constructed through the lens of 'race' or gender, then those social divisions may become most visible, rather than the violence itself. This is particularly the case when individuals and communities are pathologized in terms of 'race' and gender. Parallel to this, there was evidence of distancing from those designated as 'other', placing those deemed to be outsiders beyond a communal 'safety net' of care. This has implications for social cohesion, in that border crossings are not attempted on the grounds of irreconcilable difference, and the 'culture' of the 'other' is used to justify distancing and inaction.

This has parallels within a broader framework, in that domestic violence and racial violence may be relegated to separate realms, for community action, for academic research, for service provision or for policy focus. Paradoxically, this can serve not only to reinforce the boundaries of 'race' and gender, but also to separate out the boundaries of care and reciprocity. To clarify this statement, I should point out that I do *not* refer here, for example, to merging allocation of resources to target either forms of violence; nor do I propose that discrete and particular attention to both forms of violence should be abandoned. However, I do suggest, as a result of this study, that the specificity of responses to either domestic or racial violence may unwittingly create a barrier to viewing the *links* between both forms of violence. This barrier obscures the opportunity to view both forms of violence as connected strands of a continuum of violence employed to control and subjugate those individuals and groups designated as 'appropriate' victims. This then potentially prevents coalitions of care, reciprocity and activism to counter the use of violence as vehicle for hierarchical control.

This study of the boundaries and borders of community also shows, through the analysis of community responses to domestic and racial violence, that social cohesion itself is a risk. To achieve expansive cohesion, communities must be prepared to deconstruct borders and remove boundaries. However, it is important to note this research identified multiple forms of cohesion, some of which were inward-looking and inherently exclusionary, but still supporting a form of identity and belonging to those within the boundaries of community. Crucially, therefore, this study rejects the one-dimensional, static vision of cohesion as unrealistic and unworkable. Moreover, I would argue that maintaining a primary focus on communities themselves, as the site of, and vehicle for, community cohesion risks leaving the government's stance unchallenged.

For the government to promote the 'cohesive community' as one in which 'there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities' is at best naive and at worst disingenuous. This study shows that, for a broader, more meaningful, form of cohesion to be made possible, there must be an overt interrogation of claims of injustice and of power dynamics, including those of 'race' and gender *at all levels of society*. On one level, the government's policy and rhetoric on cohesion fails to fully

engage in challenging these persistent social divisions: on another, it actually feeds into the perpetuation of racist stereotyping, gender subordination and scapegoating.

The absence of a gendered perspective in the government's cohesion agenda means that patriarchal gender relations, as evidenced in violent intimate relationships, are excluded from an analysis of the dynamics of community cohesion. This has the effect that gendered inequalities and injustice are made less invisible outside of an economic framework of analysis (Levitas, 1998). The resulting *partial* visibility of gender hierarchies is relevant to this critique of the cohesion agenda. This study also shows that 'community' is a powerful presence, both physically and symbolically, in recognising and responding to domestic violence. Yet despite acknowledging domestic violence as a *social* problem, the current focus of local and central government responses is on service delivery for victims/ survivors and separate awareness raising programmes with survivors and with perpetrators. This approach still, to an extent, places domestic violence in a 'semi-private' realm, rather than the communal or 'community', domain. Gendered violence therefore remains posited as an individual aberration rather than a social structure, embedded within society and therefore within all communities (Walby, 1990).

This study also finds that the government's position on racism is inconsistent and, at times, incoherent. The government claims that the aim of the cohesion agenda is to eliminate or minimise 'difference', but in policy, rhetoric and practice, it has inculcated a more pernicious and dichotomous process of assimilation and marginalisation. New Labour has attempted to make the social division of 'race' invisible, for example through citizenship ceremonies, (or as this study shows, by direct calls to stop referring to racism), while simultaneously pathologizing and racialising specific communities. This is evidenced by the portrayal of and responses to rioting Asian (compared to white) youths in 2001; by ministerial statements linking asylum and immigration with a threat to social order and stability, and by a persistent focus on the 'Muslim community' as a source of threat and danger.²¹²

²¹² The spectre of the homogenous and self-segregating 'Muslim community' and the wider, racialised and dangerous 'Other' still persists. Post-submission, Ruth Kelly (Minister for Communities) launched the "Commission for Integration and Cohesion" on 24th August 2006 (for full transcript of Kelly's launch speech, see full <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502280> accessed 30th August 2006. See also Home Secretary John Reid's speech urging Muslim parents to look out for signs of

The final conclusion of this research is that the language of cohesion is tired, and linked to a particular political perspective/ideology of assimilation and social control. It is, therefore, time to reject the attempted hegemonic construction of society, underpinned with imperialist tendencies, in order to pursue a more appropriate, and hopefully more productive, agenda of social justice premised on dismantling hierarchical social divisions, including those of 'race' and gender.

radicalisation and extremism in their children and report them to the police. No concomitant appeal was made to white parents to be vigilant and act on evidence of far right extremism in *their* families. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5362052.stm> accessed 26th September 2006.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agar, M. H. 1996 *The Professional Stranger*, 2nd Edition, London: Academic Press Ltd.

Ahlbrandt, R. S. J. 1984 *Neighborhoods, People and Community*, New York: Plenum Press.

Ahmed, S. 2000 'Who Knows? Knowing Strangers and Strangeness', *Australian Feminist Studies* 15: 49-68.

Alexander, C. E. 2004 'Imagining the Asian Gang: Ethnicity, Masculinity and Youth After "the Riots"', *Critical Social Policy* 24(4): 526-49.

Alexander, C. E. 2000 *The Asian Gang*, Oxford: Berg.

Almeida, R. V. 1993 'Unexamined Assumptions and Service Delivery Systems: Feminist Theory and Racial Exclusions', *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 5(1): 3-23.

Anderson, B. 1983 *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso.

Anthias, F. 1992 'Connecting 'Race' and Ethnic Phenomena', *Sociology* 26(3): 421-438.

Anthias, F. 1998 'Rethinking Social Divisions: Some Notes Towards a Theoretical Framework', *The Sociological Review* 46(3): 505-535.

Anthias, F. and Yuval-Davis, N. 1992 *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle*, London: Routledge.

Aspinall, P. J. 2002 'Collective Terminology to Describe the Minority Ethnic Population: The Persistence of Confusion and Ambiguity in Usage', *Sociology* 36(4): 803-816.

Atkinson, P. 1990 *The Ethnographic Imagination: Textual Constructions of Reality*, London: Routledge.

BBC 2003 *Hitting Home* series on domestic violence transmitted between 15th-23rd February 2003

BBC Today programme Radio 4 transmitted 11th September 2000

Back, L. 1996 *New Ethnicities and Urban Cultures*, London: Routledge.

Back, L., Cohen, P. and Keith, M. 1999b 'Between Home and Belonging: Critical Ethnographies of Race, Place and Identity', Dagenham: Centre for Ethnicities Research.

Back, L. and Keith, M. 1999a 'Rights and Wrongs': Youth, Community and Narratives of Racial Violence', in P. Cohen (ed) *New Ethnicities, Old Racisms?*, London: Zed Books.

Back, L., Keith, M., Khan, A., Shukra, K. and Solomos, J. 2002 'The Return of Assimilation: Race, Multiculturalism and New Labour', *Sociological Research Online* 7(2): 1-14.

Banton, M. 2001 'Progress in Ethnic and Racial Studies', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24(2): 173-194.

Barker, M. 1981 *The New Racism*, London: Junction Books.

Barley, N. 1983 *The Innocent Anthropologist*, London: British Museum Publications Ltd.

- Barot, R. and Bird, J.** 2001 'Racialization: The Genealogy and Critique of a Concept', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24(4): 601-618.
- Barter, C.** 1999 'Protecting Children from Racism and Racial Abuse: A Research Review': NSPCC.
- Barter, C. and Renold, E.** 1999 'The Use of Vignettes in Qualitative Research', *Social Research Update*(25): 1-7.
- Barth, F. (ed)** 1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Illinois: Waveland Press Ltd.
- Bauman, Z.** 2001 *Community: Seeking Security in an Insecure World*, Oxford: Polity.
- Beecham, S. J., Denham, R. H. J., Raynsford, R. H. M. and Singh, G.** 2002 'Draft Guidance on Community Cohesion', unpublished.
- Bell, C. and Newby, H.** 1971 *Community Studies*, London: George Aallen and Unwin Ltd.
- Benn, S. I.** 1982 'Individuality, Autonomy and Community', in E. Kamenka (ed) *Community as a Social Ideal*, London: Edward Arnold.
- Bland, L.** 2005 'White Women and Men of Colour: Miscegenation Fears in Britain after the Great War', *Gender and History* 17(1): 29-61.
- Blok, A.** 2000 'The Enigma of Senseless Violence', in G. Aijmer and J. Abbink (eds) *Meanings of Violence: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Oxford: Berg.
- Blunkett, D.** 2002 'What Does Citizenship Mean Today?' *Observer*.
- Bograd, M.** 1999 'Strengthening Domestic Violence Theories: Intersections of Race, Class, Sexual Orientation, and Gender', *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 25(3): 275-289.

- Bourdieu, P.** 1992 *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bowling, B.** 1998 *Violent Racism: Victimisation, Policing and Social Context*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Braithwaite, J. and Daly, K.** 1994 'Maculinites, Violence and Communitarian Control', in T. Newburn and E. A. Stanko (eds) *Just Boys Doing Business?: Men, Masculinities and Crime*, London: Routledge.
- Bridges, G.** 2002 'The Neighbourhood and Social Networks', Vol. 2003: CNR Paper 4 ESRC Funded.
- Brown, A. R.** 1999 'The Other Day I met a Constituent of Mine': A Theory of Anecdotal Racism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22(1): 23-55.
- Brown, C.** 2001 'If We Want Social Cohesion We Need a Sense of Identity' *Independent on Sunday*, London.
- Brownmiller, S.** 1975 *Against Our Will*, London: Penguin.
- Bryson, V.** 1999 *Feminist Debates: Issues of Theory and Political Practice*, London: MacMillan Press Ltd.
- Burnett, J.** 2004 'Community, Cohesion and the State', *Race and Class* 45(3): 1-18.
- Burnett, J. and Whyte, W. F.** 2004 'New Labour's New Racism': Institute for Race Relations.
- Burney, E. and Rose, G.** 2002 'The Implementation of the Legislation on Racially Aggravated Offences in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998', London: Home Office Research, Directorate and Statistics Directorate.
- Burnley Task Force 2002** *Report By the Burnley Task Force* Chaired by Lord Clarke

- Burton, P.** 2003 'Communtiy Involvement in Neighbourhood Regeneration: Stairway to Heaven or Road to Nowhere?' Bristol: ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research.
- Butler, J.** 1993 *Bodies that Matter*, London: Routledge.
- Byrne, P.** 1997 *Social Movements in Britain*, London: Routledge.
- Campbell, B.** 1983 *Goliath: Britain's Dangerous Places*, London: Methuen.
- Cantle, T.** 2001 'Community Cohesion: A Report by the Independent Review Team', London: Home Office.
- Castells, M.** 1997 *The Power of Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Castles, S. and Kosack, G.** 1985 *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*, 2nd Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Caughie** 1999 *Passing and Pedagogy: The Dynamics of Responsibility*, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.
- Cavanagh, K. and Lewis, R.** 1996 'Interviewing Violent Men: Challenge or Compromise?' in K. Cavanagh and Cree (eds) *Working with Violent Men: Feminism amd Social Work*, London: Routledge.
- Cavanagh, K., Lewis, R. and Haq, J.** 1999 'Violent Men: A Report of Men's Programmes Work Currently Being Undertaken with Male Domestic Violence Perpetrators in Great Britain.' Report commissioned by the 'Associazione contro la violenza alle donne', Modena, Italy, on behalf of the DAPHNE (European Community) Initiative. Unpublished report.
- Cavanagh, K. and Cree, V. (eds)** 1996 *Working with Men: Feminism and Social Work*, London: Routledge.
- Chahal, K.** 2004 'Experiencing Ethnicity', York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

- Chahal, K.** 2003 'Racist Harassment Support Projects', York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Chahal, K. and Julienne, L.** 1999 'The Experience of Racist Victimisation', York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Chahal, K. and Julienne, L.** 1999 'We Can't All Be White!' Racist Victimisation in the UK', York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Chancer, L.** 2004 'Rethinking Domestic Violence in Theory and Practice', *Deviant Behaviour: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 25: 255-275.
- Charles, N. and Davies, C. A.** 2005 'Studying the Particular, Illuminating the General: Community Studies and Community in Wales', *The Sociological Review*: 672-690.
- Chessum, L.** 2000 *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Clarke, T.** 2002 'Report of The Burnley Task Force'.
- Coffey, A.** 1999 *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*, London: Sage.
- Cohen, A. P.** 1992 'Self-Conscious Anthropology', in J. Okely and H. Callaway (eds) *Anthropology and autobiography*, London: Routledge.
- Cohen, A. P.** 1986 *Symbolising Boundaries: Identity and Diversity in British Cultures*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cohen, A. P.** 1998 *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, London: Routledge.
- Connell, R. W.** 1995 *Masculinities*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Crenshaw, K. W. 1994 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color', in M. A. Fineman and R. Mykitiuk (eds) *The Public Nature of Private Violence.*, New York: Routledge.

Crow, G. P. and Allan, G. 1994 *Community Life: An Introduction to Local Social Relations*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Darton, D., Hirsch, D. and Strelitz, J. (eds) 2003 *Tackling Disadvantage: A Twenty Year Enterprise*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Dasgupta, S. D. 1999 'Just Like Men? A Critical View of Violence by Women' *Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Davis, A. 1982 *Women, Race and Class*, London: The Women's Press Ltd.

Delva-Taui'i'ili, J. 1995 'Assessment and Prevention of Aggressive Behaviour among Youth of Color: Integrating Cultural and Social Factors', *Social Work in Education* 17(2): 83-91.

Denham, J. 2002 'Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion', London: Home Office.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1994 *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K. 1978 *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, 2nd Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Derrida, J. 2000 'Hostipitality', *Angelaki* 5(3): 3-18.

Derrida, J. 1994 *Spectres of Marx*, London: Routledge.

Dobash, R. P., Dobash, R. E., Cavanagh, K. and Lewis, R. 2000 *Changing Violent Men*, California: Sage.

Dobash, R. E. and Dobash, R. P. (eds) 1998 *Rethinking Violence Against Women*, London: Sage.

Dobash, R. E. and Dobash, R. 1979 *Violence Against Wives: A Case Against the Patriarchy*, New York: Free Press.

Dobash, R. E. and Dobash, R. P. 1992 *Women, Violence and Social Change*, London: Routledge.

Du Bois, W. E. B. 1989 *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*, New York: Fawcett.

Dworkin, A. 1981 *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, London: Women's Press.

Eisenstein, H. 1996 *Hatreds: Racialized and Sexualized Conflicts in the 21st Century*, London: Routledge.

Elias, N. and Scotson, J. L. 1994 *The Established and The Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems*, London: Sage.

Evans, S. 2005 'Beyond Gender: Class, Poverty and Domestic Violence', *Australian Social Work* 58(1): 36-43.

Fanon, F. 1986 *Black Skins, White Masks*, London: Pluto Press.

Faulkner, D. 2004 'Civil Renewal, Diversity and Social Capital in a Multi-Ethnic Britain', London: The Runnymede Trust.

Fekete, L. 2001 'The Emergence of Xeno-Racism', *Race and Class* 43(2): 23-40.

Ferber, A. 1998 'Constructing Whiteness: the Intersections of Race and Gender in US White Supremacist Discourse', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21(1): 48-63.

- Finney, N.** 2004 'Asylum Seeker Dispersal: Public Attitudes and Press Portrayals Around the UK', Swansea: University of Wales.
- Fitzgerald, M. and Hale, C.** 1996 'Ethnic Minorities, Victimisation and Racial Harassment', London: Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate.
- Flyvbjerg, B.** 2002 *Making Social Science Matter*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Forrest, R. and Kearns, A.** 1999 *Joined-up Places? Social Cohesion and Neighbourhood Regeneration*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Forrest, R. and Kearns, A.** 2001 'Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood', *Urban Studies* 38(12): 2125-2143.
- Frankenburg, R.** 1993 *The Social Construction of Whiteness: White Women, Race Matters*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Franks, M.** 2000 'Crossing the Borders of Whiteness? White Muslim Women Who Wear the Hijab in Britain Today', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23(5): 917-929.
- Frost, M.** 1999 'Health Visitors' Perceptions of Domestic Violence: The Private Nature of the Problem', *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 30(3): 589-596.
- Fryer, P.** 1993 *Aspects of Black British History*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Index Books Ltd.
- Fryer, P.** 1984 *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, London: Pluto Press.
- Gamach, D. and Asmus, M.** 1999 'Enhancing Networking Among Service Providers: Elements of Successful Co-ordination Strategies', in M. F. Shepard and E. L. Pence (eds) *Co-ordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence: Lessons from Duluth and Beyond*, London: Sage.

- Geertz, C.** 2000 *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, USA: Basic Books, Inc.
- Geertz, C.** 1998 *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, Oxford: Polity Press.
- Geertz, C.** 1975 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in C. Geertz (ed) *The Interpretation of Cultures*, London: Hutchinson.
- Gelles, R.** 1997 *Intimate Violence in Families*, 3rd Edition, London: Sage.
- Gibson, S.** 2003 'Accommodating Strangers: British Hospitality and the Asylum Hotel Debate', *Journal for Cultural Research* 7(4): 367-386.
- Gieryn, T.** 2000 'A Space for Place in Sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*(26): 463-96.
- Gil, D. G.** 1986 'Sociocultural Aspects of Domestic Violence', in M. Lystad (ed) *Violence in the Home: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, New York: Brunner Mazel Inc.
- Gill, F. and Maclean, C.** 2002 'Knowing Your Place: Gender and Reflexivity in Two Ethnographies', *Sociological Research Online* 7(2): 1-15.
- Gilroy, P.** 2000a *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Gilroy, P.** 2000b *Between Camps: Race, Identity and Nationalism at the End of the Colour Line*, London: Penguin.
- Gilroy, P.** 1993 *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London: Verso.
- Gilroy, P.** 1987 *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, London: Routledge.

- Goffman, E.** 1969 *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, London: Penguin.
- Gordon, P.** 1990 *Racial Violence and Harassment*, 2nd Edition, London: Runnymede Trust.
- Granovetter, M.** 1982 'The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited', in P. V. Marsden and N. Lin (eds) *Social Structure and Network Analysis*, London: Sage.
- Green, E., Moore, J., Easton, H. and Heggie, J.** 2004 'Exploring the Barriers to Women's Employment and Progression in the Workplace in the North East of England', Middlesbrough: University of Teeside.
- Hague, G. and Wilson, C.** 2000 'The Silenced Pain: Domestic Violence 1945-1970', *Journal of Gender Studies* 9(2): 157-169.
- Hague, G. and Malos, E.** 1998 *Domestic Violence: Action for Change*, 2nd Edition, Cheltenham: New Clarion Press.
- Hall, V. G.** 2004 'Differing Gender Roles: Women in Mining and Fishing Communities, in Northumberland, England, 1880-1914', *Women's Studies International Forum* 27(5-6): 521-530.
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P.** 1997 *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 2nd Edition, London: Routledge.
- Harbers, H., Mol, A. and Stollmeyer, A.** 2002 'Food Matters: Arguments for an Ethnography of Daily Care', *Theory, Culture and Society* 19(5/6): 207-226.
- Harding, S.** 1987 *Feminism and Methodology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hastings, D.** 2006 'Local Area Labour Market Statistical Indicators Incorporating The Annual Population Labour Survey' *Labour Market Trends*, Vol. 114, London: Office for National Statistics.

- Hastrup, K.** 1995 'Writing Ethnography: State of the Art', in J. Okely and H. Callaway (eds) *Anthropology and Autobiography*, London: Routledge.
- Hesse, B., Rai, D. K., Bennet, C. and McGilchrist, P.** 1992 *Beneath The Surface: Racial Harassment*, Aldershot: Avebury.
- Hewitt, R.** 1996 *Routes of Racism*, London: Trentham Books.
- Hill Collins, P.** 1998 'The Tie That Binds: Race, Gender and US Violence', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21(5): 917-938.
- Hirschfield, A. and Bowers, K. J.** 1997 'The Effect of Social Cohesion on Levels of Recorded Crime in Disadvantaged Areas', *Urban Studies* 34(8): 1275-1295
- Hobbs, D.** 1993 'Peers, Careers, and Academic Fears: Writing as Fieldwork', in D. Hobbs and T. May (eds) *Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T.** 2000 *Doing Qualitative Research Differently*, London: Sage.
- hooks, b.** 1989 *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist: Thinking Black*, Boston: South End Press.
- Hudson, R.** 1989 *Wrecking a Region: State Policies, Party Politics, and Regional Change in North East England*, London: Pion Limited.
- Husbands, C.** 1993 'Racism and Racist Violence: Some Theories and Policy Perspectives', in T. Bjorgo and R. Witte (eds) *Racist Violence in Europe*, USA: St Martin's Press.
- Isal, S.** 2005 'Preventing Racist Violence', London: The Runnymede Trust.

- Jackson, D. D.** 2002 *Our Elders Lived It: American Indian Identity in the City*, DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Jahoda, G.** 1999 *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Janner-Klauner, D.** 2004 'Community Cohesion and Addressing Racism in the Public Sphere': Local Government Information Unit.
- Jenkins, R.** 1992 *Pierre Bourdieu*, London: Routledge.
- Jenkins, R.** 1996 *Social Identity*, London: Routledge.
- John, P. G.** 2001 'What Has Gone Wrong in Race Equality in Britain's Towns and Cities? How Can We Undo This and Build for the Future?' *Delivering Effective Race Equality and Community Cohesion - Learning the Lessons from Summer 2001*, London: unpublished.
- Johnson, H.** 1998 'Rethinking Survey Research on Violence Against Women', in R. E. Dobash and R. P. Dobash (eds) *Rethinking Violence Against Women*, Sage: London.
- Kalra, V. S.** 2002 'Extended View: Riots, Race and Reports: Denham, Cattle, Oldham and Burnley Inquiries', *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* 27(4): 20-30.
- Kantor, G. K. and Jasinski, J. L.** 1998 'Dynamics and Risk Factors in Partner Violence', in J. L. Jasinski and L. Williams (eds) *Partner Violence: A Comprehensive Review of Twenty Years Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kanuha, V.** 1996 'Domestic Violence, Racism, and the Battered Women's Movement in the United States', in J. L. Edelson and C. E. Zvi (eds) *Future Interventions with Battered Women and Their families*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Keane, F.** 1996 *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey*, London: Penguin.

Kearns, A. 2004 'Social Capital, Regeneration and Urban Policy': ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research.

Kelly, L. 2001 'From Marginal to Globalised Issue: Three Decades of Research and Activism on Violence Against Women' *Inaugural Professorial Lecture*, University of North London.

Khandelwal, M. 2004 'Book Review On -line', *American Ethnologist* 31(4): 2. at http://www.aaanet.org.aes/bkreviews/result-print.cfm?bk_id=3219 accessed 8th January 2006

King, M. C. 1998 'Changing Women's Lives: The Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women', in J. Campbell (ed) *Empowering Survivors of Abuse*, London: Sage.

Klein, E., Campbell, J., Soler, E. and Ghez, M. 1997 *Ending Domestic Violence: Changing Public Perceptions, Halting the Epidemic*, London: Sage.

Lamont, M. and Molnar, V. 2002 'The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences', *Annual Review of Sociology*(28): 167–95.

Laner, M. R. and Benin, M. H. 2001 'Bystander Attitudes Toward Victims of Violence: Who's Worth Helping?' *Deviant Behaviour: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 22: 23-42.

Larsen, N. 1971 *Passing*, London: Collier Books.

Law, I. 1996 *Racism, Ethnicity and Social Policy*, Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall Europe.

Lee, M. R. 2000 'Community Cohesion and Violent Predatory Victimization: A Theoretical Extension and Cross-National Test of Opportunity Theory', *Social Forces* 79(2): 683-688.

- Lee, P.** 1999 'Housing and Spacial Deprivation: Relocating the Underclass and the New Urban Poor', *Urban Studies* 31(7): 1191-1209.
- Lentin, A.** 2000 'Race', Racism and Anti-Racism: Challenging Contemporary Classifications', *Social Identities* 6(1): 91-106.
- Levine, M.** 1999 'Rethinking Bystander Nonintervention: Social Categorization and the Evidence of Witnesses at the James Bulger Murder Trial', *Human Relations* 52(9): 1133-1155.
- Levitas, R.** 1998 *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave.
- Lewis, G.** 2005 'Welcome to the Margins: Diversity, Tolerance and The Politics of Exclusion', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(5): 536-558.
- Lianos, M. and Douglas, M.** 2000 ' Dangerization and the End of Deviance', *British Journal of Criminology* 40: 261-278.
- Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. H.** 1984 *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 2nd Edition, Belmont, California: Wadsworth, Inc.
- Lukes, S.** 1986 *Power*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Luthra, M.** 1997 *Britain's Black Population: Social Change, Public Policy and Agenda*, Aldershot, Hants: Arena.
- Mac an Ghaill, M.** 1999 *Contemporary Racisms and Ethnicities*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Maclure, R. and Sotelo, M.** 2004 'Youth Gangs in Nicaragua: Gang Membership as Structured Individualization', *Journal of Youth Studies* 7(4): 417-432.

- Macpherson of Cluny, S. W.** 1999 'The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William of Cluny', London: The Stationery Office.
- McCall, G. J. and Shields, N.** 1986 'Social and Structural Factors in Family Violence', in M. Lystad (ed) *Violence in the Home: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, New York: Brunner Mazel Inc.
- McClintock, A.** 1993 'Family Fueds: Gender, Nationalism and The Family', *Feminist Review* 44: 61-80.
- McWilliams, M.** 1998 'Violence Against Women in Societies Under Stress', in R. Dobash and R. Dobash (eds) *Rethinking Violence Against Women*, London: Sage.
- Mahtani, M.** 2002 'Tricking the Border Guards: Performing Race', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20: 425-440.
- Marshall, J.** 2001 'Connectivity and Restructuring: Identity and Gender Relations in a Fishing Communtiy', *Gender, Place and Culture* 8(4): 391-401.
- Miedzian, M.** 1995 'Learning to be Violent', in E. Peled, P. G. Jaffe and J. L. Edelson (eds) *Ending the Cycle of Violence*, London: Sage.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M.** 1994 *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2nd Edition, London: Sage.
- Mills, C. W.** 1970 *The Sociological Imagination*, New York: Penguin.
- Mirrlees-Black, C.** 1999 'Domestic Violence: Findings from a New British Crime Survey Self-Completion Questionnaire', London: Home Office.
- Mirza, H. S. (ed)** 1997 *Black British Feminism*, London: Routledge.
- Modood, T., Beishon, S. and Virdee, S.** 1994 *Changing Ethnic Identities*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Modood, T. 2005 'Remaking Multiculturalism after 7/7': Open Democracy. at <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article.jsp?id=2&debateId+124&articleId=2878> accessed 20th March 2006

Mooney, J. 1993 'The Hidden Figure of Domestic Violence in North London', in L. Morris and E. S. Lyon (eds) *Gender Relations in Public and Private: New Research perspectives*, London: North Islington Council.

Moore, H. L. 1994 *A Passion for Difference*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Mullender, A. 1996 *Rethinking Domestic Violence*, London: Routledge.

Nagel, J. 2003 *Race, Ethnicity and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Nancy, J.-L. 1991 *The Inoperative Community*, Vol. 76, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Narayan, K. 1977 'How Native is a "Native" Anthropologist', in L. Lamphere, H. Ragoné and P. Zavella (eds) *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*, London: Routledge.

Nayak, A. 1999 'Ivory Lives': Race, Ethnicity and the Practice of Whiteness Amongst Young People' *Geography*, Newcastle: University of Newcastle.

Nayak, A. 2003 *Race, Place and Globalisation*, Oxford: Berg.

Nicholson, G. 1996 'Place and Local Identity', in S. Kraemer and J. Roberts (eds) *The Politics of Local Attachment: Towards a Secure Society*, London: Free Association Books Ltd.

ni Shuinear, S. 1997 'Why Do Gaujos Hate Gypsies So Much Anyway? A Case Study', in T. Acton (ed) *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

- Niyazi, F.** 1996 'Involving Volunteers from Underrepresented Groups': Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Oakely, A.** 1979 *Becoming a Mother*, Oxford: Martin Robertson.
- Okely, J.** 1996 *Own or Other Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Opotow, S.** 1990 'Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction', *Journal of Social Issues* 46(1): 1-20.
- Oprea, A.** 2005 'The Arranged Marriage of Ana Maria Cioaba, Intra-Community Oppression and Romani Feminist Ideals', *European Journal of Women's Studies* 12(2): 133-148.
- Parekh, B.** 2000 *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Basingstoke:: Macmillan.
- Pearson, G.** 1987 'Short Memories: Street Violence in the Past and the Present', in E. Moonman (ed) *The Violent Society*, London: Frank Cass.
- Pence, E. L. and McDonnell, C.** 1990 'Developing Policies and Protocols', in M. F. Shepard and E. L. Pence (eds) *Co-ordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence: Lessons from Duluth and Beyond*, London: Sage.
- Preisser, A. B.** 1999 'Domestic Violence in South Asian Communities in America', *Violence Against Women* 5(6): 684-699.
- Putnam, R. D.** 2000 *Bowling Alone*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Puwar, N.** 1997 'Reflections on Interviewing Women MP's', *Sociological Research Online* 2(1): 1-14.
- Radford, J. and Stanko, E. A.** 1996 'Violence against Women and Children: The Contradictions in Crime Control under Patriarchy', in M. Hester, L. Kelly and J.

Radford (eds) *Women, Violence and Male Power: Feminist Activism, Research and Practice*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Raj, D. S. 2003 *Where Are You From?: Middle Class Migrants in the Modern World*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rex, J. and Moore, R. 1967 *Race, Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook*, London: Oxford University Press.

Ridgeway, C. L. and Correll, S. 2004 'Unpacking the Gender System: A Theoretical Perspective on Gender Beliefs and Social Relations', *Gender and Society* 18(4): 510-531.

Ristock, J. L. 2002 *No More Secrets: Violence in Lesbian Relationships*, London: Routledge.

Roberts, K. 1985 'The Reconstruction of 'Community': Aberfan', Warwick: University of Warwick.

Rosaldo, R. 1993 *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, London: Routledge.

Saunders, A. 1995 *"It Hurts Me Too" Children's Experiences of Domestic Violence and Refuge Life*, London: Saunders, WAFE, NISW and Childline.

Scarman, L. G. 1981 'The Brixton Disorders 10th-12th April 1981', London: H.M.S.O.

Seabrook, J. 1984 *The Idea of Neighbourhood: What Local Politics Should Be About*, London: Pluto Press.

Shepard, M. F. and Pence, E. L. (eds) 1999 *Co-ordination Community Responses to Domestic Violence: Lessons from Duluth and Beyond*, London: Sage.

- Shepard, M. F.** 1999 'Advocacy for Battered Women: Implications for a Co-ordinated Community Response', in M. F. Shepard and E. L. Pence (eds) *Co-ordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence*, London: Sage.
- Shepherd, J. P. and Rivara, F. P.** 1998 'Vulnerability, Victims and Violence', *Journal of Accident and Emergency Medicine* 15: 39-45.
- Shipman, M.** 1981 *The Limits of Social Research*, 2nd Edition, London: Longman.
- Shukra, K., Back, L., Keith, M. and Khan, A.** 2004 'Race, Social Cohesion and the Changing Politics of Citizenship', *London Review of Education* 2(3): 187-195.
- Sibbett, R.** 1997 'The Perpetrators of Racial Harassment and Racial Violence', London: Home Office.
- Silverman, D.** 1985 *Qualitative Methodology and Sociology: Describing the Social World*, Aldershot: Gower.
- Simmel, G.** 1950 *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, New York: Free Press.
- Simon, R. J. (ed)** 1996 *From Data to Public Policy: Affirmative Action. Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence and Social Welfare*, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc.
- Simpson, D.** 1999 *The Millenium History of North East England*, Sunderland: Leighton Northern Echo.
- Smith, R.** 2003 'The Impact of Hate Media in Rwanda', at <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk> accessed 9th December 2005
- Solomos, J. and Back, L.** 1996 *Racism in Society*, London: MacMillan Press Ltd.
- Sorel, G.** 1941 *Reflections on Violence*, New York: Peter Smith.

Stanko, E. A. 1994 'Challenging the Problem of Men's Individual Violence', in T. Newburn and E. A. Stanko (eds) *Just Boys Doing Business?*, London: Routledge

Stanko, E. A. 1985 *Intimate Intrusions: Women's Experience of Male Violence*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Stanko, E. A. 1998 'Taking Stock: What Do We Know about Violence?' Middlesex: Economic and Social Research Council.

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. 1993 *Breaking Out Again*, London: Routledge.

Stedman, R. 2003 'Is It Really Just a Social Construction? The Contribution of the Physical Environment to Sense of Place', *Society and Natural Resources* 16: 671-685.

Strathern, M. 1975 *Women in Between: Female Roles in a Male World: Mount Hagen, New Guinea*, London: Seminar Press Ltd.

Strathern, M. 1990 *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*, London: University of California Press Ltd.

Storr, A. 1991 *Human Destructiveness: The Roots of Genocide and Human Cruelty*, London: Routledge.

Suttles, G. D. 1972 *The Social Construction of Communities*, London: The University of Chicago Press.

Talen, E. 1999 'Sense of Community and Neighbourhood Form: An Assessment of the Social Doctrine of New Urbanism', *Urban Studies* 36(8): 1361-1379.

Tarrow, S. 1998 *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tomaney, J. and Mawson, J. (eds) 2003 *England: The State of the Regions*, Bristol: The Policy Press

- Tyner, J. A.** 2002 'Narrating Interracial Relations and the Negotiation of Public Spaces', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20: 441-458.
- van Dijk, T. A.** 1999 'Editorial: Discourse and Racism', *Discourse Society* 10(2): 147-148.
- Virdee, S.** 1995 *Racial Violence and Harassment*, London: Policy Studies Institute.
- Walby, S. and Allen, J.** 2004 'Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey', London: Home Office.
- Walby, S.** 1990 *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Walker, L.** 1984 *The Battered Woman Syndrome*, New York: Springer Press.
- Ware, V.** 1992 *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*: Verso.
- Warren, C. A. B. and Hackney, J. K.** 2000 *Gender Issues in Ethnography*, Vol. 9, 2nd Edition, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Websdale, N. and Chesney-Lind, M.** 1998 'Doing Violence to Women', in L. H. Bowker (ed) *Masculinities and Violence*, London: Sage.
- Westmarland, L.** 2001 'Blowing the Whistle on Police Violence', *British Journal of Criminology* 41: 523-535.
- Wheelock, J.** 1994 'Is Andy Capp Dead? The Enterprise Culture and Household Responses to Economic Change', in P. Garraghan and P. Stewart (eds) *Urban Change and Renewal*, Aldershot: Avebury.
- Whyte, W. F.** 1943 *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wieviorka, M. 1998 'Is Multi-Culturalism the Solution?' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21(5): 881-909.

Wilson, M. and Daly, M. 1993 'Spousal Homicide Risk and Estrangement', *Violence and Victims* 8(1): 3-16.

Wilson, E. 1983 *What is to be Done About Violence to Women?*, Middlesex: Penguin.

Worley, C. 2005 'It's Not About Race. It's About the Community': New Labour and 'Community Cohesion', *Critical Social Policy* 25(4): 483-496.

Wright, R., Houston, S., Ellis, M., Holloway, S. and Hudson, M. 2003 'Crossing Racial Lines: Geographies of Mixed-Race Partnering and Multiraciality in the United States', *Progress in Human Geography* 7(4): 457-474.

Yllo, K. and Bograd, M. (eds) 1998 *Feminist Perspectives on Wife Abuse*, Newbury Park, Calif: Sage.

Young, M. and Willmott, P. 1957 *Family and Kinship in East London*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Young, R. 1995 *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London: Routledge.

Yuval-Davis, N. and Stoetzler, M. 2002 'Imagined Boundaries and Borders: A Gendered Gaze', *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 9(3): 329-344.

Yuval-Davis, N. 1992 'Nationalism, Racism and Gender Relations', The Hague: Intsitute of Social Studies.

Yuval-Davis, N. 2005 'Secure Borders and Safe Haven and the Gendered Politics of Belonging: Beyond Social Cohesion', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(3): 513-535.

Yuval-Davis, N. and Anthias, F. 1989 *Women, Nation, State*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Reports

1990 'Against the Grain: A Celebration of Struggle and Survival 1979-1989', Southall: Southall Black Sisters.

2001 'Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order Community Cohesion', London: Home Office

1994 'Domestic Violence and Asian Women: A Collection of Reports and Briefings', Southall: Southall Black Sisters.

2005 'Domestic Violence: A National Report', London: Home Office.

2003 'Good Practice Guidelines for Agencies Delivering Services for Black and Minority Ethnic Women', Newcastle: DIVA.

2002 'Report of the Burnley Task Force', Burnley Task Force. Chaired by Lord Clarke'

2002 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain', London: The Stationery Office.

2006 'State of the English Cities', London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
Urban Research Summary 21

URL's

http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/reports_pubs/publications/race-faith/comcoh-7steps.pdf?view+Binary accessed 16th March 2006

http://www.blink.org.uk/docs.secret_police.htm accessed 10th March 2006

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3210614.stm> accessed 21st October 2003

http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/London_blasts/investigation/html/bombers.stm accessed 23rd March 2006

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/A2179884> accessed 1 March 2006

<http://www.cobar.org/group/display.cfm?GenID=4598> accessed 2nd May 2005

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502280> accessed 30th August 2006

<http://www.cps.gov.uk> accessed 10th November 2005

<http://www.cre.gov.uk/duty/index.html~specific> accessed 20th March 2006

<http://www.geocities.com/~patrin/the-wall.htm> accessed 20th March 2006

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/index.html> accessed 20th November 2005

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/?version+1> accessed 3rd January 2006

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/comm-cohesion.html~chapter 1> accessed 9th September 2004

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/sentencing/youthjustice/> accessed 11th January 2005

<http://www.icar.org.uk?lid+5019> accessed 16th March 2006

<http://www.irr.org.uk/October/ak000008.html> Comment, Institute of Race Relations
accessed 6th October 2004

<http://news.www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/3759736.stm> accessed 18th March 2006

<http://news.www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/Manchester/4688090.stm> accessed 18th
March 2006

http://news.www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4073012.stm accessed 12th March
2006

http://news.www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/919374 accessed October 2005

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5362052.stm> accessed 26th September 2006

http://news.www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4657151.htm accessed 20th March 2006

<http://www.renewal.net> accessed 3rd March 2006

<http://www.research.ofdmni.gov.uk/racistincidents/perpetrators.htm> accessed 23rd
January 2005

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk> accessed 30th March 2006

http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/campaign_oneyearrule.html accessed March
20th 2006

www.itdoeshappen.org.uk accessed 4th January 2005

www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reportts/html/action_plan/foreword.htm
accessed 20th November 2005