

Racist Sentiments, Movements and the Mass Media

A Mediated Xenophobia?

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Full Report

Introduction

In Britain and the rest of Europe ethnic relations and citizenship have become a highly contentious field of politics, largely because of their links to important questions of national identity and state sovereignty, which are themselves increasingly challenged by contemporary processes of globalisation and trans-national political governance.

In our project, the primary focus for investigation is the British national case of political conflicts over migration and ethnic relations, and in particular the public dimension through which such conflicts are rendered visible in the media, and by which arguments and political claims are made to resonate and become legitimated/dc-legitimated, both with experts and the public. We aimed to contribute to extending existing approaches in communication and social movements research, by integrating insights from both. We identified newspaper text analysis and focus groups as two techniques which could substantially benefit from a more integrated approach within the framework of a multi-level project.

In the original proposal we expressed an intention to set up a network of collaborating institutions to make the project into a strictly comparative international enterprise (see Activities). Our project is now linked to the MERCI¹ project that covers six countries: Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Italy. Analysis of functionally equivalent processes in other countries by cross-country comparison has brought out the country-specific dimensions of the British case more clearly, as well as making it possible to assess Britain in relation to countries with more similar (e.g. Netherlands) and more different (e.g. Germany) policy and problem characteristics (see publications).

¹ MERCI = Mobilisation on Ethnic Relations, Citizenship and Immigration.

Objectives²

A comprehensive analysis of the thematisation of the social problem of racist sentiments, and political activism, from the British news press media (1990 – 1997).*

Sampling techniques adopted allowed us to deepen the proposed analysis of newspaper thematisation of the problem field from four to six newspapers (Times, Guardian, Mail, Express, Sun, Mirror), and extend the length of the longitudinal study of political activism from six (1991 – 1996) to eight years (1990— 1997). (See background and method.)

*Analysis of how different sections—by ethnic background/age/distance to area */gender*...of the audience ‘read’ the social problem through the news, and reconstruct ‘ingroup’ and ‘outgroup’ definitions by relating this information to their social experiences.*

17 focus groups (6 white; 6 black (Caribbean); 5 Asian (4 Pakistani, 1 Bangladeshi)) were conducted in localities A (Bradford) and B (SE London) (see background method and results). One minor modification in the research design was to the variable ‘proximity to inner urban areas’. This was altered to ‘distance to area’ (see research questionnaire). We also added the variable ‘gender’ which was a valuable addition.

Analysis of the journalistic norms and news values that are used by media actors at the national and local levels to report incidents of migration and ethnic relations . with particular focus on related political mobilisation.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with journalists/home affairs editors from national, local and minority newspapers (see method and results). Taking note of referees’ comments, the focus on reporting of ‘extreme events’ was extended to a broad range of different types of events.

*Analysis of the agenda-setting communication strategies of the organised activists—ethnic, anti-racist, xenophobic *_and institutional actors—police, local authorities, NGOs—and their attempts to achieve legitimacy through media coverage in two specific localities with high incidence of mobilisation/counter-mobilisation.*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 movement activists and 11 institutional actors in locality A (Bradford) and locality B (SE London).

Significant contribution to methodologies for analysis of audience perceptions and constructions of the social problem of racist sentiments i.e. related analysis of text and social reality. To be backed up with intensive publication on methods and findings throughout life of project².

² Here the objectives are those outlined in the original proposal. Minor alterations to the original are indicated by the symbol . Under each objective we indicate where further detail on how it was addressed appears in the report, and explain the reasons why the minor alterations were made.

Considerable theoretical and methodological innovation was involved in the design of this project. The study sought to fuse communications and social movements approaches both in the newspaper analysis and in the focus group stages. The theoretical and methodological innovation and significance of this is to be published in *Mobilization*.

The project was designed with a multi-level structure ('multi-method strategy').

- I) **Public discourse level**
national macro-level representation of the political issue field on migration/ethnic relations
- II) **Expert actor level**
opinion leaders and expert claims-makers in field: communication strategies and interpretative frames
- iii) **Ethnic group level**
qualitative range of 'public opinions' on conflicts by different ethnic groups: public perceptions and framing ingroup/outgroup

Public Discourse Level

National Macro-level Representation of the Political Issue Field

We combined conventional thematic contents analysis of communications research with framing analysis from social movement research. By using two units of analysis (news article; individual act of claims-making), we were able, firstly, to study the press reporting of migration and ethnic relations, and secondly, to use news texts as a source for reconstructing the political issue field on migration and ethnic relations in Britain. This dual approach is an original theoretical and methodological contribution:

Background

News Discourse: Media Contents and Frames

A detailed comparative contents analysis of the national press coverage of migrations and ethnic relations issues was undertaken. We sought to determine whether tabloid versus broadsheet or political affiliation—left/right—were factors in determining the level and style of reporting on migration and ethnic relations topics. We also sought to determine the relative amount of space given to different types of actors (institutional versus movement activist) to make political claims as 'sources' in news reports, in order to understand whether or not the newspapers favoured representing specific sources. Finally, we compared the editorial lines of the newspapers by looking at the language and style of editorials, commentaries and headlines on specific selected topics, and compared the terminology used for labeling minorities / migrants.

This step was vital for gaining information and forming hypotheses that could be used in the questioning of journalists and for assessing public perceptions (focus groups).

Political Discourse: Claims-Making

An important innovation was the development of a collective action approach for studying political contention in the ‘race’ field. Following authors such as Gamson and Tilly, we studied acts of ‘political claims-making’.

The approach combined two theoretical approaches—political opportunities and framing.

In our perspective, British migration and ‘race relations’ politics (embodied in citizenship rights) is seen as the basis for an institutional setting and patterning of resources that either facilitates or restricts political claims-making by ethnic, anti-racist and xenophobic movements, and their supporters and opponents. In addition, the national language and political discourse on the topic—e.g. the focus on ‘race’ in Britain—defies the discursive setting to which minority, anti-racist and xenophobic actors have to refer when they actively frame their demands in ways which attempt to make them effective in convincing the public and policy-makers. Taken together, then, access to the political institutions and to legitimating interpretative frameworks can be seen as dimensions of a ‘political opportunity structure’ that constrains or facilitates different types of claims-making acts by collective actors.

The three main movement types, which contest the relationship of minorities within the national political community, are as follows:

ethnic minority claims-making—by minority groups making demands on state and majority British society, typically for an extension of rights

*xenophobic*³ claims-making—by groups from the majority public, making demands on British state and society, reacting against the presence of minorities

anti-racist claims-making—by groups from the majority public, making demands on British state and society, reacting against xenophobic claims-making, and on behalf of minorities

Such claims-making is clearly inter-related, partly because of overlapping concerns and constituencies (ethnic and anti-racist), and partly by movement-counter-movement dynamics (xenophobic versus ethnic and anti-racist).

Our main research questions can be summarised by three basic clusters:

- 1) How do political debates and state policies on migration and race relations (as a political opportunity structure) shape the levels, forms (radical/moderate,

³ Our use of the term xenophobic here is not limited to the narrow definition as a psychological fear of foreigners, but is broad and descriptive, encompassing all forms of racist political action and public statements, including both extreme right political parties and racial attacks.

institutionalised/non-institutionalised) and the contents (type of discourse, policy goals and frames) of the three types of claims-making and their outcomes?

- 2) The second set of questions reverses the direction to investigate ‘movement outcomes’. How do the three types of claims-making impact upon national debates and policies in the field, and resultant processes of integration?
- 3) Thirdly, we look at the links between the three types of claims-making. One question here relates to whether ‘spirals of escalation’ can be detected, whereby increased levels of claims-making by minorities and/or anti-racist groups leads to increased levels of xenophobic claims-making, and vice versa.

Our findings on political claims-making, were used as a basis for defining hypotheses and asking questions when interviewing the actors—political and cultural elites, and movement activists—and conducting focus groups (see below).

Method

News Discourse: Media Contents and Frames

All articles referring to topics relating to migration and ethnic relations were collected manually and copied from micro-fiche, or where possible selected by day-by-day searches through headlines on CD ROM. We decided against using keyword searches for the CD Rooms as these cannot guarantee a complete sample, and one that would be comparable with those retrieved from micro-fiche or hard copy.

All articles from two broadsheet papers (Times, Guardian), two tabloids (Sun, Mirror) and two middle-range newspapers (Mirror, Express) for a year, 1995, in the middle of our longitudinal study were collected. We decided to take two extra papers (the ‘middle range’) in addition to those originally proposed, to give a more accurate overview of the press landscape for reporting ‘race’. This gave an overall sample of 1264 articles for 1995. The newspaper with the highest coverage —Guardian—was collected for eight years —1990–1997—so that it is possible also to look at longitudinal changes in levels of reporting –press attention. The sample was coded, taking the article as the unit of analysis, for news structure (article type, size, position) and thematic contents variables (headline, news topic, issue field, journalist’s language/symbolism) using a detailed coding scheme. The data-base was coded using Access (data entry with text), and calculations were made using SPSS.

Political Discourse: Claims-Making

The method for political claims-analysis builds on the methods of protest event analysis (Rucht, Koopmans, Neidhardt 1998) and political discourse analysis (Gamson 1990). Here only news reports which cover factual events are taken from an established newspaper of public record with a high level of reporting on the topic. This criterion led us to select the Guardian, from which a sample was drawn of articles for every Monday, Wednesday and Friday edition for eight years, 1990-7. This source sample was checked for biases by applying

the method to other newspapers, and found to be suitable.⁴⁴ Our units of analysis are instances of claims-making, and not articles. All acts were included which involved demands, criticisms or proposals relating to the regulation or evaluation of migration, minority integration, or xenophobia. Instances of claims-making were included irrespective of their form—ranging from violent attacks to public statements—and actors were coded regardless of their type—giving a sample including institutional, civil society and movements actors.

Important variables in the detailed coding of claims-making include the identity of actors making the claim, name of organisation, action form, and (where present) size, target and intensity of protest. For the semantic contents of the claims, up to three aims or demands, and up to two (causal or symbolic) frames, were coded per act, as well as the addressee (the actor on whom demands are made). Highly detailed open category systems were used in the code lists to retain as much detail of the claims as possible, and the language text of original claims was retrieved as text into the data-base (Access for coding entry; SPSS for calculation). We have identified about 350 different actors and 500 different aims in the coding, and coded more than 1450 acts of claims-making, 1990 — 1997.

Main Results

News Discourse Analysis

General findings can be summarised with reference to table one, which gives the coverage of the newspapers in relation to general aggregate categories of issues.

The ‘centre-right’ Times (46.4%) and Mail (54.6%) newspapers tended to focus more on issues of immigration and asylum in their coverage, whereas the ‘centre-left’ Guardian focused more on Racist/Anti-racist Activism issues (39.8%), and among these on racial abuse in particular (21.5%).

‘Middle-range’ newspapers (Mail and Express) tended to give more prominence to race stories in the news structure (7.9% and 7.2% on front page, respectively) than either the broadsheets (Guardian 5.6%; Times 3.8%) or the Sun tabloid (0.6%).

⁴ It is common practice within the social movements field to take a single newspaper as the source for longitudinal analysis (e.g. Tarrow 1989), because events (and not the newspaper’s opinion) are the unit of analysis, and the newspaper is in effect taken as a public record. Tests on different newspapers’ selectivity of events show that the selection of newspaper does not change findings significantly for this type of analysis.

Table One: Newspaper Coverage of Migration and Ethnic Relations

	Guardian	Times	Mail	Express	Sun	Mirror
Immigration/Asylum issues	36.5%	46.4%	54.6%	40.8%	31.6%	16.8%
Minority issues	16.0%	17.5%	24.4%	22.7%	33.4%	28.6%
Racist/Anti-racist Activism issues	39.8%	29.5%	17.3%	34.2%	28.1%	51.6%
National Identity (majority/minority) cleavage issues	5.4%	6.6%	3.3%	2.3%	5.7%	0.0%
Other issues	2.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%	1.2%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N (articles)	376	183	242	194	174	95

The major substantive finding of our comparative analysis of national newspaper coverage was that although the newspapers varied considerably in the ways they themselves presented race issues—prominence, editorial line and commentary, and language, symbolism and meaning attributed—there was considerable similarity in the proportion of space that was given to ‘sources’ to make claims about the topic in news reports. This finding is rather counterintuitive. According to our findings, although the overall level of reporting in the broadsheet Guardian was more than twice as high as for the tabloid Sun, both newspapers attributed proportionally similar amounts of space to different types of ‘source’ claim-makers: e.g., government/executive source claims—Guardian 21.1%, Sun 23.3%; ethnic minority source claims –Guardian 18.6%, Sun 16.3%; extreme right source claims –Guardian 1.7%, Sun 2.3%. Thus, it is not the case that minorities are not given news space in a populist paper such as the Sun. The way the populist newspaper comments on minorities is, however, less pro-minority than a paper such as the Guardian. Nevertheless, the finding indicates that tabloids do give significant space to the substantial claims of reported actors. Explanation for such findings and hypotheses were followed up at the interview stage (see later).

Political Discourse Analysis

This section is restricted to some of the key demonstrative findings about claims-makers in the issue-field—for detailed interactive analyses please see our publications.

Table two (on next page) shows the distribution of claims made across actors in the field. The right-hand column deals with the overall migrations/ethnic relations field, while the middle three deal with important sub-fields.

Table 2. Claims-making Actors in the Migration and Ethnic Relations Fields, 1990-1996

	Immigration and Asylum	Minority Politics	Anti-racism versus Xenophobic	Total Field*
Supranational institutions (EU, UN)	1.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.9%
Foreign governments	1.0%		0.6%	0.6%
National government	27.6%	8.6%	1.3%	13.9%
Local governments	1.4%	1.8%	1.3%	1.5%
National legislative	18.8%	5.6%	13.4%	12.5%
Local legislative bodies	0.6%	2.7%	6.8%	2.9%
Judiciary	9.5%	6.1%	4.3%	6.8%
Police and security agencies	1.2%	7.6%	6.8%	4.9%
State institutions dealing with minorities and migrants (e.g. CRE)	1.9%	6.3%	3.7%	3.9%
Other state institutions	2.1%	3.1%	0.9%	2.1%
National and local political parties	1.2%	0.2%	2.8%	1.3%
Total state and party actors	67.0%	42.4%	42.2%	51.3%
Unions and professional organisations	1.2%	5.6%	2.1%	3.0%
Employers and business organisations	1.9%	1.6%	1.3%	1.6%
Churches	2.3%	1.1%	0.9%	1.5%
Media	1.0%	2.0%	3.1%	2.0%
Scientific and cultural organisations	0.4%	7.0%	4.4%	3.7%
Human rights, welfare and pro-minority organisations (national)	15.5%	4.9%	2.8%	8.3%
Anti-racist groups and organisations	0.6%	1.1%	9.9%	3.1%
Minority groups and organisations	9.1%	29.8%	16.8%	19.4%
Racist and extreme right organisations and groups	0.0%	0.2%	11.2%	2.9%
Other organisations and groups	0.5%	1.8%	0.3%	0.9%
Unknown 'public' actors	0.5%	2.5%	5.0%	2.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N=	483	446	322	1269
% of total field	38.1%	35.1%	25.4%	100.0%
Average Valence:	0.32	0.51	0.41	0.41

* Includes 18 additional cases relating to 'Homeland Politics' – minority demands on homeland/not UK

Valence score: -1 anti-minority/racist; 1 = pro-minority/anti-racist; 0 = neither pro- nor anti-minority/racist

An important finding is the prominence of minority claims-makers, which account for more claims than any other actor in the field - 19.4% of all political claims. This indicates that minorities are not merely the 'object' of migration and ethnic relation politics, but are important actors in shaping and determining the field.

Our findings support the hypothesis - from a 'political opportunity' approach—that minorities with the official legitimacy of full residence and citizenship rights have greater institutional and discursive access to politics than those without such status—such as asylum-seekers. Minorities have a three times greater share in claims-making in minority politics (29.8%), and double in the field of anti-racism/xenophobia (16.8%), than they do in immigration politics (9.8%). This indicates that resident minorities are able to draw on the legitimacy of their official rights of access to institutional politics, to become the most prominent actor in the political field which deals with them and their relationship to the national political community. In contrast, within the immigration politics field, they are only the fifth most prominent actor in the political field—where national government (27.6%), legislature

(18.8%) and judiciary (9.5%) collectively account for almost half of all claims-making, and human rights, welfare and pro-minority organisations (e.g., Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)) collectively account for 15.5%. While minorities with full social and political rights play an important role in shaping ethnic relations politics, those without such resources— asylum-seekers, political refugees and new foreign migrants—depend far more on the altruism of groups and organisations from the dominant culture—as well as resident minority groups—to represent their interests in the conflicts about them.

In terms of claims made by each of the three movements, it is interesting that racist and extreme-right organisations are highly marginalised within migration and ethnic relations politics—accounting for less than 3% of all claims. This indicates that such groups have difficulties in gaining visibility for their demands in national politics (with hardly any in immigration/asylum and minority politics), while their ethnic and anti-racist opponents have better opportunities for doing so, in a society which upholds equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory principles by statute.

This does not mean that anti-minority positions do not exist. To a certain extent they have been co-opted by mainstream political actors. We scored each claim with a ‘valence’ of -1 for ‘racist/anti-minority’, 0 for ‘neutral/ambiguous’, and +1 for ‘anti-racist/pro-minority’ position. When these overall scores for actors are aggregated according to political party identity (possible for 30% of all claims) the following aggregates can be arrived at:

Conservative Party	—0.35
British National Party	—0.73
Liberal Democrats	+0.18
Labour	+0.72

This finding suggests that the Conservative Party have, to a certain extent, taken an anti-minority position and thereby reduced the political space available to the extreme right—this is particularly noticeable with regard to immigration/asylum politics, which account for 70% of Conservative claims-making, and which are highly negative (valence —0.5) towards minorities. Our findings also confirm that the Labour Party generally takes a pro-minority stance.

A last point is that the state itself can be an important source of discrimination. A third of all minority demands (and more than 40% of claims by ‘Black’ minorities) were directed against the police. About 12% of such claims referred to discrimination or racial abuse by the police, rising to 27% of those made by ‘Black’ minorities. Opposition to police discrimination and racial abuse thus has a systematic basis, and is not merely tied to high-profile events such as the Stephen Lawrence case—the latter might be better seen as ‘triggers’ allowing such grievances to make a policy impact through their visibility in the public domain.

Again it should be stressed that these are *comparative* data, allowing international comparisons to be made (see Activities).

Expert Actor Level

Communication Strategies and Interpretative Frames

Background

To further ground the above findings we conducted semi-structured interviews with key actors involved in the circulation of political demands. This approach is cognate to that of source/journalist relations in communications (e.g. Schlesinger and Tumber) *and* to studies of how social movements make strategic attempts to make their demands publicly visible.

For media actors, we sought to determine the influence of news production side values—reporting practices and dynamics, ‘news values’, editorial involvement, relations with sources, and the newspaper’s ideological position and genre—on how topics were reported.

For political and cultural elite actors (local authority officials and politicians, church leaders, headteachers, the police and race equality councils) we focused on selected localities *A* and *B*, gaining considerable contextual information on the opportunity structures in these areas and focusing on how these actors perceive and interact with the media—e.g. as ‘sources’, the ‘effects’ national coverage has on the local environment, etc.

Finally we interviewed movement activists from ethnic minority groups in localities *A* and *B* (e.g. Porishad—Bangladeshi community Bradford) and at national level, anti-racist activists (e.g. from *Searchlight* and the National Assembly Against Racism), and xenophobic activists from the British National Party. As well as providing contextual information on these organisations, their activities, strategies and aims, this allowed us to examine their communicative strategies—their attempts to get in the news and what consequences coverage has for their campaigning.

Method

Drawing on findings from news and political discourse analysis, we developed three semi-structured interview schedules—for journalists/editors, political/cultural elites and movement activists—to allow findings to be linked thematically. Interviews lasted 30 —45 minutes and were transcribed, and were carried out as follows (over page):

14 interviews with media actors	5 with home affairs editors 5 with journalists 4 with the minority press
11 interviews with experts	2 with the police 2 with councilors 1 with social services 1 education 2 race equality council 2 church 1 CRE
16 interviews with activists	10 with minority activists 5 with anti-racist/solidarity activists 1 with racist
Total: 41 interviews	

Main Results

Media actors

Migration and ethnic relations do not have their own newsbeat, which makes reporting practices and choice of journalist strongly dependent on the nature of the event being reported, although the topic ‘race’ can itself increase news value. Usually, however, ‘novelty’ value is needed to make a story (e.g. fifty asylum-seekers being found in the back of a lorry).

Most journalists and editors said that sensitivity in writing copy on ethnic relations has increased greatly over the last decade. It was also regularly stated that negative reporting has shifted from minorities—who are no longer regularly stigmatised—to asylum-seekers—who are. Our finding, that a considerable amount of space is given to minorities making autonomous claims as sources in the Sun, was accounted for in two ways. The journalist told us at first that internal attitudes at the paper had changed after the proprietor’s daughter married an African, but followed this up with a structural explanation about the tabloid’s changing readership and the fact that much of its working class readership is ‘Black British’.

Newspapers tend to have different sources for stories, and treat them differently—for example the Sun sees itself basically as a ‘pro-police newspaper’, while a broadsheet editor claimed to receive regular anonymous faxes from the Home Office, which he only used when the story was verifiable. All newspapers are bombarded by campaigning groups, but tend to see their material as having diminishing returns.

Journalists do not feel a moral obligation to represent minorities in a positive light, and have more interest in technical aspects—accuracy and verifiability—than in thematic contents of stories. It was recognised, however, that reference to minority background was a sensitive matter, only to be mentioned if directly relevant to the story.

All journalists were careful about giving exposure to the extreme right. One said

You risk to encourage them to get publicity. The only time we ever report anything to do with them is when perhaps they’re involved in demonstrations.

Activists

Activists all saw the press as cynical, interested only in circulation figures, and bemoaned newspapers' failure to take an issue-based moral stand. They also claimed that journalists tended to have ephemeral interests in topics, focusing on extreme events, and producing stories with considerable negative effects on long-term campaigns. Generally, most found it difficult to get quality coverage for their causes, often resorting to dramatic stunts or protest events—although some had good contacts with individual journalists. Organisations often resort to using their own controllable communications media—leaflets and the internet—for example in the cases of an anti-deportation campaign and the extreme-right BNP.

Experts

Local institutional experts referred most significantly to the damaging effect negative national-level reporting can have on the local environment and relationships between institutional and minority actors. Further contextual information was collected for use in the case studies of localities *A* and *B*.

Ethnic Group Level Public Perceptions and Ingroup/Outgroup Framing

Background

An important original contribution was our extension of existing focus group approaches—used in both communications (e.g. Merton and Kendall 1946; Glasgow Media Group 1993) and social movement research (e.g. Gamson 1992). Contextual factors affect the way the public views the world and interprets events, shaping individual and collective action. We are dealing with two related processes:

- a) interpretative transmission of public discourse to actors' private cognitive worlds; and
- b) meaningful construction of action reproducing social relationships, occurring when actors use personal experiences to interpret public events.

The aim of these focused discussions was to gain a range of opinions expressed by different ethnic groups in relation to specific topics. These indicated perceptions of political, social and cultural integration and the perceived relationships between ethnic minorities and others in different problem-related contexts.

Qualitative data were gathered at three different levels:

News Coverage and the Representation of Ethnic Relations and Immigration

What different ethnic majority and minority groups think about media representations of topics, labeling of minority groups, styles of reporting (e.g. sensationalism, misrepresentation of ethnic groups, journalists' lack of cultural knowledge, focusing on violence, effect on the local area).

Definition of the Public Problems of Ethnic Relations and Immigration

How different ethnic minority and majority groups construct social problems in five issue fields, what types of interpretative frames—injustice, agency, identity—they use, how they attribute causal and political responsibility, and how this relates to mobilisation and activism.

Self and Other Perceptions—Symbolic Boundary Markers in Ethnic Relations and Immigration

How different ethnic minority and majority groups construct 'ingroup' and 'outgroup' symbolic boundary markers which define the social relationship of an ethnic minority in the community. The bases on which they are constructed, in terms of territorial scope—local, national, foreign—and cultural identity/religious belonging.

These three levels move from perceptions of the media as an actor, to actors' construction of social problems, to actors' definitions of selves and others—i.e. collective identity.

Method

Seventeen focus groups were organised as follows:

Asian	Five groups, 40 individuals Ethnic origin: 4 Pakistani, 1 Bangladeshi (all Muslim) Location: Bradford area (close proximity to Manningham, an area of racist, anti-racist and ethnic minority activism) Gender: 3 male, 2 female (group of Asian women aged 45—60 could not be recruited) Age cohorts: 16—24, 26—45, 45—60
Black	Six groups, 48 individuals Ethnic origin: Black—Caribbean Location: South East London area (Lewisham, Catford, Eltham, areas of racist, anti-racist and ethnic minority activism) Gender: 3 male, 3 female Age cohorts: 16—24, 26—45, 45—60
White	Six groups, 48 individuals Ethnic origin: white UK nationals Locations: three groups from South East London, three groups from Bradford Gender: 3 male, 3 female (rotated by location) Age cohorts: 16—24, 26—45, 45—60 (NB Workers for race equality councils and journalists were excluded from recruitment)

Issue fields focused on:

1. ethnic minorities and state treatment
2. ethnic mobilisation
3. group culture and rights
4. racist attacks, racist and anti-racist mobilisation
5. asylum-seekers and 'new' immigration

Although these fields are distinct—selected on the basis of prominence within the news sample—there was considerable scope for overlap and for linking chains of discussion together. Initially we focused on locality and personal experience, extending outwards through the other topics towards more abstract and geographically distant areas.

Video clips were used to introduce each field, followed by materials from our news reporting sample. Particularly relevant was our development of the 'editing' group technique, requiring the group to focus on two or three news editorials selected from (unnamed) newspaper reports on the topic. These editorials were read out, and group members were asked to select their preference among the expressed opinions, accounting for their selections. Participants then placed themselves in the role of news editors, and removed 'words' from the editorials according to their perceptions of account validity. Some ethnic groups, for example, removed references to colour or race from editorials. Where disagreement existed within the group, participants were allowed to negotiate as long as the discussion was fruitful to determining criteria for selection. At the height of discussions, groups were asked to formulate headlines for editorials representing their collective opinion and position on the issue. This allowed us to produce an empirical 'text', representative of the group's self-perception of the public problem.

Main Results

The editing group technique was very successful: groups were adept at interacting with newspaper materials, editing in and out preferred readings and constructing their own headlines. This was a development from previous editing group techniques which only used visual images (MacGregor, Morrison), and proved useful in identifying ideological differences between different ethnic groups in relation to particular problem contexts through the condensing symbols these groups constructed.

When given a Daily Mail editorial, 'The Real Lessons of the Bradford Riots', for example, a group of Asian males from Bradford aged 25 —45 stated:

He's using religion as a cause—he's writing in a really accusing way... He's brought up religion. Cutting hands off thieves? What's that got to do with the Bradford riots? This should be renamed 'What I Really Hate About the Muslim Religion'

Another group of Asian males, aged 45 - 60, also objected to the commentary's depiction of Islam, but produced a set of headlines apportioning blame for the events to the police:

I'd say the police went too far... 'Bradford Police Went Too Far' ... 'Police Went Too Far, That's Why Riot Started' ... 'Abuse of Police Power'

In contrast, a group of white females, aged 45–60, did not pick up on religion as an issue within the article, instead seeing it as a problem of law and order, and they were inclined to apportion blame to the minority:

The title is all right but I don't think there are any lessons to be learnt... Well the white people didn't start the riots so who needs to learn the lesson?... It isn't the whites fighting the blacks—it's 'The Asians Against the Police'.

This allows us to identify the conflict lines produced in relation to specific topics—here over religious difference and the relation between minorities and the police in a law and order context. It becomes possible to develop a battery of language, symbolism and attributed cause used to frame and define different ethnic groups' positions. For reasons of space, rather than detailing such findings, we are restricted to listing a few of the more significant ones.

In terms of cultural rights for minorities, using the example of Muslim schools, Black and white groups strongly supported educational equal opportunity in principle, seeing this as a potential basis for improving race relations. In contrast, Asian groups favoured the provision for Islam within British schooling, although only a minority (young men) were in favour of outright Islamic education, defining themselves beyond British state authority. At the perceptual level it seems that the Islamic religion is an important cleavage and makes a difference. Black groups define themselves more closely to whites on the topic of Muslim schooling, but for other issues such as racist attacks Blacks and Asians have a common shared experience as minorities in British society. This indicates that definitions of 'ingroup'/'outgroup' boundaries are problem—and context-dependent rather than intrinsic characteristics of ethnicity.

Most groups found depictions of asylum-seekers as 'bogus' and 'scroungers' as stigmatising, but a substantial minority within groups were subsequently prepared to use these terms. All ethnic groups were hostile to the admission of asylum-seekers to Britain, often telling stories of how much they cost social services. Generally, however, Black and—in particular—Asian groups were more sympathetic than whites, relating their own migration backgrounds, nonetheless seeing Britain as a 'full' country. This showed a clear 'ingroup'/'outgroup' symbolic boundary at the perceptual level between British citizens and foreign migrants. This symbolic boundary, however, was drawn along ethnic lines by a minority of white groups, who also categorised British Asians as an outgroup, despite them being for the most part British citizens.

All groups were strongly antipathetic to the extreme right, even where some group members expressed racist sentiments during sessions. Most groups were also sceptical, however, about the benefits and motives of anti-racist activism. Only the young expressed potential interest in engaging in such activism, and this was somewhat marginal. Some groups, especially women, expressed solidarity with such activism, although most were rather apathetic in their assessment of the value of political activism in general.

Overview and Summary of Key Findings

The combination of social movements and communications approaches is able to contribute significantly to theory building in migration ethnic relations studies. Our findings on the British national case are further deepened and validated through international comparison which confirms our basic hypothesis that national forms of citizenship -political opportunities- have an important influence in shaping minority perceptions of opportunities for political participation -a finding also confirmed in the focus groups. From our data, ethnic minority organisations make 20% of the political demands relating to ethnic relations in Britain. This makes them the single most important actor in making such political demands, whereas in Germany the figure relating to such demands by similar groups was only 7%. This shows that public debate over ethnic relations in Britain is not just *about* minorities, but is also *shaped by* them. In short, minorities are active participants in debates concerning ethnic relationships. Indeed, what the comparative dimension of the research shows is that minorities in Britain have greater opportunities for political participation compared to their counterparts in Germany, and do so largely because of Britain's relatively inclusive ethnic relations policies - embodied in legislation relating to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity- and state sponsorship for ethnic minority organisations. This is not the case in Germany, where such opportunities do not exist to the same extent. In Germany the ethnic-exclusionist citizenship politics continues to officially define second and third generation Turks as 'foreigners'. Over time this situation may change, given the recent changes in German citizenship law, but the present basic situational difference is borne out in our other findings. For example, more than 50% of the political activism by ethnic minorities in Britain targeted national institutions for an increase in rights or for anti-discriminatory measures, compared to only 5% in Germany. Conversely, in Germany more than 40% of the political activism by ethnic minorities was directed toward 'homeland' conflicts, principally between Turks and Kurds, whereas in Britain only 5% of political demands by ethnic minorities related to 'homeland' politics. Such striking national differences -underlined by analyses of the Dutch, French and Swiss cases, where marked variations were also recorded between the countries-demonstrated the continuing importance of national frameworks of perception for the construction of political action. Such findings have thus assisted in the building of a theory of ethnic mobilisation that contradicts the contemporary body of research and theory that claims that the 'national' has been replaced by the 'postnational' (Soysal) as the relevant framework of reference for minority and migrant mobilisation

Activities

An important part of the project has been the establishment of a network of academic institutions in Europe — the MERCI group, Mobilisation on Ethnic Relations Citizenship and Immigration —, which undertakes strictly comparative work, using the same coding scheme. The comparative project covers five core countries: UK, Germany, France, Switzerland, and

Netherlands. It is hoped to include Italy shortly. Our intention to have the UK study form part of a comparative analysis was included in the original proposal.

We have participated, during the course of the project, in several expert international conferences. Papers and presentations/lectures were given at the following:

March, 1999, Mannheim, Germany. European Consortium of Political Research Joint Sessions of Workshops. Citizenship, Ethnic Minorities and Political Mobilisation.*

February, 1999, Liege, Belgium. Rencontres du CEDEM, University of Liege.

August, 1999, San Francisco, USA. Annual Conference of the American Sociological Association.

July, 1998, Geneva, Switzerland. Protest Event Analysis Methodology Conference, University of Geneva.

April, 1998, Utrecht, Netherlands. ERCOMIER. New Directions in Research on Racism and Xenophobia, University of Utrecht.

November, 1997, Berlin, Germany. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin. Citizenship, Immigration and Xenophobia in Europe.

February, 1997, Warwick, UK. Open Seminar Series. Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick.

* organised by member of research team.

Outputs

Data sets as outlined in the report, which are also internationally comparative.

Publications

Statham, P. forthcoming October 1999. The political mobilisation by minorities in Britain: outcomes, side-effects and negative feedbacks of 'race relations'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 25 (4).

Statham, P. (with R. Koopmans) forthcoming November 1999. 'Challenging the Liberal Nation-State? Postnationalism, Multiculturalism, and the Collective Claims-Making of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Britain and Germany.' *American Journal of Sociology*.

- Statham, P. (with R. Koopmans) in press 1999. 'The Contentious Politics of Migration and Ethnic Relations in Britain and Germany: Claims-making in the Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Field' in ter Wal, Jessika and Maykel Verkuyten eds. *Comparative Perspectives on Racism*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Statham, P. (with Koopmans) in press 1999. 'Political claims analysis', *Mobilization. The International Journal of Research and Theory about Social Movements, Protest and Collective Behavior*, 4 (2).
- Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham Eds. (to be published 2000). *Challenging and Defending the Fortress: Political Mobilization over Ethnic Difference in Comparative and Transnational Perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Statham, P. 1999. Political mobilisation by minorities in Britain: outcomes, side-effects and negative feedbacks of 'race relations'. *Cedem Working Papers* No.2. University of Liege
- Statham P. (with Ruud Koopmans) 1999. Nationalstaat und Migranten. StaatsbOrgerschaft und politische Mobilisierung. *WZB Mitteilungen* 83:10 — 12, März.
- Statham P. (with Ruud Koopmans) 1998. Challenging the Liberal Nation-State? Postnationalism, Multiculturalism, and the Collective Claims-Making of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Britain and Germany. *Wissenschaftszentrum Discussion Paper Series, FS III 98 - 105: 1 — 52*.
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- Statham P. 1998. The Political Construction of Immigration Politics in Italy: opportunities, mobilisation and outcomes. *Wissenschaftszentrum Discussion Paper Series, FS III — 102: 1 — 60*.
- Statham P. 1996. Berlusconi, the Media, and the New Right in Italy. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 1(1): 87 — 105. Cambridge: MA. MIT Press.
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Impacts

Ongoing discussions with the Commission for Racial Equality about how our findings may be related to policy concerns.

The comparative work between Britain and Germany received considerable coverage in the German press at the time of the recent changes in Citizenship legislation. Members of the research team were interviewed and asked to relate British experiences to possible outcomes in Germany.

Future Research Priorities

- 1) Following the establishment of a comprehensive data-base of political claims-making in the migration and ethnic relations field, as well as the press coverage of the issues, we consider that the continued collection and coding of the data, which is genuinely longitudinal (1990-97), would be an invaluable resource for researchers in the field. This could be managed relatively easily on a reduced scale from the base collection.
- 2) We strongly advocate that international comparative dimensions be added to future research in this area, as cross-country findings have significantly contributed to a deepening of our understanding of the national case.
- 3) The important findings drawn from the ethnic focus groups, on sensitive issues such as cultural group rights, suggest that an even higher level of aggregation of ethnic groups—e.g. Sikhs, Gujaratis, Rastafarians—would provide even more insights into the position of these minorities in relation to British society.
- 4) Following the interviews undertaken with the minority press . The Voice, Eastern Eye—it became apparent that relatively little research has been done on the position of the minority press in the British media landscape, and the relationship between the minority press and its audience.