



What is Racism? Othering, Prejudice and Hate-motivated Violence

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Abstract

The paper's concern is the current difficulty, in journalism, the academy and politics, of discussing questions to do with race, ethnicity, difference and immigration because of the fear of being called a racist. It starts with an analysis of biographical interview data drawn from fifteen people who had variously acquired the label racist and who were part of a small-scale study into racism in the Midlands city of Stoke-on-Trent, UK conducted between 2003 and 2005. The interviews used the free association narrative interview method. This analysis revealed that most people do not consider themselves racist and that having a conviction for a racially aggravated offence or being a member of a far right organisation was not able to differentiate racists from non-racists. It also revealed a spectrum of attitudes towards immigrants or particular ethnic groups: strong expressions of hatred at one end of the spectrum; strong prejudicial feelings in the middle; and a feeling that 'outsider' groups should not benefit at the expense of 'insiders' (called 'othering') at the other end. The turn to theory for assistance revealed that, although hatred, prejudice and 'othering' are not the same thing, and do not have the same origins, they have become elided. This is primarily because cognitive psychology's hostility to psychoanalysis marginalised hatred whilst its exclusive preoccupation with prejudice came effectively to define racism at the individual level. Progress in thinking about racism might consist of abolishing the term and returning to thinking about hatred, prejudice and 'othering' separately.

Keywords

Racism; hatred; prejudice; 'othering'; spectrum.

Introduction

Trevor Phillips, former head of the British Commission for Racial Equality, recently presented a TV documentary on Channel Four provocatively entitled 'Things We Won't Say About Race That Are True' (first broadcast 19 March, 2015, Channel Four). In it he explored the evidence for a number of British stereotypes and, controversially, found many of them to be 'true' (Jews are more likely to be 'rich and powerful', the building trade is run by the Irish and certain crimes in London are dominated by particular ethnic groups, for example). Why can't these things be said, even if 'true'? Answer: fear of being called a racist. In a more academic vein, Farhad Dalal's

(2012) critical look at the Equality Movements argues that thinking about equality has become paralysed. Why? Because the strategy of celebrating diversity and difference has effectively worked to make the practice of *any* form of discrimination seem to be unfair or oppressive. Result: to discriminate is to risk being called a racist. In the realm of politics, something similar pervades talk about immigration: to be anti-immigration is to be seen as anti-immigrant or racist. In journalism, the academy and politics, apparently, and from various points on the political spectrum, a similar problem emerges: debate about race, ethnicity, immigration and difference has become stifled for fear of being called a racist. In some way, then, the very meaning of racism, what it is to be a racist, seems to be 'in crisis'. And all this in an increasingly globalised, cosmopolitan and unequal world where war and terrorism add refugees and asylum seekers to the ceaseless flows of migration – legal, illegal and trafficked – a world in which issues of race, ethnicity and difference, and thus the question of racism, cannot be avoided.

Exploring racism empirically

Because being called a racist, but not recognising oneself in the label, is part of the problem, I want to start with some empirical data drawn from people who have been called racist, rather than with the now massive theoretical literature – psychological, sociological, psychoanalytic and psychosocial – variously addressing different aspects of the topic (to which I shall return). If progress is to be made on producing a more satisfactory definition of racism, which is my primary objective, it will need to be meaningful to people so labelled, not least because individuals cannot change if they refuse the label. The empirical data are biographical interviews with 'racist' individuals stemming from a small-scale, interview-based study into racism in the Midlands city of Stoke-on-Trent. Twelve men and two women were each interviewed twice, and one man three times, using the free association narrative interview method (Hollway and Jefferson 2013), a method designed to elicit stories from 'defended' subjects: that is, subjects whose anxieties are always being unconsciously defended against and whose stories are therefore never fully self-evident. In other words, it is a method that attempts to get behind the defensive justifications and rationalisations that all of us unconsciously use when our sense of self feels threatened in some way. The interviewing principles – use open-ended questions, elicit stories, avoid 'why' questions, follow up using respondents' ordering and phrasing – are designed to stay as close as possible to interviewees' own associations and experiences (without the accompanying justifications: hence no 'why' questions). The analytic strategy combines alertness to contradictions and inconsistencies, familiarity with the whole of the interview material, awareness of appropriate theoretical resources and a willingness to use one's own subjectivity. Movement between these four elements – part, whole, theory, reflexivity – continues until a 'good enough' interpretation emerges: one that satisfies all the elements simultaneously.

Utilising a whole data set of fifteen double (or treble) interviews is no easy matter in interviews where biography is of the essence because themes must be tracked across the sample (cross-sectional analysis) whilst staying alert to the unique intra-biographical meaning of each theme. In other words, the analysis attempted to hold on to the detail of fifteen life stories (the vertical axis) as each story was compared with all the others (the horizontal axis). Since similar themes manifest differently depending on biographical context, there was no escaping the need to be intimately familiar with the original transcripts and the summary pen portraits produced from these. Using these to make a further set of notes, a tabulated biography for each interviewee was then constructed covering details of their family, neighbourhood, school, work, health, drug-taking, criminal 'careers' and relationship to racism (for full details, see Table 1 in Appendix A). At that point, it became possible to see, in relation to 'family' for example, whether there was a step parent involved; whether the parents' relationship was 'poor' and/or 'violent'; whether the children were treated violently or not; whether there was any reported history of parental depression; whether there was a racist parent; whether the family was 'small' or 'large'; whether there were step siblings; whether sibling relationships were 'good', 'mixed' or

'poor'; whether there was any mention of sibling violence or bullying; and whether they thought their childhood had been 'happy', 'mixed' or 'unhappy'. (Given the interviewee-led nature of the interviews, not all of this information was elicited for all interviewees; hence the presence of empty boxes and question marks in parts of the table.) Looking horizontally I could compare the sample on any of these dimensions; looking vertically I could see how these dimensions related to all the other dimensions within particular biographies. Though I could return to the pen portraits and the transcripts for clarification, the table became the indispensable starting point for analysis.

The whole sample and racism

There were several ways the interviewees had acquired the label 'racist': they had been charged with, or convicted of, racially aggravated crimes; they had been interested in or been a member of a far right political party like the National Front (NF) or the British National Party (BNP); or someone in authority who knew them, such as a probation officer, simply thought they were racist because of things they had said or done. However, although all the interviewees were selected for their 'racism', all but two denied they were racist. We could of course conclude these are simply racists 'in denial'; or that they would say that, wouldn't they, to escape the shame of the label or the enhanced sanction accruing to 'racially aggravated' offences; or that they are full of contradictions: expressing hatred towards particular groups while denying the racist epithet. But, there are two particular forms of justificatory denial that suggest more going on here than various forms of 'excuse'. Paul, the youngest at 15 years and aspiring to join the BNP, captures well the first of these when he said, 'I just think it's not right all the immigration coming in this country ... They're always causing trouble, vandalising and claiming taxes ... not working'. It's the perceived injustice and unfairness of immigration – in this case 'not working' and 'claiming taxes', for others taking [our] jobs by working – that takes the utterance beyond the negative prejudicial stereotypes ('always causing trouble', and so on) which on their own make a conventional charge of racism harder to deny. The second form of justificatory denial is the defence of getting on well with some ethnic groups (something shared by at least nine of the sample). Steve (aged 16 years), for example, has always hung around with Black people (by which he meant Asian) because at secondary school 'most people in my year were Black'. He also liked the local gypsies, occasionally chilling out in their caravans. However, he does not like Kosovans because they 'come over here to get benefits and don't work or nothing', thus echoing Paul's (and many others') form of denial (for a fuller account of Steve, see Gadd and Dixon 2011: chapter 3). Greg claimed to be 'not racist against Asians 'cos I got Asian mates in Leicester and ... they are sound', although he regularly brawled with a particular group of local Asians because they were 'mouthy', and he had strong feelings about asylum seekers (for a fuller account of Greg, see Gadd and Jefferson 2007: chapter 8). Although the particular mix of likes and dislikes varied, this 'partial racism', that implicated some but not all ethnic groups, complicates the notion of a simple racist/non-racist distinction.

What of the two exceptions, those who accepted the racist label? Interestingly, these would seem to span the entire racist spectrum. At one end is 18 year old Belinda (whose admission of racism was ambiguous), a White woman from a small, still-intact family living in a nice area, who had enjoyed a 'happy life' full of 'nice things' and holidays abroad. A sometime victim of bullying in her secondary school, she had a conviction for assault following a fight over a boy with another girl while still a juvenile, which meant she was not a complete stranger to violence. However, her 'really racist' views, picked up by her English teacher, would seem to stem from her strong identification with her racist father: she had, she said, been 'brought up...racist' by her father, to whom she was 'a lot closer' than to her mother. Had she been old enough she would have voted for the BNP, as had her father and boyfriend. What differentiates her a little from our deniers is the general vehemence of her views and their all-encompassing nature, though good personal experiences with particular members of ethnic groups were acknowledged and she claimed she would never be racist to Indians who stayed in their own country.

At the other end of the spectrum is Stan, a White man aged 19 years. Brought up by a series of stepfathers who abused his mother, sexually abused by a babysitter at the age of eight, he was already disruptive in infant school where he would 'blow up like a volcano'. By his early teens, misbehaviour in and out of school led to suspensions, expulsion and a criminal record. By his mid-teens, violence had become endemic, and racialised: 'Whites v Pakis' in and out of school. He had become, on his own admission, 'a proper little racist' who 'signed up for the NF' and who enjoyed the violence. Interviewed while serving a two year custodial sentence for racially aggravated affray (and other violent offences), he had successfully convinced the Black prisoners on his wing (where he was the only White man) that he was not racist because he had once had a 'half-caste girl-friend' and 'half-caste mates', although he hated 'niggers with attitude ... the ones that think "I'm fucking better than you."' Claiming that he loves fighting but has no idea why, and that his head was 'all over the place', it should not need the expert psychiatric assessment he was awaiting to conclude that his abusive, violent and troubled upbringing was seriously implicated in his hatred, racism and current love of violence (for a fuller account of Stan, see Gadd 2010: chapter 10).

Those convicted of, or charged with, racially aggravated offences

How might it assist us to examine those convicted (or charged awaiting trial in one case) of a racially aggravated offence (seven in all: Stan, Marcus, Shahid, Carl, Emma, Alan and Terry)? Apart from Stan (see above), the others all deny that their offences were racially motivated. Indeed, it is arguable that this group of offenders includes some of the least racist in the sample. Two examples where the offences were against the arresting officers – 'contempt of cop' offences – demonstrate in an extreme way how unhelpful such offences proved as a starting point. Carl was a White man (aged 25 years) with over 50 convictions for petty crime, many of them related to his severe alcoholism. During an altercation with police for a trivial, alcoholism-related matter (he had thrown his house keys at a van in frustration at being refused a prescription for anti-depressant and anti-craving drugs), Carl ended up kicking two of the officers and calling the arresting female officer 'a dyke' and a 'Black bitch' (for which he was put on probation). Shahid, a British Muslim (aged 22 years) from a strict Pakistani background, found it hard to walk away from racial abuse of any kind. He felt his charge of racially aggravated threatening behaviour against a police officer was as a result of his being singled out (as the only Asian) for questioning by a group of police officers, after he had stopped his car to assist friends being pushed around by these same officers, and losing his head. This, apparently, involved swearing at them, threatening them and calling them 'racist names ... like "you White bastard"', in an attempt to 'make them feel really uncomfortable'.

In both these cases, their racist diatribes would seem to be frustrated, angry products of the moment: attempts to snatch a semblance of (verbal) control from a situation where they were clearly being overpowered. Carl's story, although it involved an abusive stepmother and a 'not very happy' childhood, some paranoid episodes, self-harming and a perception of himself as a 'bad person', was not especially preoccupied with issues of race and immigration. He went gambling (another of his addictions) with Black friends, got on with the corner shop owners and takeaway workers whose trades provided him with 'a life line to surviving' and was impressed by the way Asian mothers disciplined their children (giving them 'a right bollocking' after they had thrown milk bottles at him). Otherwise, he felt a little intimidated by immigrants on the streets, envious of their apparent ability to afford what he could not and thought they 'shouldn't be here doing our jobs'. Local Asians, he felt, 'didn't want to mix'. Shahid's story involved having to deal with racist teachers, fighting playground racists, being excluded from school in consequence, 'getting a little bit out of hand', a spell in an Islamic boarding school and protected walks between school sites after the murder of a violent local racist. Although this history of victimisation no doubt contributed to the probation record that suggested Shahid was prone to hysterical outbursts when he felt accused and humiliated, his attempt to resolve a dispute on a Stoke nightclub dance floor between White, Black and Asian men with the words 'we are all one

colour' (for which he received a shot glass thrown in his face by another Asian man for his troubles) would seem to better capture his feelings about race.

Those interested in, or sometime members of, far right political parties

What of the group that should have contained the most racist of our sample: namely, the group (of six) who had had some connection with, or interest in, the NF or the BNP? Stan, who we have already encountered, was an extreme, hate-filled racist. Paul too, who we have also previously 'met', also displayed evidence of hatred: he deliberately cut someone's hand in school with a sharpener blade, a lad he had 'always hated'; and he hated Asian youths (who chase Paul and a mate out of a local park, seen by the Asian youth as 'theirs'): 'I hate them ... horrible, dirty little things'. Belinda, however, as we saw earlier, expressed only strong prejudices. But it was the oldest three in our sample, all White men, who proved the most revealing. Frank, aged 44 years, had had a very violent upbringing, a criminal adolescence, a spell in a young offenders' institution and a history of fighting, including years as a racist, NF skinhead constantly fighting Black and Asian men, if they were 'up for it'. Superficially, this resembles Stan's story. But where Stan's experience of a succession of step-fathers left him with some serious hatred and a head 'all over the place' (exacerbated by his sexual abuse), Frank strongly identified with his 'dead racist' father (such that he had never been able to feel close to his abused mother; or, we might say, identify with her suffering). Thus, like Belinda, his racism would appear to have developed through identification. Getting married, having children and staying happily married led to a promise to stay out of trouble, a promise he kept. However, attendance at a BNP meeting in his forties led to him standing for election as a BNP candidate because everything they said made sense to him, which basically amounted to the immigrant issue: their 'unfair' benefits and their numbers, which were 'going to ... overrun the country'. After his wife left the party because of its racism, Frank was forced to reconsider and concluded the same, after a senior BNP figure proposed excluding people with Black friends or relatives from full membership. Still concerned about immigration and a host of local issues (loss of jobs, crime and anti-social behaviour and 'the pittance' they pay the elderly), he decided to withdraw and stand either as an independent or as a Labour candidate. Understanding these shifts away from his violent past and then the BNP would seem, once again, to involve identification: now he desired to be like his wife, to whom he remained very 'close'; and like his beloved children, whose lives were very different from that of his violent, racist upbringing – and Frank was determined to keep it that way (for fuller accounts of Frank, see Gadd 2006 and Gadd and Dixon 2011: Chapter 8).

Nigel (aged 48 years) also came from a large family with a violent and abusive father but with an important difference: Nigel was beaten so often, seemingly for no reason, by his (apparently non-racist) father that he had nightmares and even contemplated suicide. He was also closer to his mother, who attempted to protect him from the beatings (but then died suddenly in his mid-teens, a death for which his father blamed Nigel – "Is this you? Carrying on". That's all he said' – thus compounding Nigel's grief). Thus, the pathway of identification with his father was blocked off (though Nigel claimed he never hated him). Shortly afterwards, Nigel was forced to choose between his pregnant girl-friend and remaining at home; so he moved into lodgings with an Asian landlord who badly exploited him: 'treated me like shit'. These early traumatic experiences left the young Nigel far more emotionally fragile than Frank. Having the first two of his four children taken into care left him unable to cope and 'crying all the time'. He took an overdose. After splitting up with his girl-friend, he married and had four more children; but his temper, back pain and poor mental health meant he could never hold a job down for long. Chronic depression was eventually diagnosed in his late thirties. Community activism became his sole means to do something that might make his children proud of him. In this capacity, he came close to the local BNP and eventually joined them; but Nigel was adamant that he was there for all residents, insisting he could 'never discriminate. Once I start discriminating I walk away'. If his quick temper connoted anger, it also masked his pain: 'I'm torn all the time.

Underneath I'm heartbroken' (for fuller accounts of Nigel, see Gadd 2010 and Gadd and Dixon 2011: chapter 5).

Terry (aged 64 years) exemplifies a very different route to both Frank and Nigel. A war baby bought up by his grandparents whilst his father was away at war and his mother worked in a munitions factory, he had lived on the same street all his life. His childhood and school years were happy and successful. He left with 'a very good report', took up an apprenticeship and spent the next 38 years in the same job as a joiner. He never took a day off, took pride in his work and was 'very happy' in his job. He married and had a daughter in his twenties, but this ended with his wife's infidelity and the discovery that his child was not his. He then became 'one of the best known blokes' locally, living alone, helping people with odd jobs and speeding up their council work, and racing pigeons. Losing both his parents within months of each other was a big blow, but he remarried in his forties and continued working until an injury at the age of 57 forced him finally to have a day off work and, quite suddenly, he became 'very depressed'. It all started with physical pains and a complete loss of confidence. Despite having 'a fantastic wife and family', he began to feel lonely and to suffer paranoid delusions. He was diagnosed with 'chronic depression'. This gradually ebbed away over the following months but he took early retirement and never returned to the job he loved. After several years he became involved with a local Action Group (which became chaired by a BNP activist, but Terry was not a BNP supporter because they wanted to discuss 'national issues' of no interest to Terry) and writing letters to the press about local issues in which various problems posed by immigrants, asylum seekers and the Asian community figured prominently. These activities had led to an accusation of racial harassment and inciting racial hatred, a charge that Terry vehemently denied; what really hurt was seeing 'racial hatred' on the charge sheet: 'I have never, I would never hate anyone'. Rather, he was pointing out how police and council failure to deal with area problems over the years had caused the racial tensions he was pointing to; and that he had good friends among the Asian community (though not among the new generation who were 'totally different' because they were from the countryside). Given Terry's background, his denial of hate seems accurate; rather, the key to his concerns stem from his intense love for his locality.

The whole sample and animosity: Othering, prejudice and hatred

Finally, what does separating the sample out according to the strength of their negative feelings towards others tell us? To find out, I constructed a dimension, which I called, 'othering', 'prejudice' and 'hatred'. Here, each interviewee's life story was reviewed to see whether there was evidence of strong, hateful feelings towards particular ethnic groups or immigrants, in which case an H rating resulted, evidence of negative stereotypical prejudices and feelings short of hatred, in which case a P rating resulted, or evidence of some negative sentiments towards others, but without expressions of either hatred or prejudice, in which case an O rating resulted. This produced three groups: the OPH group (five in all) where there was evidence of all three forms of negative feelings (othering, prejudice and hatred); the OP group (six in all) where only the lesser two forms were in evidence, and the O group (four in all) who only displayed evidence of othering.

Let's start with the OPH group, those who evidenced some hatred, namely, Paul, Greg, Steve, Stan and Darren (and Frank, in his younger incarnation; but, I have placed him where he ended up, in the O group). Paul, introduced earlier, achieves his H rating because of his frequent references to hatred across a wide spectrum, from individuals to ethnic groups. Greg, who earlier exemplified 'partial racism', falls into this category because of his visceral dislike (which I translated into hatred) of seeing White women with certain ethnic groups: 'I don't mind about Black men, they can have as many White women as they want. It's just Asians, Turks, Albanians, whatever you want to call them ... I don't like seeing them with White women'. Steve, too, as we also saw earlier, had Asian mates and was fine with gypsies; it was Kosovans he did not like. He recounted three fights with them, including one with three complete strangers for 'mumbling

loads of shit in their language' in response to his aggressive 'what you looking at'. This I interpreted as a sign of his 'hatred'. Stan's hatred, as we saw earlier, was admitted, widespread and included physical as well as verbal violence. As for Darren, his physical violence (an expression of hatred) was directed against his partner but the vehemence of his verbal tirades against 'Pakis', for example, was extreme and hate-filled: 'give me a bomb and I'm sorted' was his response to reducing their numbers. However, it was a(n oddly) differentiated picture: he was, unusually, sympathetic to Kosovan immigrants because 'our troops are going over there supposedly to help and [are] making it worse'; was critical of White South Africans: 'South Africa is a Black man's country ... so fuck off'; and sympathetic to Black people in Britain: 'we've dragged them here as our slaves, they've got no choice but to be here' (for a fuller account of Darren, see Jefferson 2013).

The middle group, the OPs, whose negative feelings fell short of hatred, consisted of Kamron, Belinda, Marcus, Emma, Nigel and Terry. Kamron was a 17 year old British born Bangladeshi Muslim, caught between the traditionalism of his father and his more Westernised mother, who witnessed some frightening marital violence before his parents split up when he was six. Although he claimed to be 'good at studying' at junior school, by the time he reached high school he was being 'a bit disruptive on the streets' with a multi-cultural 'crew' of Black, White and Turkish mates ('disruptions' that included both violent and property crimes, apparently). This pattern continued in school and the suspensions followed. Once drugs became implicated, he moved to his father's house in another area and a new school, where he went 'haywire'. Here, the ethnic divide was sharp, he had no White mates and fights between White and Asian groups were commonplace. Eventually excluded from his new school, his criminal career escalated to drug dealing, burglary and some serious violence, including severely beating a White boy thought to be the author of some racist graffiti and someone who was bullying a young Asian boy. This led to charges of racially aggravated assault and racially aggravated possession of a weapon, despite the victim claiming that Kamron 'never really said anything racial'. An eight months custodial remand followed before the racially aggravated elements were dropped at trial. Although this brutal attack might suggest hatred, I concluded that it was motivated not by hatred but by the felt need to avenge perceived attacks on one's community within a heavily masculinised cultural frame of reference. A small but, I think, important difference. As for his prejudice, it was directed towards asylum seekers: 'Desperados they are, mate. They are desperate for sex them. They rape girls'. But even this was modified: 'But some of them, they are alright'.

Belinda's prejudice, as we noted earlier, consisted of strong negative feelings towards various ethnic groups that had been 'learned' from her racist father through her strong identification with him. Marcus was a White man (aged 22 years) who had reluctantly pleaded guilty to a racially aggravated assault on the advice of his solicitor to avoid Crown Court, even though he claimed the fight was not racially motivated. For this he was serving a prison sentence of 30 months. From a large, 'close', 'well-known' criminal family with a reputation for violence, Marcus 'hated' school, spent his time 'messaging about with the lads' (a mixed ethnic group: 'we didn't think of it as Black or Asian then. We were all just the lads ... that's why I knew I never been racist'), left with qualifications in only one subject and got building work through a family connection. He was cautioned at age 15 for carrying an offensive weapon and got 15 months for domestic burglaries when he was aged 17. What he called a 'drunken altercation' involving him and his mate and some Asian men led to his present 'racially aggravated assault' conviction. Once again, I interpreted his violence as not hate motivated; but there was evidence of prejudice against asylum seekers and immigrants: 'We're going to work really paying for what they [asylum seekers] want ... I've never signed on the dole ... we have been paying taxes for immigrants ... they are getting more, more assistance ... [There is] loads, loads. Absolutely loads ... It's getting too much. It is too much'.

Emma (aged 28 years) was an African-Caribbean woman of mixed parentage whose 'half English/half Italian' mother's mental health problems made her unreliable and violent. Her parents split up in her first year of secondary school, which was when her previous enjoyment of school turned into a phobia, with the result she spent her time sneaking off, messing around, drinking, 'terrorising people' and stealing purses in Manchester. There she discovered other 'people like me', a reference to her lesbianism, which became the main target of the abuse she often suffered, especially from Black and Asian men. Her arrest and subsequent conviction for a racially aggravated assault followed the trading of racial and sexual slurs between her and four Asian men ('I called them Pakis and they called me nigger'; previously they had called her 'dirty lesbian'), her fighting an Asian shopkeeper when he refused to serve her, and throwing boxes around and smashing a shop window. Drink, aggressiveness, her mental health and self-harming were also causing problems by this time. All this had led to her hating not particular groups, but the place where it all happened: 'I just hate Stoke-on-Trent and the people in it are even worse. There's no jobs, they are all alcoholics and on drugs. They don't know what gay is or a transvestite. They know fuck all'. This 'hatred' is so all-encompassing that I took it to be mostly rhetoric; hence her designation as prejudiced and not hate-motivated.

I can be briefer with Nigel and Terry (see earlier). Nigel edges into this category because, despite his disclaimer that he could never discriminate, there was some evidence of prejudicial views of Asians stemming from his unhappy experiences as a young tenant with an Asian landlord – but it was a close call. Conceivably, he belongs in the O group instead. Terry too was a difficult case since his prejudices were quite particularised (differentiating between the older, settled Asians and the newer arrivals, for example) and he himself might disclaim the description much as he disclaimed the charge of racial hatred. However, the long list of his concerns about various ethnic groups suggests a tendency to generalise (something he was aware of but insisted was experientially-based) that probably warrant the label prejudice. But he remains border-line because some of his concerns can, arguably, be read through a discourse of othering rather than prejudice.

What about the four in the O group, namely, Carl, Alan, Shahid and Frank? Carl we recently encountered. With him there was no evidence of hatred and, leaving aside his diatribe against his arresting officer ('dyke', 'Black bitch') that might be described as 'aggressive othering', there was no real indication of prejudicial thinking. With Alan, despite his conviction for racially aggravated assault, all the indications (including the view of his probation officer) are that he did not think or express himself in racist terms: he denied he would ever use the word 'Paki' (that secured his conviction) because 'that word isn't in my vocabulary; his years as a violent football hooligan were about who you supported not what colour you were: 'colour never came into it'; he wore a 'Rock against Racism' badge in his punk days and would tell those 'spouting National Front garbage' to 'fuck off'. If he was now more suspicious of some groups in a post 9/11 world, he also stressed how important it is not to 'tar all people with the same brush' because 'we've all got bad apples haven't we' (for fuller accounts of Alan, see Gadd 2009 and Jefferson 2014). Shahid's comments, recounted earlier, about all being one colour would seem to absolve him from charges of both hatred and prejudice; but he was prone to othering, especially when 'he felt accused and humiliated'. As for Frank, his hatred would appear to have dissipated and his decision to leave the BNP on grounds of their racial prejudices absolves him on that score. However, his concern with being 'overrun' with immigrants suggested some othering taking place.

Summary

How might we summarise what this empirical exploration reveals about racism?

- 1) Most people do not consider themselves racist because they see this as an all-encompassing term whereas their concerns are restricted to immigration, asylum seekers or particular ethnic groups but not others;
- 2) Convictions for racially aggravated offences tell us nothing about racist motivation, although much about the unintended consequence of giving the police new powers with an inadequate definition of 'racially aggravated';
- 3) The reasons for joining or being interested in a far right party like the NF or BNP cover the spectrum from an opportunity to exercise (racial) hatred to a desire to do something about local problems in which immigration and particular ethnic groups figure prominently;
- 4) The spectrum of attitudes towards immigrants and particular ethnic groups ranges from strong expressions of hatred, including acting on these violently, through strong prejudicial feelings towards particular ethnic or immigrant groups, to the feeling that 'outsiders' should not benefit at the expense of 'insiders';
- 5) Having a racist parent with whom one identifies helps perpetuate racial prejudice; and
- 6) Racist behaviour is not a life-long condition but can fluctuate and change.

How can theory help?

Having established empirically some noticeable distinctions – between othering, prejudice and hatred – I am now in a position to see how the relevant research-based theoretical literature on racism can help us understand these findings and, at the same time, shed light on our starting point: namely, the current crisis in thinking about racism in which the term is both easily used yet commonly refused when applied to particular individuals. It should be stressed that what follows is not a critical survey of the literature but merely a selective use to illuminate my concerns. Moreover, since it is an attempt to understand the meaning of racism at the level of the individual subject, it is focused on the social psychology literature and not the sociological literature, which mostly has institutional or structural racism as its theoretical object.

The classic studies on the social psychology of racism really start post World War II and are attempts to understand the hate-filled anti-Semitism of German fascism that produced the Holocaust. The most compendious of these, based upon an eclectic combination of surveys, projective tests and case studies, was *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950). This found (to summarise a massive amount of material) that the authoritarian personality type – rigidly conventional in its values, uncritically submissive (often over-idealised) attitude towards authority figures, highly aggressive and punitive towards non-conformists – was the 'syndrome [that] comes closest to the overall picture of the high scorer ... throughout our study' (Adorno et al. 1950: 759). By 'high scorer' was meant those scoring highly on a variety of scales which all correlated highly with each other: namely, anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, political and economic conservatism and fascism. The origins of such a type were both psychic and social, or psychosocial.

Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* was first published a few years later, in 1954. In terms of understanding hatred, his 'Prejudiced Personality' was substantially the same as Adorno and colleagues' authoritarian personality. Importantly, he makes the distinction between those for whom prejudice is an incidental matter: 'merely conformative, mildly ethnocentric, and essentially unrelated to the personality as a whole' (Allport 1979: 395) and the prejudiced personality for whom prejudice is 'organic, inseparable from the life process'. Summoning in support a plethora of research studies, both longitudinal and cross-sectional, he suggests that '[U]nderlying insecurity seems to lie at the root of the [prejudiced] personality' (Allport 1979: 396). This insecurity, the result 'for some' of 'unresolved infantile conflicts with parents or siblings' or 'persistent failure in later years' (Allport 1979: 396), produces a 'crippled' ego in

need of a crutch. In such personalities, 'prejudice ... develops as an important incident in the total protective adjustment' (Allport 1979: 396), central to which is repression. Thus 'bigoted personalities' tend to display 'a sharp cleavage between conscious and unconscious layers': normal on the surface but 'underneath' showing evidence of 'intense anxiety ... buried hatred towards parents, destructive and cruel impulses' (Allport 1979: 397). Associated characteristic 'devices to bolster a weak ego' include 'Ambivalence toward parents', 'Moralism', 'Dichotomization', 'A need for definiteness', 'Externalization of conflict', 'Institutionalism' and 'Authoritarianism': 'the earmarks of a personality in whom prejudice is functionally important' (Allport 1979: 397).

Despite some differences in conceptualisation and terminology, many of the interviewees introduced earlier spring to mind when reading Allport's words. His work, too, was thoroughly psychosocial (though I cannot demonstrate that here). However, he has become known primarily as the originator of a cognitive approach to prejudice based on two key ideas that he introduced to the debate: firstly, the natural capacity of the human mind to categorise, or generalise (that is, pre-judge), in order to negotiate, or simplify, the otherwise overwhelming number of events and situations encountered daily; and, secondly, our natural tendency to 'overestimate the things one loves' (Allport 1979: 25) – Spinoza's 'love prejudice' – and to 'underprize (or actively attack) what seems to us to threaten [our own mode of existence]' (Allport 1979: 27); or, more simply, to prefer our own various 'in-groups' to 'them', the others, 'out-groups': '[P]sychologically ... the familiar [the affiliations provided by 'parents, neighbourhood, region, nation'] provides the indispensable basis of our existence' (Allport 1979: 29).

With regard to prejudice, although Allport recognises that the concept of prejudice can encompass positive as well as negative biases, he also notes that '*ethnic* prejudice [the book's effective focus] is mostly negative' (Allport 1979: 6: emphasis in original). Consequently, antipathy gets built into the definition:

Ethnic prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group. (Allport 1979: 9)

In relation to in-groups and out-groups, he adds that, although 'hostility toward out-groups helps strengthen our sense of belonging ... it is not required' (Allport 1979: 42).

What we have in these two early classic texts is substantial agreement about the origins of hatred; but also, in Allport's introduction of the new ideas of pre-judging and in-groups/out-groups, the beginning of an elision of processes that do not necessarily belong together. In other words, although Allport himself makes distinctions, noting that hostility is not a necessary component of either prejudice or preferring ones in-group to 'others' (what I call othering), his focus on 'negative ethnic prejudice' tends to undercut these distinctions. Subsequent take up of his work only worsened these elisions. Henri Tajfel (1969), for example, recognised that prejudice need not lead to negative prejudgements but was hostile to psychoanalysis and the idea of the unconscious. Consequently, for all his contributions to the cognitive dimension of prejudice, he was unable to get to grips with the emotional investment involved in extreme prejudice (or hatred) that he himself acknowledged needed to be understood (see Billig 2002). From this point on, a cognitive approach to prejudice and othering came to dominate research into racism yet without giving up the idea that it was attempting to explain the hatred involved in genocide. Herein lies one important source of the confusion between hatred and prejudice that I have argued elsewhere has bedevilled subsequent theoretical literature (Jefferson 2014) and, as happens in such cases, has produced the confusions in commonsense understandings that were manifest in our research interviews.

If the emotional dimension of hatred and the cognitive dimension of prejudice have become erroneously elided (to the detriment of properly understanding either: the notion of positive prejudice completely disappears, for example), a similar point can be made about the third process: Spinoza's 'love prejudice' or favouring our 'in-groups'. Despite 'love prejudice' being an example of a positive prejudice, once again the focus has been on hostility to out-groups, given the elision with hatred, even though, as we learnt earlier, such hostility is 'not required' to 'strengthen our sense of belonging'. This notion that there are positive as well as negative aspects to our relationship with the other is echoed in Stuart Hall's discussion of why 'difference' matters – indeed is essential – in his chapter "The Spectacle of the "Other"" (which precedes the discussion of racism). He gives four examples. In Saussurean linguistics, "*difference*" matters because it is essential to meaning: without it meaning could not exist' (Hall 1997: 234; emphasis in original). The meaning of Black, for example, is only knowable through its difference from White, not through some intrinsic qualities of blackness. From a slightly different approach to language, Bakhtin argued that meaning arises through dialogue. Thus, 'we need "*difference*" because we can only construct meaning through a dialogue with the "Other"' (Hall 1997: 235; emphasis in original). In anthropology, 'difference' matters because 'culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system' (Hall 1997: 236; emphasis in original). Finally, in psychoanalysis, Hall argues 'that the "Other" is fundamental to the constitution of the self, to us as subjects, and to sexual identity' (Hall 1997: 237; emphasis in original). Now is not the time to take up these points in detail, or to discuss the links with negative aspects of difference and thus the links made with racism. I simply wish to reiterate that othering (in the sense of differentiating self from others) is not an intrinsically negative process, much less a hateful one, and it is not the same as prejudice or prejudging something.

If we fast forward to more recent work, we find that the distinctions I have been pointing to are recognised, albeit implicitly, but the confusion has become so endemic that no attempt is made to work with the distinctions. Dalal, for instance, returns to the psychosocial tradition of the early, classic studies. He defines racism as 'anything – thought, feeling or action – that uses race as an activating or organizing principle' (Dalal 2002: 27), but quickly adds 'racism is a form of hatred of one group for another'. He then distinguishes between these two propositions saying the 'mechanisms' driving each will 'not necessarily' be the same. Here, then, is a distinction that looks very like mine between prejudice and hatred. He goes on to add aversive and institutional racism so that his final definition includes four 'very different types of things ... habits of thought ... explicit expressions of hatred and violence ... conscious or unconscious feelings of aversion...the invisible and impersonal racism structured into institutions' (Dalal 2002: 203). Four different types of thing they may be, but there is only the one term, 'racism', to capture them. The last of these, institutional or structural racism, is how sociologists have tended to define racism, with little or no dialogue with the social psychologists (such as I have been discussing) interested in the other three 'types of things'. It is small wonder that confusion reigns.

Finally, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl (1998), in a mammoth synthesising work, makes a distinction between 'ethnocentrism' – 'a form of prejudice that protects group identity in economic, social and political terms ... [and] does not in and of itself imply violence or entail legitimation for violence [but] ... is aversive' (Young-Bruehl 1998: 27, 188) – and 'ideologies of desire' (or 'orectisms' after the Greek word for desirous) – historically specific prejudices which are 'ideologically unlimited', implicate 'any marks of difference' and legitimate 'the beating, mutilating, and killing of people whose humanity has been disparaged or denied' (Young-Bruehl 1998: 27, 28, 188). In my terms, this looks much like my distinction between prejudice (with a touch of aversion) and hatred. But since, for her, modern anti-Semitism, racism, sexism and the homophobias are mostly 'orectisms' and not 'ethnocentrism', she is effectively only interested in understanding hatred.

Conclusion: Where does all this leave us?


The Introduction to *Policing the Crisis* starts thus: '[t]his book started out with 'mugging', but it has ended in a different place ... if we could abolish the word, that would have been our principal – perhaps our only – "practical proposal"' (Hall et al. 2013: 1). I now feel the same about the term 'racism'. As we saw with our interviewees, it made little sense to them when accused of racism. It failed to differentiate between those charged with racism and those who had not been; it was not a predictor of motives for joining organisations routinely regarded as racist; and, generally, it covered a spectrum from those with a preference for their own group to those full of hatred of certain groups. When we turned to the theoretical literature for assistance we found the same problem: a single term used to cover 'four very different types of things' with different 'mechanisms' underpinning each; and a divorce between sociologists and social psychologists as to the meaning of the term. Once a term has come to mean so many different things to different people – especially a term as politically loaded as racism – the time has surely come to produce more useful, meaningful terms to cover the relevant behaviour and attitudes.

My own view, based on our empirical research and supported by a reading of the relevant literature, is that hatred and prejudice are different things, with different origins, and both are different from what I call 'othering'. There is work to be done on each of these terms. For example, although there is a connection (which must be the subject of another paper) between hatred and insecure, troubled backgrounds, such backgrounds do not necessarily eventuate in hatred. Prejudices can be positive or negative, strongly held or the result of lazy generalisations. So too is the case with 'othering'. Is the chant at football matches by Tottenham Hotspur fans, 'He's one of our own, he's one of our own, Harry Kane, he's one of our own' (a reference to their goal-scoring striker, a local(ish) lad who has risen through the ranks at Spurs to the first team) positive or negative? Hunter Davies (2015) asked the question: '[i]s that Harry chant they now sing racist in any way – picking out for applause someone on the basis that he's one of us (i.e, not a bleedin' foreigner)? Could Ukip [the UK Independence Party] take it up?' Or, is it a positive example of othering: a celebration of 'us'? (Quite who belongs in 'our own' need not detain us here.) Or, perhaps, as Jonathan Liew (2015) put it recently, it is 'an elegy to something lost ... a certain melancholy, a yearning, a doleful lament for what was once commonplace but now comes along only once in a while [given the current predominance of foreign-born players in the Premiership]'. Clearing the notion of 'racism' out of the way would assist this enquiry.

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Appendix A, Table 1: Biography of interviewees according to identified life story themes (page 1/3)

<i>Identified life story themes</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Greg</i>	<i>Steve</i>	<i>Kamron</i>	<i>Belinda</i>
Biographical details					
Ethnicity: White/Black/Asian	White	White	White	Asian	White
Age	15	16	16	17	18
Family					
Step parent?	yes	yes	no	no	no
Parents' relationship: poor/violent	poor		poor	poor/violent	
Treatment of children: violent/not	not violent		?	not violent	not violent
Depressed parent(s)?					
Racist parent(s)?					racist
Size: small (0-3 siblings); large (4+)	large	large	large	large	small
Step sibling(s)	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Sibling relationships	mixed	mixed	?	?	mixed
Presence of violence and/or bullying	both				
Happy/unhappy/mixed childhood	mixed	unhappy	mixed	mixed	happy
Neighbourhood					
Local/not local born/moved out	moved out	not local	local	local	local
Safe or unsafe neighbourhood	unsafe	unsafe	unsafe	unsafe	
Had friends/felt lonely	friends	friends	friends	friends	friends
School					
Happy or unhappy time	unhappy	unhappy	unhappy	unhappy	unhappy
Bullied?					bullied
Fights/Trouble/Suspended/Excluded	F/T/S/E	F/T/S/E	F/T/S/E	F/T/S/E	
Did well or not well?	not well	not well	not well	not well	well
Employment					
Regular, spasmodic, unemployed	n/a	n/a	regular	spasmodic	spasmodic
Health					
Mental or physical problems					physical
Head 'messed up'?	no	yes			
Anxious/depressed	depressed			anxious	
Drug usage					
Early drug user?	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Problematic/dependent	p/d		p/d		
Poly user/alcohol only	alcohol only	poly user	poly user	poly user	
Criminal career					
Age started	11 or 12		12		16
Crimes: Property/Violence/Fighting	P/V	P/V/F	P/V/F	P/V/F	V
Racism					
Admitted/denied	denied	?	?	denied	admitted (?)
Some or all groups implicated	some	some	some	some	some
Othering/Prejudice/Hatred	OPH	OPH	OPH	OP	OP
Far right connection: NF/BNP	BNP				BNP
Racially aggravated conviction	no	no	no	no	no

Key

- empty box: no details provided
- ?: evidence inconclusive
- n/a: not applicable

All names are pseudonyms

Appendix A, Table 1: Biography of interviewees according to identified life story themes (page 2/3)

<i>Identified life story themes</i>	<i>Stan</i>	<i>Marcus</i>	<i>Shahid</i>	<i>Carl</i>	<i>Emma</i>
Biographical details					
Ethnicity: White/Black/Asian	White	White	Asian	White	Black
Age	19	22	22	25	28
Family					
Step parent?	yes	no	no	yes	no
Parents' relationship: poor/violent	poor/violent	?		poor	poor
Treatment of children: violent/not	?	?	violent	violent	violent
Depressed parent(s)?					depressed
Racist parent(s)?					
Size: small (0-3 siblings); large (4+)	small	large	large	small	large
Step sibling(s)	yes	no	no	yes	
Sibling relationships	?	?	good	?	mixed
Presence of violence and/or bullying		?			
Happy/unhappy/mixed childhood	unhappy	?	happy	unhappy	?
Neighbourhood					
Local/not local born/moved out	local	local	not local	local	local
Safe or unsafe neighbourhood	unsafe	both	unsafe	?	?
Had friends/felt lonely	friends	friends	friends	lonely	friends
School					
Happy or unhappy time	unhappy	unhappy	unhappy	both	unhappy
Bullied?					
Fights/Trouble/Suspended/Excluded	F/T/S/E		F/T/S		
Did well or not well?	not well	not well	well	not well	not well
Employment					
Regular, spasmodic, unemployed	unemployed	regular	spasmodic	spasmodic	unemployed
Health					
Mental or physical problems	mental			mental	mental
Head 'messed up'?	yes			yes	yes
Anxious/depressed				depressed	depressed
Drug usage					
Early drug user?	yes		yes	yes	yes
Problematic/dependent	p/d			p/d	problematic
Poly user/alcohol only	poly user		poly user	poly user	alcohol only
Criminal career					
Age started		15		15?	13?
Crimes: Property/Violence/Fighting	P/V/F	P/V/F	V	P	P/V
Racism					
Admitted/denied	admitted	denied	denied	denied	denied
Some or all groups implicated	some	some		some	
Othering/Prejudice/Hatred	OPH	OP	O	O	OP
Far right connection: NF/BNP	NF				
Racially aggravated conviction	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Key

- empty box: no details provided
- ?: evidence inconclusive
- n/a: not applicable

All names are pseudonyms

Appendix A, Table 1: Biography of interviewees according to identified life story themes (page 3/3)

<i>Identified life story themes</i>	<i>Darren</i>	<i>Alan</i>	<i>Frank</i>	<i>Nigel</i>	<i>Terry</i>
Biographical details					
Ethnicity: White/Black/Asian	White	White	White	White	White
Age	32	39	44	48	64
Family					
Step parent?	no	no	no	no	no
Parents' relationship: poor/violent	poor/violent	poor	poor/violent	poor/violent	
Treatment of children: violent/not	violent	not violent	violent	violent	
Depressed parent(s)?		depressed	?		depressed
Racist parent(s)?			racist		
Size: small (0-3 siblings); large (4+)	small	large	large	large	small
Step sibling(s)	no	no	no	no	no
Sibling relationships	poor	?	poor	?	n/a
Presence of violence and/or bullying			violence		
Happy/unhappy/mixed childhood	unhappy		unhappy	unhappy	happy
Neighbourhood					
Local/not local born/moved out	local	local	local	local	local
Safe or unsafe neighbourhood			?	?	
Had friends/felt lonely			friends	lonely	friends
School					
Happy or unhappy time	unhappy		unhappy	?	happy
Bullied?					
Fights/Trouble/Suspended/Excluded	F/T/S/E		F/T		
Did well or not well?	not well	not well	not well		well
Employment					
Regular, spasmodic, unemployed	spasmodic	spasmodic	spas/reg	spasmodic	regular
Health					
Mental or physical problems		mental		mental	mental
Head 'messed up'?	yes	yes			
Anxious/depressed		depressed		depressed	depressed
Drug usage					
Early drug user?		yes			
Problematic/dependent		problematic			
Poly user/alcohol only	alcohol only	poly user	alcohol only		
Criminal career					
Age started	10	14?	16		n/a
Crimes: Property/Violence/Fighting	P/V	P/V/F	P/V/F		
Racism					
Admitted/denied	?	denied	?	denied	denied
Some or all groups implicated	some				
Othering/Prejudice/Hatred	OPH	O	O	OP?	OP
Far right connection: NF/BNP			NF/BNP	BNP	BNP?
Racially aggravated conviction	no	yes	no	no	yes

Key

- empty box: no details provided
- ?: evidence inconclusive
- n/a: not applicable

All names are pseudonyms