

*Some findings from a qualitative study*

### **3 The nature of racial violence and harassment: some findings from a qualitative study**

#### **Introduction**

We saw earlier that an important weakness of previous national research in the area of racial violence and harassment has been the failure to provide a comprehensive picture of the different forms that racial violence and harassment can take. The BCS sweeps of 1987 and 1991 and PSI's third national survey on minority ethnic groups (Brown 1984) only examined the extent of racially motivated crime. As a result, 'low-level' racial harassment in the form of racial abuse and other forms of insulting and intimidating behaviour were neglected. This form of racial harassment if it persists over a long period of time might be equally serious as physical attacks.

This chapter presents the findings from a qualitative study which sought to explore fully the nature of each of the different forms of racial violence and harassment and in particular gather more information on aspects of 'low-level' racial harassment.<sup>1</sup> The chapter begins by seeking to ascertain a measure of the different forms of racial violence and harassment and thereby get an overall estimate of the scale of the problem. People were asked whether they had been physically attacked; had had property damaged; or been verbally insulted or threatened for reasons to do with their 'race' or colour in the last twelve months. The number of times each type of incident occurred was then recorded. Respondents who had been victims of such racial violence and harassment were asked to describe each individual incident as fully as possible. For each incident, questions were asked about where it took place; who was responsible, including whether the perpetrator was known to the victim beforehand; and, whether the victim took any action to address the problem, particularly if they reported the incident to the police.

#### ***Research design***

The findings reported from the qualitative research on racial violence and harassment formed part of a larger piece of research that comprised issues to do with ethnic identity, social care and health. The report on the research

**Table 3** Details of interviews

Location	Caribbean Walthamstow Birmingham	Pakistani Walthamstow Birmingham	Bangladeshi Whitechapel Birmingham	Punjabi Gravesend Southall	Gujarati Leicester Southall
Depth interviews	15	8	8	8	8
Group discussions	10	5	2	5	5
First generation	10	4	4	4	4
Second generation	15	9	6	9	9
Men	10	8	5	6	6
Women	15	5	5	7	7
Total	25	13	10	13	13

undertaken on ethnic identity is reported in another volume (Modood et al 1994).

A total of 74 respondents participated in the research. The number of interviews that were carried out in each ethnic group was as follows.

- 25 with African Caribbeans
- 13 with Gujaratis
- 13 with Punjabis
- 13 with Pakistanis
- 10 with Bangladeshis

Of these 74 people, 35 were men and 39 were women. Twenty-six of the respondents were 'first generation' migrants defined as individuals who were born, received their schooling or worked until the age of 16 in their country of origin, and migrated to Britain as adults. Forty-eight of the respondents were members of the 'second generation' defined as individuals who were born in, or at least had received their schooling in Britain. Forty-seven of the 74 people were interviewed individually while the other 27 took part in group discussions.

Each of the minority ethnic groups were selected in the spring of 1993 in two locations where they formed a significant and settled population. This is an important point when it comes to studying racial violence and harassment because it is suspected there is much variation between areas and the two areas selected for each of the groups may not have been typical. The respondents were selected in a number of ways. The Punjabis and Gujaratis were selected by knocking on people's doors in the designated

area and recruiting respondents until the desired number of each generation and gender was reached. The African Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi individual interviewees were selected through non-religious community organisations. Participants of the group discussions were found by a market research agency according to the two sift criteria laid down by the research team and by going to areas where it was known the communities resided.

First generation South Asians were offered the opportunity to be interviewed in their community languages. All 16 of them were interviewed in this way. Individuals were questioned through semi-structured interviews or through group discussion by an ethnically matched interviewer. The group discussions lasted an hour and a half whilst the individual interviews were between 45 and 60 minutes in length. Of this time, an average of ten minutes were taken up with questions to do with racial violence and harassment, although this clearly varied depending on the respondent's personal experience of the problem. The researcher in the group discussions took detailed notes during the course of the discussion as well as tape-recording the interview. In the individual interviews with the African Caribbeans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, the same procedure was adopted while for the Punjabis and Gujaratis detailed notes were undertaken during the course of the interview and written up afterwards.

### **The overall prevalence of racial violence and harassment**

As shown by Table 4, about a third, that is 22, of the total of 74 respondents had suffered some form of racial violence or harassment in the past twelve months. The South Asians in the sample had a much higher rate of victimisation than African Caribbeans. Two-fifths that is 20, of the 49 South Asian respondents said they had experienced some form of racial violence or harassment in the past year compared to less than a tenth, that is two, of the 25 African Caribbean respondents. On the other hand, there was no significant difference in victimisation rates by gender.<sup>2</sup>

Each of the constituent parts of racial violence and harassment were then analysed in further detail by asking the victims about what insights they could provide about the location of such incidents and the type of person who engaged in such acts of racial violence and harassment, including whether the perpetrator was known to the victim beforehand. Finally, the victim was asked whether they took any action to address the problem, particularly if they reported the incident to the police.

### **Racial abuse and threatening behaviour**

Table 4 shows that 18 of the 74 respondents had been racially abused or threatened in the past 12 months. It was found that almost all of the 22

**Table 4 The number of individuals who have been racially attacked or harassed in the last 12 months by ethnic group**

Ethnic group	Number of people in ethnic group	Overall number of people experiencing some form of racial violence or harassment	Number of people racially abused or threatened	Number of people racially attacked	Number of people whose property damaged due to their 'race'
Gujarati	13	3	3	1	1
Punjabi	13	9	7	3	0
Pakistani	13	3	2	1	1
Bangladeshi	10	5	5	2	2
African Caribbean	25	2	1	0	1
Total	74	22	18	7	5

respondents who said they had suffered some form of racial violence and harassment had experienced what is commonly known as its 'low-level' component.

***The location of incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour***

Table 5 shows that 18 respondents suffered a total of 24 incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour in the last 12 months. Some of the 18 respondents recounted multiple incidents of victimisation at different locations. However, the problem of repeat victimisation was not adequately addressed within this qualitative study. The records of the racially motivated incidents show that the respondents often reduced what was a series of several incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour to one single discrete incident. To illustrate the precise yet diverse nature of these types of incident, all of these accounts are recorded below.

***Racial abuse at work and college***

Seven of the total of 24 incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour took place at work. The perpetrators tended to be both customers and fellow workers.

One Gujarati man said he and other Gujaratis had been racially abused on several occasions by fellow white workers who objected to their speaking Gujarati together. The incidents had been reported to the supervisor and manager on a number of occasions but no action had been taken. As he

**Table 5 The location of incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour**

Location	Number of incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour
Place of work/ education	7
In or near the home	3
Public transport	2
Place of entertainment	3
In the street	9

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n = 24  
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said, ‘they just turned a blind eye to it all’. He continued that the situation facing Gujarati workers at his place of work was intolerable, particularly when management could have undertaken measures to address the problem.

A Punjabi woman shopkeeper was another victim of racial abuse at work, but this time on the telephone. This had occurred at least three times in the last three months. This woman felt particularly perturbed about these phone calls because they occurred only when her husband (who worked with her) was out. On occasions when her husband had picked up the phone the caller would stay on the line but would not speak which led her to suspect the caller was the same person making racist calls to her.

Another Punjabi woman who worked as a carer in an old people’s home was racially abused by an elderly white patient. She said this patient had made comments such as ‘don’t touch me’ and ‘I don’t like blacks’ to her. This woman said she had little confidence in management taking action against this type of racial abuse and had consequently decided against reporting these incidents. Instead she had come to the conclusion that she would have to accept that incidents of racial abuse were ‘all part and parcel of the job of caring’.

Similarly, an African Caribbean woman who worked as a home care officer said she was racially abused by a patient. Again, she had decided against reporting the perpetrator to management because she felt the racial abuse and threatening behaviour was an inevitable aspect of ‘having to look after mentally ill patients’.

One incident of racial abuse occurred at school. The incident involved a female Bengali teacher who was racially abused by a fellow teacher in the staff room. She had been sitting with a number of other Bengali teachers showing pictures of a wedding she had recently attended and speaking in

Bengali when the offending teacher came in and said ‘speaking bloody Bengali again, speak English’.

A Punjabi woman narrated how she had to experience racially insulting remarks from a white student in her class who ‘told everyone in the class that her father had been on holiday and looked like one of them, pointing at me and other Asian students in the class... "a Paki"’.

A Pakistani man said that college was a location where incidents of racial abuse were commonplace. He explained how jokes about his ‘race’ and colour were a regular and integral part of his college life. He recounted numerous incidents where fellow white students had made racist jokes. Indeed, even some of his own white friends engaged in the telling of such jokes. Although he sometimes publicly objected, he felt it was very difficult to do so continually because you would then be considered ‘a poor loser’.

#### *Racial abuse in or near the home*

Of the 24 incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour, three had occurred in the area where the victim lived.

One Gujarati woman and her family began to suffer racial harassment almost immediately they moved to a predominantly white residential area. The woman stated that ‘we immediately became the gossip of the whole road... we’ve been stared at, got complaints from them over minor rebuilding work to the house and for playing music too loud’.

The white neighbours complained to the local council, asking them to investigate their complaints. This woman said she and her family had chosen to ignore this racial harassment rather than report it to anyone but acknowledged that it had caused them ‘unwanted misery’.

A Bengali man recounted how he had been called ‘Paki’ and threatened by a white person who lived on the same road as him. He had initially decided to inform the police but had been dissuaded by a friend who said that he might suffer possible reprisals.

A Punjabi man also recounted an incident of racial harassment where he was spat at by a white youth who went to the same school and lived in the same road as himself.

#### *Racial abuse on public transport*

Of the 24 incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour, two had occurred on public transport. One Punjabi man recounted how he was spat at by a gang of white male youths when he was getting off a train at a mainline London station.

Similarly, another Punjabi man described how he had been racially abused by a group of white youths when waiting for a train.

*Racial abuse at a place of entertainment*

Of the 24 incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour, three had taken place at a place of entertainment. Two of the Punjabi women interviewed were racially abused by bouncers at a Central London nightclub who then proceeded to refuse them entry on the grounds that 'they were going to restrict the number of Asians coming into the club'. One of these Punjabi women was refused access to five Central London clubs in one night whilst out with some South Asian friends.

Finally, a Bengali man was racially abused, chased and threatened by a gang of white youths at a fair. He reported the incident to a policeman at the fair but the officer took no action.

*Racial abuse in the street*

Nine of the 24 incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour had occurred in the street. This was the most common location of incidents of 'low-level' racial harassment. All the incidents were similar in that the respondents had been racially abused or threatened by people unknown to them beforehand.

A Punjabi woman was called 'Paki' by a group of white youths when walking down the street while a Punjabi man was racially abused on the street by passing white youths in a car whilst walking with a South Asian friend. Similarly, one Pakistani man was called 'Paki' by passing white youths in a car. A Bengali woman was called 'Paki' by white schoolboys. A Bengali man was racially abused by a number of white people on the street. He said that he had been racially abused because he had a job and dressed well when going to work. These white people would often say 'look at that "Paki" taking our jobs'.

Four of the nine incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour in the street involved the police. These four cases were different from the other incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour recorded in this study in that the victims did not give any specific reason for thinking that racism was the motive for the police behaviour. However, after an analysis of these incidents it appears that the police behaviour in all these cases was at the very least unreasonable, and that racial antipathy almost certainly played a part in their harassing these particular people. Interestingly, the four incidents of police stops involved South Asians rather than African Caribbeans, which seems to go against the available evidence (see Smith and Gray 1985 and Shaw 1994).

The incidents included one where a Gujarati man in his car was stopped by the police and asked to open the boot. When they found hammers and

chisels in a toolbox, they gave him a ‘warning’ for ‘carrying offensive weapons’ despite establishing that he was a carpenter by trade.

A Gujarati woman explained how she felt she had been racially harassed by the police when she was stopped and had her car searched for drugs. She outlined how the police treated her in a rude manner and continually questioned whether she was the owner of the vehicle. As she recalled, ‘they searched my car for half an hour and kept asking me whose car it was’.

She also recounted several other incidents where ‘on the way back from Central London, we get stopped all the time, especially if there are more than four Asians in the car. Every time we go to or are coming back from Central London this happens.’

Another Gujarati woman gave an example of where she had been stopped by the police who then questioned her competency to drive. She recounted several similar incidents that her friends had also experienced.

A Punjabi man recalled one incident where he was stopped by the police.

I got stopped by the police for carrying a cricket bat. It was in a cover in a sports bag. The policeman came up to me and said, ‘Excuse me son, can I have a look at your bat?’ and began shaking it.

This youth perceived this incident as being part of the wider pattern of racial harassment of South Asian youth by the police who ‘suspected they were up to no good’.

### ***Perpetrators***

Table 6 shows that almost all the people racially abused or threatened in or near their home or at work or study knew who the perpetrator was before the incident took place. On the other hand, none of the people who had been racially abused or threatened on public transport, in places of entertainment or in the street knew the identity of the perpetrators. In almost every incident of ‘low level’ racial harassment, the perpetrators were young white males.

### ***Action taken***

The victims were then asked what action they had taken when they were racially abused or threatened. Only one individual reported an incident of racial abuse or threatening behaviour to the police. A Bengali man had gone to the police and told them that he had been racially abused and threatened by a group of white youths at a fair. The police decided to take no action. In another incident, following complaints from teaching staff, the school authorities decided to dismiss a teacher who had made racially abusive remarks towards a fellow member of staff.

**Table 6 The identification of perpetrators by location**

Location	Number of incidents where the victim knew perpetrator
Work/ education	6 from 7
In or near the home	3 from 3
Public transport	0 from 2
Place of entertainment	0 from 3
In the street	0 from 9

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n = 24 (18 respondents recounted a total of 24 incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour).  
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### **Racial attacks**

The British Crime Survey states that ‘[South] Asians and African Caribbeans often reported that there was a racial element in violent incidents against them’. Thirty-seven per cent of all violent incidents against South Asians were felt to be racially motivated compared with 27 per cent of all violent incidents against African Caribbeans in the respondents’ view. In addition, the relative incidence of racially motivated attacks on South Asians and African Caribbeans tended to differ to some extent by location.<sup>3</sup> South Asians reported a high incidence of racially motivated assaults in or around the home and in the street whereas African Caribbeans reported a high incidence of such types of assault at work and in clubs as well as in the street. Hence, for South Asians 64 per cent of all assaults in or around the home were felt to be racially motivated compared to 18 per cent of African Caribbeans. Both groups had a high incidence of racially motivated assaults in the street (53 per cent and 58 per cent respectively). However, 34 per cent of assaults at work and 24 per cent of assaults in clubs were thought to be racially motivated by African Caribbeans compared to 7 per cent and 5 per cent of South Asians in these locations (Aye Maung and Mirrlees-Black 1994: 15). Table 4 shows that seven of the 74 people interviewed in our own study said they had been physically attacked because of their ‘race’ or colour in the past year. All the seven people who had been racially attacked were South Asians.

**Table 7 The location of incidents of racial attacks**

Location	Number of incidents of people racially attacked
Place of work/education	0
In or near the home	1
Public transport	1
Place of entertainment	0
In the street	5

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n = 7 (None of the respondents recounted multiple incidents of physical attack in the past year)  
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***The location of incidents of racial attacks***

Table 7 shows that five of the seven racial attacks occurred in the street, one in or near the home and one on public transport.

*A racial attack in or near the home*

One person was physically attacked near where he lived. A Bengali man recounted how he was constantly harassed and racially abused on the estate where he lived in Wapping, east London. He felt it was because he was only the second non-white person on the estate and therefore isolated and an easy target for white racists. This man was not only verbally abused, but had bricks thrown through his windows and was constantly being ‘kicked and punched’. However, he has since been moved off the estate and feels he is living in safer accommodation.

*A racial attack on public transport*

A Punjabi man explained how he was attacked by a group of white youths when he and some friends went to the aid of some young South Asians who were being racially abused and threatened in a bus garage. He recounted that the police were called but took no action against the white youths who continued to call him ‘Paki’ in their presence. Indeed, not only was there no action taken against the white youths by the police, one of the policeman actually began to racially insult him. And he continued ‘when he was searching me, the policeman saw a chain around my neck with a picture of a Sikh God with a turban and beard and said "he needs a shave doesn't he?"’. In the end, the man said the police took no action against the white

youths despite knowing 'it's a known skinhead haunt' and he felt they had been unsympathetic to him and his situation.

*Racial attacks in the street*

Five of the seven individuals were physically attacked in the street. A Gujarati man was beaten up by 'a gang of white boys' who called him 'Paki'. A Pakistani man was walking with a friend when he was physically attacked by three white boys with a brick. A Bengali woman was 'pushed and punched' by a group of white boys who called her 'Paki'. A Punjabi woman recounted how she and her mother were attacked in a subway by four white youths who then went on to steal all their belongings. In recounting the incident she highlighted graphically the nature of the attack:

I was taking my mum to the clinic. I had a gold necklace on. Four white youths started following us... we knew they were following us but kept on walking. When we got to the subway, they jumped us... called us 'Pakis' and beat me and my mum up, stole everything and ran away.

Another Punjabi woman was attacked by a white man who also racially abused her while attempting to steal a gold necklace. She said that £50 worth of damage was caused to the necklace.

*Perpetrators*

On the whole, the people who carried out these racial attacks were again groups of young white males, including some of school age. The attackers were unknown to the victims in every instance apart from the case of the Bengali man who was racially harassed and attacked near his home.

*Action taken*

In only two of the seven cases of physical attack were the police contacted. The reasons for not reporting the incidents to the police are covered elsewhere in the report (see page 38). The two people who did contact the police about the physical attacks were both dissatisfied with the police response. As we saw earlier, the Punjabi youth who was physically attacked by a group of white youths at a bus garage, alleged that the police were not only unhelpful in dealing with the incident, but had also racially insulted him. In the second case, where the woman had a gold chain damaged, she said the police were 'not helpful at all'.

It is worth noting that the 1988 British Crime Survey found that satisfaction after reporting to the police was lower among ethnic minorities than among white people:

61 per cent of white victims said they were 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied with the way the police dealt with the matter, as against 49 per cent of Afro-Caribbeans

and 44 per cent of [South] Asian victims. Both Afro-Caribbean and [South] Asian victims were more likely than whites to feel that the police did not do enough. Afro-Caribbean victims more often perceived impoliteness or unpleasantness on the part of the police, and they were more likely to feel that the police should have apprehended the offender. [South] Asian victims were relatively more dissatisfied because the police did not appear interested. (Mayhew, Elliot and Dowds 1989: 28-29)

### **Racially motivated damage to property**

Table 4 showed that five of the 74 people said they had had their property damaged in the past year for reasons to do with their race or colour. In four of the five incidents, the victims were South Asians.

#### *Damage to the house*

A Pakistani man was a victim of continual racial harassment over a period of five years from different white, male youths who in the most extreme case had thrown stones and broken the windows of his house.

A Bengali woman had the windows of her house smashed and a fire started on her front doormat by a group of white youths.

We have already heard the case of a Bengali man who was continually harassed, racially abused and attacked, being one of only two non-white people living on the estate. This man had also had his windows broken by white youths throwing bricks.

#### *Damage to the car*

A Gujarati man said he had his car broken into on several occasions in the past year. He strongly suspected at least some of these incidents were racially motivated because several white people who lived near him had often remarked about him and other South Asians as being "show-offs"... They think their white friends are forced to break into cars because of poverty and unemployment.'

An African Caribbean woman had a brick thrown at her car window by a white man shouting racial abuse.

### ***Perpetrators***

The victims of racially motivated damage to property were asked to describe the people who had undertaken these acts and whether they knew them beforehand. In all three of the incidents where the house had been damaged, the victims identified the perpetrators as being young, white males who lived in the same residential area. In the two incidents where the victim's car was damaged the perpetrator was unknown.

### ***Action taken***

Three of the five incidents where the property of the victim was damaged as a result of a racial motive were reported to the police. However, in all these cases, the victims were dissatisfied with the action taken. The individual who had his car damaged on several occasions felt 'the police were of no use' and he had little confidence in them dealing with the matter effectively. Similarly, the person who had been racially harassed consistently for the past five years argued he had reported many of these incidents to the police and had even sought to resolve the problem through political channels via his local Labour Party but 'to no avail'. He felt his situation to be beyond hope and said 'no-one could help'.

The response of the police to the third incident which was reported to them was particularly disturbing. An African Caribbean woman who had a brick thrown breaking her car window while also being racially abused by a white man was told by the investigating police officer that he was not going to take any action against the perpetrator because the brick had not hit her and he was coming to the end of his shift and did not wish to do any further paperwork. The police officer dismissed the woman's request to take action against the man for racially abusing her as being the equivalent of calling someone overweight. He told her that if she wished to pursue the incident further, she would have to contact the perpetrator herself.

Consequently, the African Caribbean woman brought her brother along with a tape recorder to get the man to admit on tape what he had done. However, the white man, although admitting to the incident, proceeded to throw another brick, breaking the brother's car window. The brother responded by throwing the brick through the window of the white man's house. At this, the white man went into the house and came out with a knife and threatened the brother. By this time the police had been called again; they arrested the brother of the African Caribbean woman but took no action against the white man. Although in the end no charges were made against either party, this incident was particularly worrying because the failure of the police officers to address the initial complaint led directly to an escalation of the problem and a further offence being committed.

### **The non-reporting of incidents of racial violence and harassment to the police**

Those people who had suffered any form of racial violence and harassment but had not reported it to the police were asked to explain the reasons for their decision. Broadly speaking, the study found that respondents did not report incidents of racial harassment to the police for three reasons.

- Having to live, work and learn beside the people who racially harassed them meant there was a danger of reprisals and further harassment if the incidents were reported. Hence, many felt they would only worsen the situation by reporting the perpetrators to the police.
- People did not believe that incidents of racial harassment would be dealt with effectively by the police. This view was reinforced for some by their own personal experiences with the police where incidents of racial harassment had not been investigated thoroughly. Some respondents also felt the police were unlikely to treat those incidents of ‘low-level’ racial harassment seriously because they refused to recognise a pattern of repeat victimisation and instead tended to treat such incidents in isolation thereby ‘trivialising them’.
- The police were regarded by some of the people interviewed as being ‘part of the problem’ of racial violence and harassment rather than an organisation capable of dealing with it effectively.

### **Summary**

This chapter has sought to explore the nature of each of the constituent parts of racial violence and harassment. Attention has been particularly paid to the wide range of incidents that constitute what is referred to as ‘low level’ racial harassment. The study found that about a third of all respondents had suffered some form of racial violence and harassment in the past year. South Asians were more likely to have been victims of racial violence and harassment than African Caribbeans.

A quarter of all respondents said they had been racially abused or threatened in the last twelve months. These incidents of racial abuse and threatening behaviour occurred in a wide variety of locations that included the victim’s place of work or study; in or near the home; places of entertainment; while using public transport and in the street. Whether the victims were likely to have known the perpetrators beforehand was dependent on the location. Almost every person who had been racially abused or threatened in their place of work or study or in or near the home knew the perpetrator beforehand whereas none of those who had been racially abused or threatened in the street, on public transport or in a place of entertainment did so. Four of the victims reported they had been racially insulted or threatened by police officers. The type of person who engaged in this ‘low level’ racial harassment tended to be almost always a young white male, acting as part of a group.

These incidents were rarely reported to any official body. Only two of the 24 incidents of racial abuse were reported by the victims. The one person

who reported it to the police was disappointed by their response. On the other hand, racial abuse directed at a Bengali teacher by a fellow member of the teaching staff did result in the dismissal of the offender by the school authorities.

About one in ten people reported they had been racially attacked in the past year. Most of these racial attacks constituted common assaults rather than serious woundings. On the whole, racial attacks tended to occur in the street and were carried out by groups of young white males. Two of the seven cases of racial attack were reported to the police. Both the victims revealed their dissatisfaction with the response of the police in addressing the problem.

Five of the 74 respondents reported that they had been victims of racially motivated damage to property. In most of these cases, this had involved the breaking of windows of the victim's house or car. However, in one case, a fire was started on the front doormat of a woman's house. In the three cases of racially motivated damage to the house, the victim identified the perpetrators as being young white males who lived in the same residential areas. Three of the five cases were reported to the police, but the victim tended to be disappointed with the response of the police. Indeed in one case, not only did the police officer fail to address the initial complaint, but their refusal to do so led directly to an escalation of the problem and another offence being committed.

## **Notes**

1. It needs to be reiterated that 'low-level' racial harassment is difficult to capture in quantitative research because of the wide range of incidents that it can encompass. A number of local studies have made an attempt to capture this form of racial violence and harassment by asking questions about a specific type of incident that is considered to be indicative of this form of racial harassment (see Walsh 1987). As a result, it is contended that you can get at least a reasonable estimate of the extent of the problem of 'low-level' racial harassment. However, it is extremely difficult to find an incident which is indicative of all the types of incident that can potentially fall into this category. As a result, you are likely to get only a partial picture of the extent of this form of racial harassment. There is no doubt that it is problematic to find a wording which manages to encompass the various types of incident without asking questions on each type of incident. Therefore, a question that seeks to tap into this form of racial harassment effectively must be sufficiently comprehensive to capture incidents as wide-ranging as verbal abuse, malicious complaints, spitting, graffiti, telephone harassment, racist mail and other types of nuisance behaviour. It is believed that the present study, by asking a question which sought to be wide-ranging in its scope, has attained this and thereby gathered a relatively comprehensive picture of the nature of this form of racial harassment.

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2. Although statistical tests were carried out in this study, the conclusions based on these should be treated with caution because of the non-representative nature of the sample.
3. The British Crime Survey notes that this may be because 'Afro-Caribbeans work and socialise more in mixed ethnic settings' (Mayhew, Aye Maung and Mirrlees-Black 1993: 87).