

1

Race, Housing and Community

Introduction

This book seeks to critically analyse the story of race, housing and community cohesion. They have different meanings for different audiences. This is not surprising since race, housing and community cohesion do not especially lend themselves to a sterile analysis. The problem with these debates is that there is very little end product resulting from the critique of race and community cohesion.

Some have argued that community cohesion should be regarded as the antithesis of multiculturalism. As we will see in more detail later in this chapter, community cohesion is sometimes viewed as bleaching race from public policy debates and replacing it with a much more insipid fluid. There is a level of concurrence with this perspective. However, community cohesion should not be regarded as neutral. Rather the opposite. It is a highly ideological response to race during a remarkable and politicised period in our history. The concept has been influential in public policy debates in shaping the direction, content and trajectory of travel.

Race, Housing & Community: Perspectives on Policy & Practice, First Edition.

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Housing has been a key metaphor for race and community cohesion. Indeed, housing publications have illuminated the discourse on race and more latterly, community cohesion. Policy analysts have generated research, guidance and impact measures on race and community cohesion. Practitioners need to utilise academic research and policy guidance in making sense of conflict for public resources between and within communities.

So much for the reduced significance of race and community cohesion in recent years. There has never been a prescient time to discuss these concepts in relation to housing. The book provides an interpretation of housing, race and community cohesion in a highly politicised and fluid policy context. It is designed to initiate discussion and debate. This should not be esoteric and limited to a group of academics. Rather, the objective is to bridge academic and policy audiences in the hope that this fusion provides a basis for a new agenda to discuss these topics.

This first chapter will place the book in context. We will assess how academic contributions to race and housing reflected national policy imperatives and provided a context to discussion about the impact minorities have on housing and neighbourhoods. This is not so much about passive responses but the contention is that academic research was shaped by public policy. To make sense of this and also provide a context, housing and race will be explored from 1945. Necessarily we will be selective but the timeframe we review is important given that the first phase of minority migration to the UK took place during the 1950s and 1960s. The contributions will be grouped into four distinct categories: passive culturalism, choice and constraint, social conflict, politics and power, and cultural resistance. They are not clinically sequential but do reflect broad periods in the post-war period. Race and housing research has been shaped by the choice/constraint paradigm. Here it is argued that this has been more of a hindrance rather than a help.

An early note about race

Before continuing on to discuss race and housing, it is important to clarify our understanding of the term race. This is a deeply contested concept. Though extensively used in literature, the roots of race suggest that it is flawed as an analytical concept (see Back and Solomos, 2000, for an overview of theories of race).

It could be argued that earlier studies of minority communities accepted the notions of both race and race relations (Banton, 1955; Glass, 1960; Patterson, 1963; Rex and Moore, 1967). Though there was disagreement about the precise locus and development of 'race,' these publications shared the view that race could be analysed, largely within a framework of interaction between the dominant white communities and new immigrants from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent.

Research and subsequent publications influenced a discussion about phenotype differences between groups. It has been suggested that the concept of race is based on a biologically determinist concept (Miles, 1982). Indeed, Britain's imperialist adventures in the nineteenth century had been partly predicated on the application of race in this way. The concept of race and 'racial' ideology supported the subjugation of people and communities across the British Empire, the assumption being that British people (being white) were superior to these groups (being non-white). Indeed, Patterson's title *Dark Strangers* is loaded with political and racist imagery (Patterson, 1963). Banton (1967, 1997) has been an influential proponent of race relations theory. The focus of his work is the study of diverse groups in society based on cultural difference, the development of relations between different racial categories and a narrative about the usage of race. Developing this framework further he argues that six stages of race relations can be deduced: institutionalised contact, acculturation, domination, paternalism, integration and pluralism (Banton, 1967). This theoretical paradigm (sometimes known as the race relations problematic) appears to closely parallel public policy priorities on race relations.

Rex's theory of race relations is grounded in the seminal publication *Race Relations in Sociological Theory* (Rex, 1983). His model is based on social conflict. It views race relations as being structured by conditions existing within society including competition over scarce resources (such as access to housing), class exploitation, cultural segregation, varying group access to power, and minorities filling the role of an underclass within an urban context. This type of analysis borrows significantly from the work of Weber (1976). As we will see later when reviewing race and housing literature, Rex and his associates were especially interested in differential access to housing, education and employment markets and how racial discrimination led to the formation of political action that was disconnected from class conflict (see Rex and Tomlinson, 1979).

Though employing different approaches to race relations theory, both Banton and Rex acknowledge the concept of race and the existence of race

relations. This has been strongly disputed by a number of academics and activists. For Miles (1982; 1995) race is an ideologically constructed term that forms the basis for racism and the domination of groups of people. Those that use the term have given it a dangerous legitimacy. The problem with race as an analytical category is best summarised by Guillaumin:

Whatever the theoretical foundations underlying the various interpretations of 'racial' relations, the very use of such a distinction tends to imply the acceptance of some essential difference between types of social relation, some, somewhere, being specifically racial. Merely to adopt the expression implies a belief that 'races' are real or correctly apprehensible, or at the best that the idea of race is uncritically accepted ...' (cited in Miles, 1995: 72)

Miles further suggests that the concept of race is a distraction from the importance of class. Whilst recognising that capitalist societies need a mobile and reserve army of labour (which may be racialised) to meet requirements of capital accumulation, there is no room in the analysis of race as driver for progressive change (Miles, 1982). Miles concedes that race is a term that is used in everyday language. He also agrees that the term has been reclaimed by black activists since the 1960s as a form of resistance against racism. However, it remains an ideological construct and only serves to confuse the primacy of class and economics.

The importance of the economy is further stressed in explanations for post-war migration to the UK. Castles and Kosack in a classic study of the subject viewed immigration from poor to rich countries as an essential tool to support capitalist expansion (Castles and Kosack, 1973). The same point is made by Sivanandan who suggests that Britain's imperialist past effectively underdeveloped the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent (Sivanandan, 1982). The economies were in such poor condition by the time of decolonisation that they created 'push' factors for people to migrate to seek new jobs. Peach suggests that Caribbean migration was closely linked to the needs of the British economy in the post-war period. People settled in areas where there was a labour shortage. Once labour shortages had eased Caribbean migration slowed down (Peach, 1968).

Reviewing patterns of minority settlement in the UK demonstrates the validity of economic explanations of migration. Minorities continue to be concentrated in metropolitan areas. In effect, they were a replacement labour force for the British economy (Miles, 1982; Smith, 1989).

The analysis by Miles is the most concerted attempt to theorise an explicitly Marxist analysis of race but there are weaknesses in his approach (see Solomos, 1986 for a detailed discussion). The reluctance to discuss the progressive role of culture and ideology is a serious problem. Black politics both in the United States and the UK have used these components to reference radical initiatives against the State. For example, the Notting Hill Carnival started as a celebration of Caribbean culture but became a point of resistance against heavy handed police tactics in the 1970s and 1980s. More recently Islamophobia in the UK has led to Islam being employed by some British Muslims as a form of cultural resistance against growing acculturation. Whilst accepting that race is a pejorative concept in common sense usage, culture and ideology (that may be bounded by references to a generic black identity or faith) are key agents for change and resistance used by minority groups. Miles' reluctance is based on a Marxist reductionism which superimposes class as the most important reference point for discussing race. This, too, is limiting in the same way as the earlier discussion of race is redundant.

The ready acceptance of race as a concept has also been criticised as reifying group behaviour for 'racial' groups. To this end it fuels debates that research has led to 'common sense' understanding of minority groups based on racist and stereotypical assumptions (Sivanandan, 1982; CCCS, 1982, especially chapters by Lawrence). There are a number of specific charges levelled at Rex and Banton. The most important is the pathologies used to account for the behaviour of minority groups. For example, 'Afro-Caribbean' youth are variously described as having a 'criminalised dreadlock sub-culture' (cited in Lawrence, 1982). Asian groups are at once viewed as being passive and yet possessing cultural bootstraps that will support them in British society. The contrast with 'Afro-Caribbean' groups is striking.

If the West Indian is plagued by self-doubt ... and seeks a culture which will give him a sense of identity, the Asians have religions and cultures and languages of which they are proud and which may prove surprisingly and suited to the demands of a modern industrial society. (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979: 117)

Normative assumptions and ascribed group behaviours may considerably weaken race as a concept. Rex and Tomlinson's reification of African-Caribbean and Asian communities is a case in point. Research does not analyse the differences within a group shaped by gender, age and

class. Neither does the research focus on the modes of collective resistance within minority communities against racism, harassment and fascist attacks in the post-war period (Sivanandan, 1982; Lawrence, 1982; Gilroy, 1987).

The reification of minority groups has been a strong influence in public policy debates. This, combined with the importance attached to culture and resistance within black politics from at least the 1960s, helps to explain why concepts of 'white', 'black' and to a lesser extent 'brown' are still widely used (for example the Housing Corporation's *Black* and Minority Ethnic Housing Policy; *black* led housing associations).

It is advisable to take a practical and informed view of race. First, research has shown the importance of culture in informing the identity of minority communities across the country. Sivanandan provides a vivid account of culture and black resistance in the post-war period. It seems that that culture dissociated from the racist and biological use of race needs to be included for meaningful discussion (see Sivanandan, 1982; Fryer, 1984; Gilroy, 1987). Second, culture should also be celebrated in its own right as adding diversity within communities and providing choice. A cultural approach in social housing helps to meet specific and nuanced needs within groups. Third, culture should also be viewed as a form of social resistance when collective interests are challenged (Bourne and Sivanandan, 1980; Sivanandan, 1982; Lawrence, 1982). For example, this was utilised by minority groups to champion black led housing associations as a response to the failure of housing providers to meet needs; it informed analysis of riots and rebellions, most noticeably in 1981 and 1985, as well as culture, which can currently be seen in the way Islam is being used as a rallying point for Muslims in the fevered political climate in which we now live. Finally, race and racism are used in everyday language within policy and practice communities. These terms are unavoidable and should be at least acknowledged and justified by researchers working in the field.

An understanding of race is critically important. Race has been, and remains, a highly contested concept. However, it is, along with culture, vital in moving debates forward. This is especially crucial within the current policy and political climate given the discussion about identity, citizenship and territory as ushered in by the 2001 riots (Home Office, 2001), the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, and the 2005 bombings on the transport network in London. Race and culture should not be regarded as esoteric concepts but fundamental to the future direction of society.

This book is about race and housing. At the outset we need to understand the framework for key debates and to this end we will now review a selection. In doing so we suggest that there are four different typologies on race and housing literature. This closely mirrors public policy interventions that help to understand sequencing and content.

Passive culturalism

It could be argued that the first and earliest strand of research on race and housing has been termed passive culturalism and is often associated (though not exclusively) with studies undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s. The approach is characterised by an anthropological method to studying newly emerging minority communities and an absence of the discussion of power, conflict and racism.

The context is large scale immigration from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent in the post-1945 period which was concentrated in major urban centres of England. At this point it should be noted that a black presence in Britain had been recorded for many centuries and publications have celebrated the role, presence and resistance of these established groups before 1945 (for example, Fryer, 1984). However, the point we are making here is that post-war immigration helped to fuel the perception about adverse neighbourhood change in urban centres. This became so unsettling to politicians and policy makers in the 1950s that Churchill considered using the slogan 'Keeping Britain White' to mobilise popular support at a General Election (Layton-Henry, 1984). A common misconception was that the 1950s was a benign political environment. This was far from the case. Indeed, MPs repeatedly intervened during Parliamentary debates in the 1950s to call for restrictions on immigration from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent (see Carter et al., 1987).

Despite immigration helping to sustain a post-war economic boom by providing an accessible army of labour for shortages in key industries, these newly emerging minority communities presented a policy dilemma for the State, namely to politically restrict immigration from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent at a time when cheap labour was required to maintain growth. National debates on race were being justified on the basis of the 'problem' that immigration was generating in towns and cities. The image of neighbourhoods being transformed became popularised during this period and continues to resonate in the discourse on race and immigration. Indeed, immigration played a significant

role during the 2010 General Election and was highlighted at several times in the televised leadership debates. During the 1950s, concern was expressed partly because it was believed that immigrants were in competition with white communities for housing, health and employment. It should be noted that public housing was generally perceived as tenure of aspiration for a broad range of people living in the UK. It compared favourably with private sector housing to rent which was unregulated, of poor quality and located in neighbourhoods of economic decline (Malpass and Murie, 1994; Pawson and Mullins, 2010).

We contend that a passive culturist approach framed studies of race and housing during this period. Leading publications on race (Little, 1947; Richmond, 1954; Banton, 1955; and Patterson, 1963) emphasised that the conflict was due to cultural differences between immigrant and host communities. Over time, conflict would ease because of increased interaction between groups and the goal of integration reached. As we have discussed, Banton (1967) developed a theory of race relations predicated on increased cultural understanding leading to stability. These earlier studies focused on minority communities living in urban centres. For example, Little and Richmond concentrated on describing the conditions of Somali groups living in Cardiff and Caribbean migrants in South Liverpool respectively. There was very little discussion about discrimination by public and private sectors or harassment of new migrants by established communities. Instead researchers appeared to approach race as a psychological problem. The main aim of Little's study was to: '...examine the social interactions and reactions resulting from the specific presence of coloured people in Britain...and the patterns of coloured-white relations could add to the political awareness and understanding of a social problem.' (Little, 1947: 1).

A notable example of the passive culturist approach can be viewed in Patterson's *Dark Strangers* (Patterson, 1963) which is a study of relationships between Caribbean migrants and white communities in Brixton. This publication exemplifies, as suggested by its title and content, the impact of immigration on traditionally white neighbourhoods. The terminology is grounded in the immigrant-host praxis and identifies the problem of race to be with Caribbean migrants rather than racism in housing and wider society. 'Common sense' narratives help to construct race and immigration as critical issues that need to be addressed by local and national policy. Here, it could be construed

that minority communities are viewed as a threat to stability, housing resources and established white residents.

Open doors, its friendly room to room visiting, the noise of music and conviviality, the quarrelsome voices from rooms in which gambling, ganja-smoking and drinking goes on may be enough to drive out all but the elderly, lone white tenant. (Patterson, 1963: 167)

The onus appeared to be on minority communities to either 'trade off' minority identity for a British cultural view or, alternatively, wait until relations between different groups were stabilised over a period of time. Competition for housing between established communities and new migrants is considered by Patterson and other publications during this period. Discrimination is discussed but is largely contextualised within a host-immigrant framework (Patterson, 1963).

These passive culturist studies only serve to demonstrate the problems of reification and stereotyping of groups that impact on race and housing. Of course, largely anthropological accounts are based on location and observation. They provided little in the way of critical appraisal of government policies or interventions by housing providers that led to the concentration of migrants in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods of cities and living in the most overcrowded and poorest parts of the private rental market. In addition there are three further problems with the passive culturist literature. First, race is viewed within a socially constructed lens. This helps to support political debates on racial hierarchy and dominant modes of culture and living. The onus is on minorities to adapt to British culture rather than addressing problems of structural and institutional racism. Second, there is an almost total absence of discussion on power, conflict and resources in critical areas such as housing. One reason could be that the Welfare State was viewed as a key mechanism to resolve conflict between groups in different public policy areas. Finally, the passive culturist perspective portrays minority groups as submissive recipients of services rather than activists. Indeed this comes up again in the choice-constraint debates where some (Ballard and Ballard, 1977) suggest that minorities are much more active in housing decisions than others suggest.

Taking this into account we are left with the conclusion that earlier studies of race and housing had a fixed view of minorities that did not consider needs and aspirations of communities, and how these change over a period of time.

Social conflict, politics and power

Growing evidence of racism in the UK during the 1960s and 1970s led to a different type of approach to race and housing. During this period, research showed that structural constraints prevented minorities from exercising housing choice. Rather than take a passive view of 'immigrant-host' relations, this framework was based on social conflict between groups competing for scarce and valued resources such as public housing. John Rex's two seminal publications on race and housing in Birmingham helped to transform academic and policy debates (Rex and Moore, 1967; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979). Apart from these specific accounts of race and housing we will also make reference to an important strand of literature on race, communities and politics generated by key interventions by American academics. This includes Katznelson (1973) as well as the debates on community power (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970) and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000). This chapter, and indeed the thinking of this book, suggests this literature may provide a productive way to make sense of race and housing in a modern setting.

The context for Rex and Moore's study of race and housing in Sparkbrook was increased conflict between different groups in a city. Birmingham in the 1960s was as it is today—a city that attracts immigrants to different forms of employment. In their study, Rex and Moore employed a Weberian approach. Here, class theory is based on groups of people sharing the same life chances because of their economic power in labour *and* additional markets. Rex and Moore wanted to show that people within the same class could be allocated different types of housing because of competition over this scarce resource. Sparkbrook demonstrated that minority groups were denied access to good quality public sector housing because of racism by local authority housing officers. Moreover this was replicated by landlords and agents operating in the private sector. The consequence was minorities occupying poor quality housing in areas of economic and social decline (the so called zones of transition). In this way the differential position of groups is based on resources available to them (financial, political and social) and leads to Rex's and Moore's central theory of housing classes. This institutional approach subsequently influenced a number of housing studies (for example, Saunders, 1990).

The later work of Rex with Tomlinson developed the themes of *Race, Community and Conflict*. On this occasion the focus was the Handsworth area located in the north west of Birmingham. Here too, the concern was to demonstrate that competition for housing, education

and employment had left minority groups occupying the poorest housing as well as suffering disadvantage within schools and the local labour market. Rex and Tomlinson suggested that whilst white workers had improved their economic and social position through representation by trade unions and the Labour Party, the position of minority workers had deteriorated. Moreover, they were not represented by the Labour movement and would find it difficult to improve their economic position through these channels. In effect, minority communities were detached from working class institutions even though they occupied housing in the same neighbourhoods. They had become an 'underclass'.

The concept of underclass was intended to suggest ... that the minorities were systematically at a disadvantage compared with their white peers and that, instead of identifying with working class culture and politics, they formed their own organisations and became effectively a separate under-privileged class.' (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979: 275)

Having located minorities as being the most exploited class, Rex and Tomlinson then suggested that this group could become a 'class in themselves' and be imbued with revolutionary potential. Political inspiration would come from struggles against imperialism and colonisation in the developing world. Rex and Tomlinson further suggested that political strategies would vary for different groups. The process for Asian communities was securing economic and social capital leading to improved opportunities in housing, education and employment. In contrast 'West Indians' are likely to withdraw from the State and seek to develop a black identity (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979: 245).

The conflict model used in Sparkbrook and Handsworth developed from a Weberian perspective. It was not associated simply with class and the State but also competition over a number of policy and political areas such as housing. Rex and his associates accepted the notion of race because it was used in common discourse and viewed minorities as being rooted in poor housing located in declining neighbourhoods. Crucially the analysis emphasised the role of housing organisations and individuals to shape the outcomes for minority groups.

Despite being seminal studies, there are weaknesses in Rex's work which need to be explored. First, it could be argued that this is a culturally deterministic approach. Though the concepts of class, power and politics are discussed, Rex and Moore (and later, Rex and Tomlinson)

make grouped assumptions about minorities that rest on culture and behaviour. This could be viewed as associated with deterministic theories and not so far removed from the simplistic anthropological studies previously discussed.

Lawrence (1982) criticised Rex and Tomlinson for arriving at 'common sense' assumptions on minority culture that borrow heavily from racist stereotyping. For example, the comparison between successful entrepreneurial Asians to 'West Indians' who withdraw altogether from society is a crude form of grouped assumption. Minorities are not passive recipients within society. Neither should they be reified into groups nor ascribed collective behaviour based on assumed cultural preferences. A second concern with Rex is the fixed assumptions made about housing classes. The studies of Sparkbrook and Handsworth suggested that minorities are parked in the same rigid housing market over a period of time. However, research shows that minority groups have moved out from housing markets. This is because of increased prosperity for some groups (Harrison and Phillips, 2003) and by housing organisations seeking to meet needs and aspirations (see Ratcliffe et al., 2001). Differential aspiration for housing is dependent on a number of factors including income, education and employment performance (Harrison et al., 2005). Finally, there is little or no consideration of the way in which the State can respond to meet needs. Social housing organisations, whether local authorities or housing associations, have been forced to consider the housing needs of minority groups and address the problems of racism. Initially this was embedded within the 1976 Race Relations Act. Later the Housing Corporation supported the growth of black led housing associations as well as developed anti-discriminatory measures in social housing (see Harrison, 1995). This important and interesting period shows that the State can act in a benevolent as well as malevolent way on race and housing. We will critically analyse this idea as well as the black led housing sector later on in this book.

Rex did consider the role of race and local politics but this was largely framed on minorities and party political competition (see in particular Rex and Tomlinson, 1979). Katznelson's comparative study of race and politics goes much further by reviewing the role of the State, minorities and community based organisations. He suggests that local authorities create buffer institutions such as community relations councils to mediate the politics of race. Radical activists join these organisations and get absorbed by the State and its bureaucracy. Protest is neutralised and race equality progress slowed down by working within a bureaucratic

framework (Katznelson, 1973). Moreover, minority politics may be compromised as some groups are given access whilst others remain excluded. This builds on the community power literature most notably Bachrach and Baratz (1970). Studies into local politics in the United States showed that conflict could be managed by a differential application of power. Disputes were limited because local political decisions were limited to neutral issues. More problematic areas such as race did not make it onto the agenda for discussion. Power was used to minimise conflict by reducing discussion to non-decision making arenas. Power, access, restricted agendas are all important areas for discussion on race and housing. This is even more the case given that growing diversity has led to increased numbers of minority groups attempting to access power and resources for local initiatives and projects. These will be explored later in the book with reference to the concept of recycled racism and the relationship between different minorities.

We mentioned social capital earlier in this chapter. The term is associated with Putnam who defined it as 'connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam, 2000). The more recent strain of social capital has been influential to public policy debates especially during the Labour Government of 1997–2010. It provided a form of analysis that powered debates on social exclusion and addressing neighbourhood disadvantage. There are considerable problems with the work of Putnam when viewed through race. Assumptions are made that prosperous neighbourhoods (mainly white) have greater levels of social capital than poor neighbourhoods (mainly minority as well as poor whites). In an echo to previous debates, there is a tendency for Putnam to reify communities by both class and race in that his analysis suggests that poor neighbourhoods need a fix of social capital to support renewal. However, minority groups have strong social networks and indeed this is one of the reasons that influence housing decisions. Moreover, research has found that minorities may not want to join local organisations because they do not meet their current needs or future aspirations (Mullins et al., 2004). Bourdieu's radical perspective on social capital helps to understand the role of minorities better (Bourdieu, 1986). Here we see social capital as a contested concept between different groups within society. There are four forms of capital; economic, cultural, social and symbolic. The importance of ideology, resources and power leads to a much more inclusive discussion. For example, cultural capital is explained as building up knowledge, skills and credentials through upbringing and education.

This helps to maximise economic capital and enables people for example to decide upon different forms of housing choice. New minorities may be adversely affected in a two ways. First, knowledge and skills are limited because they are new arrivals. Barriers exist in the form of language, lack of awareness by government and housing agencies of their needs. Second, they may also be excluded from decision-making machinery that decides on housing investment in local areas. They cannot choose because they do not have a choice.

We will return to the debates of race, housing and social capital in the concluding chapter of this book. We will attempt to make a case for these to be included as part of the new research agenda for race and housing.

Choice and constraint

It has been stated that the 'choice-constraint' debate is the most important theme in the academic literature on race and housing (Ratcliffe, 2000). One of the most enduring issues has been to explain housing based segregation in towns and cities across the country (Robinson, 1986; Smith, 1989; Ratcliffe, 1996; Phillips, 1998). The narrative was based on the importance of power (held by the State), residence (shaped by discrimination and/or class) and choice (limited). It could be argued that these publications followed in the tradition of Rex et al. and stated that minorities were denied a housing choice because of racism operating within public and private sector housing markets.

Housing affordability is one the most significant structural constraints that confronts minorities. These groups are disproportionately represented within the poorest sections of society (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000; National Equality Panel, 2010), face the greatest levels of housing need (Harrison and Phillips, 2003) and are more likely to have low wages or be out of work (DWP, 2007). In the main, minorities remain concentrated within the poorest neighbourhoods in towns and cities because they cannot afford better housing located elsewhere. In these circumstances housing reach is limited. The housing booms of the 1990s onwards have widened the affordability gap between poor minority groups and the rest of the population which the periodic slumps in housing price have not rectified.

Those who are committed to the theory of constraint argue that the relatively poor position of minority communities reflects the discriminatory barriers placed by housing organisations and individuals. There is little or no room to manoeuvre for individuals when presented with

these structural barriers. The opposite view is taken by those who put forward a choice model who believe that minorities are not passive actors within the housing market. Individuals act with a degree of freedom in making decisions about housing and this may reflect the importance of accessing community infrastructure, family and friends (see for example, Dayha, 1974).

Proponents of the constraint school suggest that institutional racism, poverty and harassment in some neighbourhoods limit the housing choice available to minorities. This was the main cause of racial segregation within towns and cities across the country. We have seen that Rex and his associates (Rex and Moore, 1967; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979) viewed structural constraints in employment, education as well as housing that resulted in minorities concentrated in the poorest neighbourhoods. Their analysis showed little optimism for the State to act in a positive way to empower minority groups in the housing market. Lee's account of housing segregation in London during the 1970s demonstrated that discrimination in public sector housing combined with perceived harassment from people living in some neighbourhood's reinforced concentration of 'coloured' communities in Brixton and Streatham. Dispersal was happening but there was a general reluctance by minorities to become 'pioneers' in new housing markets (Lee, 1977). The structural barriers in housing are again stressed by Smith (1989). Constraints are considerable and enduring spanning inequality within employment, discrimination in society and of course, housing.

... segregation is not a neutral expression of cultural preference. It is ... the fulcrum of racial inequality – in the labour market, in the housing system and ... in access to wide range of opportunities ... such inequality is sustained by the operation of the housing system and by the restructuring of welfare rights that has accompanied the economic and ideological change of the late twentieth century. (Smith, 1989: 18)

For Smith these structural inequalities lead to increased racial polarisation with the tacit support of the State. Referencing housing policies to the 'common sense' images of minorities as being problematic means that there is little incentive for politicians to develop a progressive policy on race and immigration. The theme of systematic inequalities reproduced by the State is some distance from the discriminatory role of housing officers identified by Rex and Moore as being so crucial to the development of housing classes in Sparkbrook (Rex and Moore, 1967).

The race and housing debate was developed by Henderson and Karn in their influential study of public housing in Birmingham (Henderson and Karn, 1987). Despite the passing of the 1976 Race Relations Act and related anti-discriminatory housing policies their research identified that minority communities were still being offered the poorest housing. Like Rex and Moore before them, Henderson and Karn point to the role of housing officers in rationing this scarce product. Minorities lose out in the allocation process because of the 'common sense' view that they either do not want to be housed in some areas or direct discrimination. A housing system which seeks to act on the basis of need does not function for minorities because of the pervasive nature of racism operating within society. Problems with running a dispersal policy in Birmingham for minorities are also identified by Flett (1979). This floundered because of fears of a tenants' revolt against the movement of minorities into predominantly white neighbourhoods. Rather than address the issue directly, housing policy was circumvented despite the realisation that integration was the solution for the city as a whole (Flett, 1979: 189). Similar problems of racial inequality in housing were uncovered by Simpson (1981) and reports conducted by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) reviewed a number of local authorities, most notably Hackney and Liverpool (CRE 1984a; CRE, 1984b).

Structural constraints are embedded within the housing system and overlain by racism. These factors lead to the pattern of minority segregation across the country that is still in place today. A very different view is provided by supporters of the choice (or agency) approach. As mentioned, one of the best known and earliest examples of this approach is the study by Dayha of Pakistanis living in Bradford (Dayha, 1974). Whilst acknowledging the importance of discrimination in restricting choice, Dayha nevertheless suggests that Pakistani communities voluntarily choose to live in close proximity to each other. This provides social, economic and political support. Housing decisions are made on a rational basis (Dayha, 1974: 112). The choice interpretation has been supported by Burney (1967) and Ballard and Ballard (1977) in their studies of Pakistani and Sikhs respectively. Minority communities are active in their housing decisions and value the importance of community infrastructure. As Ratcliffe succinctly points out in reviewing different theories of race and housing: 'The fundamental argument here was that social actors are not simply pawns of the market: they are knowing actors with aims, objectives and aspirations.' (Ratcliffe, 2009).

Interestingly the theme of 'choice' has been inverted somewhat by the much more recent debates on community cohesion which will be picked up in this and subsequent chapters. Some commentators criticise minorities (mainly Muslim Pakistanis) for not doing enough to integrate themselves within towns and cities even though many of the structural constraints have been reduced (Home Office, 2001; Phillips, 2005). Community infrastructure in this scenario is not seen as providing support but perpetuating segregation (see Robinson, 2007 for a community cohesion critique; also Flint and Robinson, 2008).

The dualism between choice and constraint and the relative importance of structure and agency is interesting but ultimately very limiting. There is a danger of race and housing debates leading to an intellectual cul-de-sac. Recently there have been signs of a much less rigid stance. For example, Harrison has suggested that policy debates on race and housing have inevitably been highly normative in suggesting that minority residential concentration is a problem. 'The idea that concentration is a damaging process-produced by external forces, accident, or social pathologies – also may undervalue the importance of action and choice within minority communities.' (Harrison, 1995: 58).

The choice and constraint models have a great virtue in their simplicity. However, as Ratcliffe notes, the problem with these theories (and indeed much of the debate on race and housing in general) is that they provide very little room for taking on a dynamic approach to structure and agency (Ratcliffe, 2000; Ratcliffe, 2009).

Giddens helped to move away from the dualism of structure and agency by suggesting that rather than being fixed and durable concepts they are both subject to change over a period of time. Individuals (agents) can influence the State (structure) and both are interdependent (Giddens, 1976). As he states: 'Structures must not be conceptualised as simply placing constraints upon human agency, but as enabling.' (Giddens, 1976: 60).

One of the more interesting attempts to take this debate forward with reference to race and housing was undertaken by Sarre and his colleagues (1989). The study of minorities in Bedford focused particularly on the Italian community. Advancing Giddens' structuration theory, they sought a model that would reconcile choice and constraint. The structures within society that limit choice of housing available to minorities are not independent. They may be influenced and changed through the actions of individuals within society. It could be argued that Giddens freed up the 'log jam' in race and housing by constructing a framework to consider dynamic and interdependent relationships between structure and agency

(Giddens, 1976). The Bedford study showed how agency can influence structure. For example, private lenders that prevented Italians from securing competitive loans to buy homes lost out on this business as this group moved to organisations that had a more progressive outlook. This helped to change patterns of lending and residence in Bedford (Sarre et al., 1989: 320). More recent examples of changing behaviour of housing institutions has been mainstream lenders such as HSBC offering Islamic mortgages in a specific appeal to get the custom of the growing number of Muslims in the country (CIH, 2005). Similarly a provider perspective is the role of housing associations in trying to work with refugees to renew neighbourhoods and communities in areas of economic decline (Mullins et al., 2007). As we can see, the value of structuration theory is that it brings dynamism to the debates. Of course, it too can be criticised for providing a 'fudged' solution to choice and constraint but nevertheless the interdependence between structure and agency may provide a positive way forward for discussion of the subject.

The constraint approach that has dominated much of the discussion has a number of weaknesses. First, it could be argued that the focus on structure is a one sided analysis of race and housing. There is an assumption that minorities want to move from inner urban areas to access better housing, education and environmental outcomes in contiguous neighbourhoods. This makes an erroneous assumption that housing markets remained fixed. That is, it takes the view that housing pathways will always be uni-directional from inner urban to outer urban areas. In fact, minorities may want to continue living in housing markets because of the presence of community infrastructure but also fear of harassment in some outer neighbourhoods (Henderson and Karn, 1987). Second, the structure and agency approach is a static model that does not take into account how the State can respond to political mobilisation (Ratcliffe, 2009). Whilst some have argued that housing organisations have been institutionally racist (CRE, 1984a) and helped to reproduce racial inequality (for example, Flett, 1979), there have also been interventions to promote race equality. For example, the Housing Corporation has had a specific policy to develop minority housing associations and more recently ensuring the social housing sector as a whole meets the needs of minority consumers (see Harrison, 1995; Housing Corporation, 1998). Regulators now have sanctions in place to ensure outcomes in these areas are met (Housing Corporation, 2002). It is also important to note the impact of the Macpherson Report (Home Office, 1999) on helping to prioritise race equality in the social housing sector. Measures against

racism should help to increase housing choice. It should be noted, however, that sometimes race equality initiatives (such as 'colour blind' or treating people the same) reproduce and entrench inequality. Third, the race and housing debate is still characterised by reification of minorities and ascribing of collective modes of behaviour that was problematic within the passive culturist approach. Rex and his associates have been criticised for arriving at stereotypical and racist assumptions of minority groups but this is a charge that can be levelled at much of the race and housing debates (see Lawrence, 1982; Sivanandan, 1982; Burnett, 2004). The reification is much more problematic given the impact of migration combined with post-Fordism and breaking down groups into diverse and atomised communities (Gilroy, 1987). Finally, the structuralism approach to race and housing was partly based on the assumption that minority communities had a desire for public sector housing. This does not take into account the growing deterioration of this type of housing in the post-war period. As Forrest and Murie rightly point out, a combination of increased access to mortgage finance, reduced investment in public housing and central interventions such as the right to buy legislation contributed to public sector housing being seen as tenure of last resort (Forrest and Murie, 1983; see also Pawson and Mullins, 2010). Council estates were soon regarded as places that households with aspirations did not want to live and, therefore, largely became occupied by the very poor, very old and low skilled (ODPM, 2004). Public housing was also largely rejected by minority communities and became stigmatised as being places where racial harassment was a frequent occurrence (Chahal and Julienne, 1999). Reduced reliance on public housing coincided with private sector owner occupation being regarded as leading to increased choice, power and economic capital in the housing market for minorities.

It could be argued that housing classes still operate within the housing market. Minorities are denied housing in certain neighbourhoods by factors unrelated to class including harassment and the actions of organisations, agencies and individuals. In reality the dynamic nature of housing markets, differential prosperity and progressive housing organisations weaken the classic interpretation of housing class theory.

Cultural resistance

The fourth strand of race and housing literature is closely associated with Stuart Hall and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) formerly based at the University of Birmingham (CCCS, 1982). Though

not explicitly considering the role of housing, the theories configured on cultural resistance have been noted within a number of studies on race and housing including Smith (1989), and Sarre et al. (1989). This tradition (sometimes known as the Birmingham School) was developed by Hall and others who considered culture as an important point of resistance for minorities (Hall, 1980).

In one respect, those who took on this perspective viewed race as a valid analytical category that is dynamic and contested (CCCS, 1982; Gilroy, 1987; Solomos, 1993). The problem with race was that it had been previously defined by the State, local authorities and housing organisations as being problematic. The process of race formation occurs when minority groups become organised on a political, ideological and institutional basis. Race does not replace class but should be regarded as an additional category and point of resistance for minorities. In short, race was being reclaimed from the passive culturists and used as a basis for minorities to mobilise and challenge the State to change policies and practice. Gilroy further explains the process of race formation as;

... the manner in which 'races' become organised into politics, particularly where racial differentiation has become a feature of ... institutional structures as well as individual interaction ... race formation can also relate the release of political forces which define themselves and organise around the notion of race to the meaning and extent of class relationships.' (Gilroy, 1987: 35-36)

Cultural resistance and the reconceptualising of race as an analytical term marked a significant departure from the work of Rex and his associates and also the earlier studies of Banton. In some instances both were parodied as being part of a dated 'sociology of race relations' that reinforced racist stereotypes, ascribing causal behaviour within generic groups of minorities and assuming that groups in part or whole would assume a passive position vis a vis discrimination in general and racism in particular. The problems were compounded by the lack of reference to class (although Rex and Tomlinson would dispute this), power and conflict (see Bourne and Sivanandan, 1980; CCCS, 1982). Indeed Lawrence summarises the critique of the sociology of race relations succinctly:

The ideas about 'identity crisis', 'culture conflict' and 'intergenerational conflict' which power the accounts of race/'ethnic relations' sociologists

have been constructed in large part without reference to the struggles that the parents have been involved in before and since coming to Britain. They have been characterised as passive, acquiescent victims of racism wanting only to 'integrate'; as recalcitrant 'traditionalists'; suspicious and bewildered by white society, who 'withdraw' wilfully into their own 'ethnic' or 'religious' enclaves ...' (Lawrence, 1982: 132)

In contrast to earlier political orthodoxies which viewed the Welfare State as resolving conflict, this perspective suggested that the needs and aspirations of minorities could not be met by government or agencies. Hence, the onus was on minority groups themselves to self-organise and critically use culture as a form of resistance. It could be put forward that Sivanandan was at the forefront of this model (Bourne and Sivanandan, 1980; Sivanandan, 1982) which viewed minorities as the most radical section of society using their experiences both in this country (racially) and abroad (culturally) as the engine for social change. To Sivanandan restrictive policies on minority immigration were an attempt by the State to regulate labour to meet the demands of the economy. Race relations policies were then used to manage this potentially revolutionary sector of society.

Theories of cultural resistance may seem detached from the review of race and housing but they can be used to explain a number of developments in the housing sector since the 1980s. Recognising the importance of culture and race as an analytical concept and basis for resistance helps to understand the growth of the black led housing association movement. The stimulus for growth was the failing of social housing providers to understand the needs and aspirations of minority communities. In addition, community activists lobbied the Housing Corporation for practical support for minority led housing providers and eventually initiated the cycle of Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Policies (see Harrison, 1995: 82–110; also see Chapter 4 on black led housing associations later on).

The important role of culture (as opposed to class) in shaping housing needs and aspirations has been evidenced by a number of recent housing studies (Somerville and Steele, 2002; Mullins et al., 2004; Niner, 2006). First, minority groups may express their housing preference as being in close proximity to social and community infrastructure, demanding that housing providers increase choice within a neighbourhood, and perhaps help to access culturally specific loan finance. Second, minorities may use community based organisations as a conduit to represent their needs

and aspirations to housing providers (Mullins et al., 2004). Third, culture and race may be mobilised and used as source of resistance when minorities feel that they are under attack. The 2001 riots in Burnley, Oldham and Bradford could be seen as a response to fascist groups trying to create conflict in these predominantly Muslim areas (see Burnett, 2004). A politically charged climate may limit the options available for minority communities preventing them from accessing housing in some neighbourhoods.

Culture is becoming more relevant to housing. However, there are a number of critiques that can be placed against this strand of race and housing literature. Culture, and especially minority based culture, is now viewed by the State as being highly problematic. The report into the 2001 disturbances partly blamed housing providers for increasing segregation between groups living in the same places (Home Office, 2001). The black and minority ethnic housing sector was undermined by the criticism of providing grants to support minority organisations. As a consequence, it could be said that Housing Corporation backing for the black led housing sector has now gone into reverse. Indeed, since 2003 there has been no specific policy for black led housing associations by the new Homes and Communities Agency. The number of minority registered housing associations has declined with many being forced to merge with larger mainstream providers. Further, the establishment of the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights could be said to have effectively sounded the death knell on race being regarded as the critically important area for discussion and debate in the housing sector.

Growing atomisation within minority groups is also problematic for cultural theorists. Rather than becoming a collective entity grounded on common experiences of class and racist disadvantage, the opposite seems to be the case. In an increasingly diverse and heterogeneous society it is becoming difficult to expect different minorities to be politically bound under a single identity. Competition for housing, education, funding and neighbourhood 'turf' lead to an ever more complex situation where conflict could be between different minority groups. The 2006 Lozells disturbances have been described as a 'race riot' between Caribbean and Pakistani groups living in that disadvantaged part of Birmingham (Black Radley, 2006). Of course the truth is always more difficult to comprehend but the impact of diversity on race and housing seems to be one of the key areas which requires more research. We start this process later on in this book.

About this book

We have attempted to provide a context by reviewing key trends in housing and race. As we have seen, research parallels societal, demographic and political changes moving from passive culturalism, social conflict, and cultural resistance overlain by the spectre of choice and constraint. These are not neatly sequential but are shaped by different concerns from the 1950s onwards. By selectively reviewing publications we need to acknowledge how the debate on race, housing and community has developed and grown. Importantly, it could be argued that notions of power, conflict and resistance have become part of the analysis of race and housing. However, there is a continuing need to challenge and take forward the debates on these critical issues. Community cohesion and housing will be discussed in the next chapter but it could be argued that its emergence since 2001 in public policy debates has made it much more difficult for black led housing associations. Moreover the spectre of rising support for the Far Right Parties such as the BNP at the ballot box has happened at the same time as the growth of community cohesion and the establishment of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. A cause and effect is not suggested but at least needs to be investigated. All of this shows that debates on cohesion, race and housing still form a combustible part of academic and policy debates. In this book we seek to put a different perspective on themes that have been discussed in this first chapter and add to our knowledge in areas that have not been developed through subsequent chapters.

The following chapter is titled *Housing Policy and Practice*. The task is to go into more detail about housing policy interventions on race. Specifically we will critically assess the role of the Housing Corporation as the regulator and investment agency for housing associations during a period of change in meeting the needs of black and minority communities. This included the active support to create black and minority ethnic housing associations across England to support housing needs but also encourage black and minority ethnic leadership. The Housing Corporation has given way to the Homes and Communities Agency which has been less enthusiastic on continuing to develop programmes for the black and minority ethnic housing sector. Similarly, the impact of the Commission for Racial Equality on housing debates will be reviewed and the role of the Equality and Human Rights Commission on policy and practice analysed. The focus on policy and practice is framed by the emergence of the

Housing Corporation BME Policy in 1986. The debate on race and housing has been punctuated by two important policy interventions: Macpherson in 1999 and Cohesion in 2001 (see Home Office, 2001). Both in isolation were influential but they could be seen as part of a continuum which is part of a retreat from race and housing and a move from specific to generic policy and practice.

In Chapter 3 we look at localised responses to housing and race. There has been a strange consistency in the terms and narratives on housing. By this, it could be argued, frameworks and practical responses have intertwined race and housing with discussions on the adverse transformation and impact on neighbourhoods. Thus, understanding and appraising localised responses should be an important part of any book on this subject. However the chapter will not focus on black and minority ethnic communities. Instead the emphasis will be to explore community cohesion, housing and the experiences of white working class communities. It will be stated that these communities have been conspicuous by their absence in the race and housing literature and this has enabled stereotypical and unflattering images to be developed in both popular culture and policy. Building on recently completed research the chapter will discuss the perspectives of these groups on community cohesion and housing.

We have already mentioned the emergence of the black led housing sector and which is the focus of Chapter 4. This has been one of the most interesting developments in the social housing sector since the 1980s. Most were registered by the Housing Corporation and reached a peak of over 60 organisations by 1999. They have variously been regarded as beacons of black and minority leadership, providing culturally sensitive services and creating space for black employees, board members and tenants to engage with housing issues. Yet, there have also been a number of issues and challenges for the sector. First, it could be argued that performance has been patchy. Indeed on occasions this has led to the Housing Corporation using statutory powers to intervene in the running of the association. Most recently, Ujima (the first and largest black and minority led housing association) has been taken over by a mainstream housing provider after concerns about performance. In addition macro policy shifts from a model of multiculturalism to community cohesion has further called into question the role of black and minority ethnic housing associations. The focus is not so much on narrow concerns of race but a wider agenda of equalities. Related to this are questions on the appropriateness of using labels such as 'black' to describe an increasingly fragmented society. Are we

seeing the declining significance of race and housing or a move to a different type of discussion where race is still important?

As we have seen earlier on in this chapter, race and housing is populated with important and influential publications. One of the objectives of the book is to increase knowledge and understanding in areas that have not hitherto been discussed in detail. To this end, in Chapter 5 we focus on *Housing, Communities and 'Recycled Racism'*. Part of the premise of the discussion here is that Britain has witnessed an unprecedented phase of migration during the last 20 years. Much of this has been the result of enlargement of the EU in May 2004. More than 800 000 people have arrived in the UK to live and work. In addition people have come and settled in the UK from other parts of the world including places of conflict such as Iraq, Somalia and the Balkans. Taken together these new communities have questioned assumptions of 'black' as a generic term, challenged housing providers to deliver services sometimes in areas that had seen very little immigration and led to competition between established and emerging communities for housing and related services. This has been termed 'recycled racism'. This chapter will explore the impact of migrants on the housing market, competition and conflict between different communities and the extent to which this can be termed 'recycled racism'.

In the concluding section of the book, Chapter 6, an attempt will be made to review and identify possible new directions for race, housing and community. We will also lay out the challenges and opportunities for researchers in this field. In so doing, we will suggest that existing theory and practice continues to use outmoded models of analysis that are no longer appropriate or relevant in organising housing services. Fixed notions of race and representation need to be modernised and set within an increasingly dynamic and fragmented society. In short we need to: get beyond representation and race which has limited debates and has led to positions that may be perceived as protecting self interest; help reconfigure BME housing organisations into community agencies of change; critically find alternatives to 'community leaders', who have disfigured some of the more recent debates on race and housing; and, finally, move towards a more inclusive and shared vision of race, housing and community.

It is important to acknowledge the rich contribution of housing and race research as we have done in setting a framework for the discussion in this chapter. More importantly, there is a need to review and assess the last 25 years of housing and race so that it will help to chart a new vision in an increasingly turbulent political climate.

