Comparative ethnic and race relations

Ethnic communities in business
Comparative ethnic and race relations

Published for the ESRC Research Unit on Ethnic Relations at the University of Aston in Birmingham

Edited by

Professor John Rex Director
Dr Robin Ward Deputy Director
Mr Malcolm Cross Deputy Director

This series has been formed to publish works of original theory and empirical research on the problems of racially mixed societies. It is based on the work of the ESRC Research Unit for Ethnic Relations at Aston University – the main centre for the study of race relations in Britain.

The first book in the series is a textbook on Racial and Ethnic Competition by Professor Michael Banton – a leading British sociologist of race relations and the former Director of the Unit. Future titles will be on such issues as the forms of contact between majority and minority groups, housing, the problems faced by young people, employment, ethnic identity and ethnicity, and will concentrate on race and employment, race and the inner city, and ethnicity and education.

The books will appeal to an international readership of scholars, students and professionals concerned with racial issues, across a wide range of disciplines (such as sociology, anthropology, social policy, politics, economics, education and law), as well as among professional social administrators, teachers, government officials, health service workers and others.
Ethnic communities in business
Strategies for economic survival

Edited by
ROBIN WARD
and
RICHARD JENKINS

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Contributors

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ROBIN WARD is Deputy Director of the ESRC Research Unit on Ethnic Relations and Senior Research Fellow in Ethnic Business in the Faculty of Management and Policy Sciences at the University of Aston. He has directed a multi-disciplinary research programme on Race and Housing which has given rise to numerous publications including an edited volume, Race and Residence in Britain: Approaches to Differential Treatment in Housing (ESRC, RUER, 1984), and a forthcoming book on race and housing in Birmingham (with Peter Ratcliffe and Valerie Karn). He is developing a research programme on ethnic business which includes an examination of Afro-Caribbean retailing and service activity and Asian involvement in the clothing industry, as well as international comparisons in minority business development. He has edited an issue of the journal New Community on the theme of ethnic business (vol. 11, nos. 1 and 2,
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1983). Before joining the Research Unit in 1972, Robin Ward taught for seven years in the Department of Sociology at Manchester University and was a joint author and editor of the Penguin introductory sociology texts.

Howard Aldrich is Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He has been Associate Editor of the Administrative Science Quarterly since 1974, and taught at Cornell University for thirteen years. He is currently doing research on organisations from the population perspective. With his collaborators, he has been conducting research on small shops and their local environments. He has published numerous articles in organisational sociology, ethnic relations and network analysis.

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GERALD MARS, a social anthropologist, was trained at Cambridge (BA) and the LSE (PhD). He is currently Reader and Head of the Centre for Occupational and Community Research at Middlesex Polytechnic. He is author or co-author of several books, the latest being: Cheats at Work: An Anthropology of Workplace Crime (Allen and Unwin, 1982), and (with M. Nichoal) The Secret World of Waiters (Allen and Unwin, forthcoming). He is presently researching the Soviet Union’s Black Economy.

SUSAN NOWIKOWSKI is a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Stirling. Her main interests include developments in post-colonial countries, racism and women’s position and organisation. Her doctoral research is a study of migration and settlement focussing on the Indian sub-continent and Asians living in Manchester. Her recent research activities include action research in Glasgow and fieldwork in Kenya and Tanzania.

ROBIN PALMER is the Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at Rhodes University. His doctoral research whilst attached to the University of Sussex
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concerned Italian migration to Britain, and involved fieldwork in both London and Central Italy between 1972 and 1974. He is currently engaged in research among the Xhosa of Ciskei and Transkei with the aim of determining ‘consumer’ responses to the extensions of conventional and plasmapheresis blood donor services in the area.

Harold Pollins is a Senior Tutor at Ruskin College, Oxford, and has done research in economic history and sociology. His work on West Indians in London was published in Ruth Glass, assisted by Harold Pollins, Newcomers: The West Indians in London (Centre for Urban Studies and Allen and Unwin, 1960). He also wrote ‘Coloured People in Post-War Fiction’, Race, vol. 1, May 1960. He has written extensively in the field of Anglo-Jewish history and sociology and recently published Economic History of the Jews in England (Associated University Presses, London and Toronto, 1982).

Frank Reeves is a Senior Lecturer in Multi-Cultural Education at the Polytechnic, Wolverhampton, and an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow of the ESRC Research Unit on Ethnic Relations. He is the author of British Racial Discourse (Cambridge University Press, 1983) and has published a number of articles on race and education. His current research is in race relations and borough politics.

Pnina Werbner is an urban anthropologist with a special interest in symbolic behaviour in towns. Her doctoral research focussed on ritual and social networks amongst Pakistani migrants in Manchester. She has published several articles on process and change in immigrant communities. She has been Coordinator of the Minority Arts Advisory Service, North West, and has undertaken fieldwork with her husband in rural Botswana. She is currently writing a book on ritual and exchange amongst Pakistani labour migrants.
Preface

The origin of this volume was a realisation by the editors, in the light of the Unit's submission of a memorandum to the Home Affairs Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration (Ward and Reeves 1980), that the academic study of ethnic business in Britain was proceeding along several complementary but largely unrelated lines. It was agreed that it would be valuable to bring together those who were studying aspects of business development among minorities in Britain, along with scholars with experience of parallel developments in the United States and continental Europe. From the outset it was seen as an exercise drawing on the whole range of the social sciences. As a result a two day workshop was held at the ESRC Research Unit on Ethnic Relations at Aston University in March 1981 at which most of the contributors to this volume gave papers on their research or summarised the way in which they thought their work could fit into a review of the development of ethnic business in Britain. Following the workshop, papers were written and rewritten and submitted to a second meeting of the contributors. This allowed a clearer insight into how, from a wide variety of disparate research projects, undertaken from the viewpoint of different disciplines within the social sciences and to achieve different objectives, a single volume could emerge which presented a broad overview of what is agreed to be an important feature of the social life of minority communities throughout the industrialised world. The final volume embodies further revisions made in the light of this increased understanding of how anthropologists, geographers, historians and sociologists could each throw light on key aspects of the organisation of business activities among ethnic minorities.

While the bulk of the chapters report on developments within Britain, they are set in the context of an interpretation of the contribution ethnic businesses are making to capitalist economies in industrialised societies as
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...a whole. Particular attention is paid to parallel trends in Britain, the United States and Western Europe. Given the scanty state of current knowledge concerning the factors underlying the sharply contrasting patterns of business activity among ethnic minorities in Britain, it seemed premature to be making prescriptions as to how government policy should address this area. American scholars have pointed to the lack of such an understanding in accounting for the limited effectiveness of policy on minority business in the United States. We hope that the present volume points the way towards research which can address questions of policy interventions much more securely.

We should like to thank those members of the Unit’s staff who helped to ensure the smooth running of the workshop and who have wrestled with assorted manuscripts. We are particularly grateful to Christine Dunn and Rose Goodwin for bearing the brunt of this. Finally, we should acknowledge an enormous debt to the individual contributors whose enthusiasm and constructive criticism ensured the success of the enterprise, making the end product a fully collaborative venture.