

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Comparative ethnic and race relations series

Racism and equal opportunity policies in the 1980s

SECOND EDITION

This book looks at the problems of racism and equal opportunity in employment and government policies towards them in Britain. It brings together a group of specialist contributors and covers the major areas of debate, including the law, policies towards unemployment, job training and the labour market, the role of the public and private sectors, the role of trade unions, the gap between policies and pronouncements on equal opportunity and their implementation, and the related issue of sectarian discrimination in Northern Ireland. It looks at the future prospects for equal opportunities and provides conclusions for policy.

In particular, it aims to address important topics such as the assumptions underlying current policies, and whether they realistically reflect reality, the actual effect of legislation, and the relationship between power disparities in society as a whole and racial inequality.

The book will make a major contribution to the debate about equal opportunity in employment, and will be of interest to a readership ranging from students and teachers, to policy makers, administrators and professionals who confront 'race' problems in everyday situations.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Comparative ethnic and race relations

Published for the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick

Senior Editor

Professor John Rex *Associate Director & Research Professor of Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick*

Editors

Professor Robin Cohen *Executive Director & Professor of Sociology, University of Warwick*

Mr Malcolm Cross *Principal Research Fellow, University of Warwick*

Dr Robin Ward *Head of Ethnic Business Research Unit, University of Aston*

This series has been formed to publish works of original theory, empirical research, and texts on the problems of racially mixed societies. It is based on the work of the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, a Designated Research Centre of the Economic and Social Research Council, and the main centre for the study of race relations in Britain.

The series will continue to draw on the work produced at the Centre, though the editors encourage manuscripts from scholars whose work has been associated with the Centre, or whose research lies in similar fields. Future titles will concentrate on anti-racist issues in education, on the organisation and political demands of ethnic minorities, on migration patterns, changes in immigration policies in relation to migrants and refugees, and on questions relating to employment, welfare and urban restructuring as these affect minority communities.

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.

Other books in this series:

Michael Banton: *Racial and ethnic competition* (issued in hardcover and as a paperback).

Thomas Hammar (ed.): *European immigration policy*.

Frank Reeves: *British racial discourse*.

Robin Ward and Richard Jenkins (eds.): *Ethnic communities in business*.

Richard Jenkins: *Racism and recruitment: managers, organisations and equal opportunity in the labour market*.

Paul B. Rich: *Race and empire in British politics*.

John Rex and David Mason (eds.): *Theories of race and ethnic relations*.

Roger Hewitt: *White talk black talk: inter-racial friendship and communication amongst adolescents*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

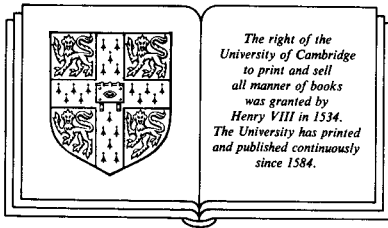
[More information](#)

Racism and equal opportunity policies in the 1980s

SECOND EDITION

edited by

RICHARD JENKINS AND
JOHN SOLOMOS



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge

New York Port Chester

Melbourne Sydney

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521389686

© Cambridge University Press 1987, 1989

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1987

Reprinted 1988

Second edition published 1989

Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2009

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Racism and equal opportunity policies in the 1980s / edited by Richard
Jenkins and John Solomos. – 2nd ed.

p. cm. – (Comparative ethnic and race relations series)

Bibliography

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 38968 2

1. Discrimination in employment – Great Britain. 2. Race
discrimination – Great Britain. I. Jenkins, Richard, 1952–

II. Solomos, John. III. Series.

HD4903.5.G7R33 1989

331.13'3'0941–dc20 89-32977 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-33013-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-38968-6 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Introduction to the second edition</i>	<i>page vii</i>
<i>Contributors</i>	<i>xix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xxiii</i>

Part One. The law, politics and equal opportunity

1 Racism, equal opportunity and public policy	3
JOHN SOLOMOS <i>and</i> RICHARD JENKINS	
2 Racial inequality and the limits of law	14
LAURENCE LUSTGARTEN	
3 The politics of anti-discrimination legislation: planned social reform or symbolic politics?	30
JOHN SOLOMOS	
4 Religious discrimination and differentiation in Northern Ireland: the case of the Fair Employment Agency	54
JOHN DARBY	

Part Two. Dimensions of equal opportunity

5 'Equality of opportunity' and inequality of outcome: the MSC, ethnic minorities and training policy	73
MALCOLM CROSS	
6 The space between words: local authorities and the concept of equal opportunities	93
KEN YOUNG	

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)vi *Contents*

7	Equal opportunity in the private sector: the limits of voluntarism	110
	RICHARD JENKINS	
8	Monitoring equal opportunities policies: principles and practice	125
	NICK JEWSON <i>and</i> DAVID MASON	
9	Training and organisational change: the target racism	141
	GLORIA LEE	
10	Unequal comrades: trade unions, equal opportunity and racism	160
	JOHN WRENCH	
Part Three. The prospects for equal opportunity		
11	Equal opportunity in the context of high levels of unemployment	189
	ED RHODES <i>and</i> PETER BRAHAM	
12	Equal opportunity and the limits of the law: some themes	210
	RICHARD JENKINS <i>and</i> JOHN SOLOMOS	
	<i>Notes</i>	221
	<i>Bibliography</i>	228
	<i>Index</i>	240

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Introduction to the second edition

Even in the short time since the first edition of this volume was published much has changed in relation to the issues it covers. For this reason we have decided to add a new introduction to bring the coverage of some of its main themes up to date. Obviously we cannot discuss all changes over the past few years, and so we shall concentrate particularly on four of the main variables: the political context; the local politics of anti-racism; equal opportunity in Northern Ireland; and finally on the prospects for the future.

The changing political context of racial equality

After Mrs Thatcher was returned to power for the third time in 1987 she declared that one of her main priorities would be the regeneration of the inner cities. Shortly afterwards she undertook a short tour through Britain's inner cities, with the aim of declaring her government's commitment to regenerating these areas. This tour was supposed to symbolise the high priority given to inner city deprivation during her third administration. On the face of it therefore there are hopeful signs about the prospects for radical changes in policy orientation during Mrs Thatcher's third term of office.

In the years since 1981, when Lord Scarman called for urgent action to tackle racial discrimination and the social conditions which underlay the disorders in Brixton and elsewhere, there has been little evidence of such urgency. Whatever the merit of the particular programme proposed by Lord Scarman – and this has been the subject of some debate (Benyon and Solomos 1987) – the one consistent response that has been evident since 1981 has had little to do with the pursuit of social justice: rather than dealing with the root causes of racial disadvantage and urban unrest the government has chosen to give more resources, more training and more equipment to the police in order to control the symptoms of urban unrest. The government's overall objective has been to decrease public expenditure, for the sake of lower taxation and to encourage an enterprise culture. In this context aid for

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

the inner cities has been dwarfed by the financial cuts applied to inner city local authorities.

Increasingly the most strident political voices are raised in the name of free enterprise and law and order, not for equity and social justice. For the new right and other influential sectors of political opinion the attempt to achieve racial equality through legal and political means is at best naive political folly and at worst a restriction on the workings of the market. The present political climate gives one little cause for optimism that a radical change in governmental priorities in this field is likely (Solomos 1989).

In the aftermath of the 1985 outbreak of urban unrest, central government promised to help those inner city areas particularly hard hit by economic restructuring and urban decay. The impact of such promises in practice has, however, been limited, and there is little evidence that the initiatives which have been set in motion as a result of the urban unrest have had much impact on the socio-economic position of black minorities in the inner cities.

The government's plan of 'Action for Cities' (DoE 1988), issued after Mrs Thatcher's post-election promise, says very little directly about racial inequality. It remains to be seen whether it will suffer the fate of numerous other initiatives on the inner cities and fade into obscurity. But one thing seems clear: since the late 1970s the government has been more intent on reducing the powers of local authorities than on providing for fundamental changes in the social conditions of the inner cities.

In this environment the auguries for equal opportunity and racial equality policies are not good, despite the government's self-proclaimed commitment to the regeneration of the inner cities. Within the present political climate it becomes increasingly unlikely that the government will respond favourably to calls for greater state intervention to combat racism and social injustice. The fate of the CRE's proposals for the reform of the 1976 Race Relations Act is the most clear example of how calls for urgent legal and political reforms have fallen on deaf ears.

Failing a strong lead from central government the CRE has attempted to innovate within the terms of its powers. It has tried to encourage both public and private sector employers to develop and implement equal opportunity programmes. The failure of the government to give it greater legal powers or to support it politically has, however, limited the impact of the CRE's initiatives (McCrudden 1987). A good example is the fate of the Code of Practice for the elimination of discrimination in employment, which came into force in April 1984. First published in draft form in early 1982, the Code went through a number of stages of discussion and redrafting before the government formally laid it before Parliament in April 1983. Since April 1984 the Code has been admissible in evidence to tribunals, and if they

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

think a provision in it is relevant to the proceedings they can take it into account in determining the question. However, the CRE's own survey of employers' responses to the Code showed that many employers were still unaware of its existence, and even fewer had taken any positive measures to put it into practice (CRE 1988: 8).

At a broader level the attempts by the CRE and various local authorities to encourage the development of positive action and contract compliance measures as tools for the promotion of racial equality in employment have met with both legal and administrative resistance. There seems little likelihood that such measures can have a significant impact on the extent of racial discrimination in British society without a broader political commitment to the goal of racial equality.

The relative absence of policy innovation at the national level during the past decade is no indication that the question of racial inequality has been resolved. Rather, the present situation can best be seen as an impasse in the search for means to achieve greater equality for black citizens in British society (Gordon 1989). Unless a way is found to move beyond the present impasse it is likely that racial inequality will remain a volatile and explosive issue in British society for some time to come. If the experience of the past few years is anything to go by it will take sustained political pressure and mobilisation to alter current priorities and establish a radical agenda for action.

Local politics and 'anti-racism'

Perhaps the most notable change in this field over the past few years has been in relation to local politics. Since the early 1980s public attention has been focused on the experiences of a number of local authorities which have introduced radical policies aimed at tackling racial inequality. The most notable cases have been the Greater London Council before it was abolished, the Inner London Education Authority and the London boroughs of Lambeth, Brent, Hackney and Haringey. Nationally, a number of other local authorities have adopted comprehensive policy statements on racial equality and equal opportunity generally.

In all these cases a combination of factors seems to have prompted rapid policy change. First, bolstered by the urban unrest that has been much in evidence during the 1980s, local black politicians and groups have sought to include racial inequality on the local political agenda. Second, a number of left local authorities sought to use the issue of equal opportunity as a mechanism for widening their basis of support among ethnic minorities and other constituencies (Stoker 1988: 207–8). Third, the failure of central

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

government to respond to calls for radical reform was seen as a sign that relatively little change could be expected as a result of the actions of central government.

The result of these pressures was reflected in three main policy changes. The first addressed the central question of who gets what, and the emphasis has been on establishing equality of treatment and equality of outcome in the allocation process. Ethnic records have been introduced to monitor channels of access and allocation. For example, in relation to housing, authorities such as Hackney and Haringey have sought to monitor mobility within the local housing stock and the quality of distribution, and to change procedures that facilitated discretion and contributed to discriminatory outcomes.

The second policy change has addressed the question of the employment of black staff within local authorities. This has resulted in a number of authorities linking the question of allocative equality with the representation of black and ethnic minority staff in local government departments. Racially discriminatory outcomes, it was argued, were not solely the function of organisational procedures but also related to the under-representation or exclusion of black and ethnic minority staff. Consequently, targets have been established to increase the employment of black and ethnic minority staff.

Once again, however, the experience of local authorities seems to mirror that of central government initiatives, since there has been a gap between the promise embodied in policy statements and the actual achievements of policies. During the early 1980s authorities such as Lambeth and Hackney did make some progress in changing their employment practices and service delivery to reflect the multi-racial composition of their local populations. Initiatives in specific policy areas such as social services and housing have also been put into practice. In Hackney's case the combination of pressure from the local black communities and a formal investigation by the Commission for Racial Equality forced the council to rethink its housing policy and introduce major changes. During the early 1980s local authorities were also the site of important debates about the delivery of social services and education.

Yet after the flurry of policy activity and change during the early 1980s the last few years have been a period of conflict, negative media publicity about racial equality policies and in some cases resistance to change by the local white population. The debates about multi-racial education in Brent and Bradford, the media coverage of the activities of the 'loony left' in a number of local authorities in London, and the attack on 'anti-racism' launched by sections of the political right have tended to push even the most radical local authorities on the defensive. Indeed in some cases the public

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Introduction to the second edition*

xi

attention given to ‘anti-racism’ has tended to take attention away from the persistence of racial inequality and direct critical attention at those local authorities attempting to allocate resources to minority groups.

Most importantly, perhaps, the increasing fiscal constraints imposed by central government and pressure on the resources available to local authorities have left little room for the maintenance of the initiatives already introduced or for new developments. During 1987 and 1988 there were signs that even previously radical local authorities are now adopting a lower profile on issues concerned with racial equality.

Equal opportunity in Northern Ireland

Reviewers of the original hardback edition of the present collection were united in singling out John Darby’s critique of Northern Ireland’s Fair Employment Agency (FEA) for particular attention. Robin Oakley, for example, suggested that ‘it is to Northern Ireland that we might look if we wish to progress equal opportunity policies further’ (*The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 20 November 1987). Robert Cormack, in a similar vein, argued that the province had become the ‘lead jurisdiction’ in the United Kingdom with respect to equality of opportunity (*International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 12, 1988, p. 660). At the end of the chapter in question, however, Darby argues – more pessimistically – that unless the Fair Employment Agency adopts a more aggressive stance in its operations ‘by 1990, the issue of equality of opportunity will have gently slipped into the backwater of Ulster politics’.

Since that sentence was written, far from slipping further down the agenda of government in Northern Ireland, questions concerning ethnic equality of opportunity in employment have assumed a greater degree of political importance than hitherto. One reason for this development is the direct pressure exerted by the United States government, in relation to the placing of orders and investment, as described by Darby. In addition, however, there is now the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement to take into account, Article 5(a) of which is concerned with the encouragement of measures to prevent economic and social discrimination (Arthur and Jeffery 1988: 103). Finally, the United Kingdom state has probably also been moved to action in part by the need to head off the Irish lobby in the United States, in particular to meet the challenge of the ‘MacBride Principles’. These are affirmative action principles which, while they may look routine enough in the American context, are not supported by the US government and have aroused considerable opposition in Northern Ireland, from

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

unionists and constitutional nationalists alike, because of suspicion as to the motives of their proponents and doubts about their legality and appropriateness (Arthur and Jeffery 1988: 29–30; Cormack and Osborne 1987; McCormack 1987; Richmond 1987). The campaign in the United States supporting the MacBride Principles has nonetheless achieved some success in affecting state legislatures and public opinion.

The state has responded to these pressures in a number of ways: *administratively* it has made changes in its own procedures as an employer; *legally*, it has begun the process of altering the legislative framework which defines, promotes and polices equality of opportunity. Less directly, quangos (see chapter 12, note 2) and state-owned companies have also produced responses of one sort or another. We shall discuss each of these in turn, commencing with administrative action.

In 1983, the Fair Employment Agency published the report of one of its most controversial investigations, into the non-industrial Northern Ireland Civil Service (Fair Employment Agency, 1983). The investigation was marked by a series of disputes between external consultants, the FEA and the Civil Service about the findings and their analysis. Depending upon where one stood, the investigation either largely exonerated the Civil Service of persistent charges of discrimination (in its final, published version) or produced strong evidence (in its draft form) of systematic Catholic disadvantage, particularly within Civil Service promotion procedures (Miller, 1986: 227–30; 1988).

Whatever interpretation one adopts – and the circumstances of the investigation's final publication might strongly suggest the latter – the report made a number of recommendations. A direct outcome of these was the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Unit within the Civil Service. As revealed in its Annual Reports (Equal Opportunities Unit, 1986; 1987), the Unit has introduced a personnel monitoring system, concerned with issues such as recruitment, promotion and wastage with respect to religious ethnicity, gender and disability, in addition to a package of measures concerned with such things as recruitment publicity, training, sexual harassment, maternity-related issues and pensions. In short, a comprehensive equal opportunity programme has been introduced, covering both industrial and non-industrial civil servants. While it is too early to see *what difference* all of this activity has made, the Unit's programme represents a major rhetorical and practical step towards enhanced equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland. A further contribution to this has been the Department of Economic Development's *Religious Equality of Opportunity in Employment – Guide to Effective Practice*, issued in 1987.

Legal developments have been even more far-reaching. The Northern Ireland Department of Economic Development published in 1986 a Con-

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Introduction to the second edition*

xiii

sultative Paper, *Equality of Opportunity in Employment in Northern Ireland: Future Strategy Options* (Department of Economic Development 1986). Originally commissioned by the Secretary of State in July 1985, the options which the paper offered for comment included an all-embracing regulatory agency covering ethnicity, gender and disability, on the basis of a single anti-discrimination law for all three, and the introduction of a strong form of contract compliance – affecting government tenders and grants – with respect to fair employment practice in the area of ethnicity.

This was followed by a report on fair employment from the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights, entitled *Religious and Political Discrimination in Northern Ireland* (Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights 1987). The Commission draws its statutory authority from section 20 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973; its role is to advise the Secretary of State on the workings of the law with respect to political or religious discrimination.

The Commission's report is the most comprehensive critical review of the existing legal and administrative measures for preventing discrimination and providing equal opportunities in Northern Ireland and of the available options for improving the situation. It is impossible to do more than summarise briefly some of its major recommendations. Among these are the prohibition of indirect discrimination, the use of the industrial tribunal system to process individual complaints of discrimination (rather than, as at the time of writing, the FEA), the replacement of the FEA by a more powerful agency and the tougher use of contract compliance strategies with respect to government tenders, contracts and grants.

In February 1988, in the wake of the Commission's report and the response to the Consultative Paper, the Department of Economic Development announced a series of proposals. These included the introduction of the legal concept of indirect discrimination as a category of prohibited practice, the introduction of statutory requirements that all organisations with more than twenty-five employees monitor their workforces and that *all* employers provide equality of opportunity and, finally, the foundation of a new regulatory agency to replace the FEA. A White Paper, *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland* (Northern Ireland Office 1988), followed in May; among other changes, the proposed statutory ethnic monitoring was extended to all organisations employing ten or more workers.

The Queen's Speech on the State Opening of Parliament on 22 November 1988 marked the public unveiling of the Fair Employment Legislation (Northern Ireland) Bill. A *Guardian* leader writer (19 December 1988) has summarised the Bill's proposals thus:

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)xiv *Introduction to the second edition*

It will require all employers with more than 10 workers regularly to monitor their workforce, submit annual reports to the Government and carry out systematic reviews of their recruitment, training and promotion policies every three years. Any employer who refuses will be committing a criminal offence. A Fair Employment Commission will be given new powers to audit the composition of workforces, issue directives and take recalcitrant employers to a Fair Employment Tribunal, which will have the unique power for a tribunal in the UK of being able to impose fines. Not small fines either. The maximum will be £30,000. Employers which have discriminated in the past, will be encouraged to adopt affirmative action programmes. Employers who refuse to change, will face losing all government subsidies and will be prohibited from tendering for any public authority contract.

This is an impressive package. What it will look like following debate in the House and the Committee process is impossible to predict. Allowing for a reasonably safe passage, however, Northern Ireland will have been given, by UK standards, a uniquely powerful framework of anti-discrimination law (for contrasting views on this, see McCrudden 1989; Miller 1989).

There is more to the situation than the law, of course, although law is at the heart of the matter. The Fair Employment Agency has continued to do its job as well as possible under the circumstances: in March 1988, for example, following an investigation by the FEA, Northern Ireland Railways announced the introduction of a comprehensive 'equality of opportunity charter'. The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights, as part of the process of information gathering for its fair employment report, referred to above, commissioned a massive report on *Equality and Inequality in Northern Ireland* from the Policy Studies Institute (Smith and Chambers 1987). Although locally controversial – see the acrimonious exchanges between its authors and Northern Irish academics in *Fortnight*, numbers 258 and 259, January and February 1988 – the report is an unrivalled source of information (for further controversy see Cormack and Osborne 1989; Smith 1988).

Finally, there are state-owned companies to consider. The most obvious case is that of the aerospace company, Short Brothers and Harland, based in Belfast. They have been one of the most obvious targets for United States government pressure, in the context of orders for the C23 Sherpa aircraft. In June 1988, Shorts told the Defence Department in Washington that it planned to increase the Catholic proportion of 'new starts' to 17.5 per cent in 1988, 25 per cent in 1989 and 35 per cent in 1990. The formulation of such explicit quotas implies a form of affirmative action (or 'reverse dis-

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Introduction to the second edition*

xv

crimination') way beyond that which would be permitted in British law. In October 1988, the order was confirmed – for ten aircraft worth £60 million.

This brief resume of recent events in Northern Ireland has done little justice to the complexities of the situation and overlooked much that is of importance. Nor has it attempted a thoroughgoing comparison of the Northern Irish situation with Great Britain (see Jenkins 1988). It is, however, sufficient to allow a number of tentative conclusions to be drawn.

The first conclusion, and perhaps the most obvious, is that despite the strength of the state's administrative and legal response to ethnic disadvantage in Northern Ireland, there is no guarantee that it will actually make much difference. If for no other reason, the depth of recession and economic depression in Northern Ireland places severe limitations upon the possibilities for equality of opportunity (O'Dowd 1986). The interaction of patterns of residential segregation with patterns of industrial location serves to further disadvantage the Catholic community. The equal opportunity situation may be exacerbated by other dimensions of government policy; there is, for example, little gain to be had from greater equality or opportunity in Shorts if the company's operations contract drastically as a consequence of privatisation and the withdrawal of state support. There is, in addition, much opposition to the new package of measures within Northern Ireland, particularly from Unionist and loyalist political constituencies. Inasmuch as the new emphasis on equal opportunity is both less radical than demanded by the MacBride Principles and part of a 'carrot and stick' approach which embraces a tougher line on security and policing, militant republicans are not likely to be impressed either. Finally, there is always a legitimate doubt as to whether the state's commitment to equality of opportunity is genuine or just another exercise in symbolic politics; a serious attempt to produce change or merely window-dressing.

The second conclusion is that, while it is undoubtedly true that the progress which has been made so far in Northern Ireland could have major implications for the rest of the UK, it need not necessarily lead to concomitant changes in Great Britain. Such an outcome is, in fact, unlikely, for a number of reasons. There is, for example – as the use of proportional representation in elections in Northern Ireland illustrates – no reason why radical change in one part of the United Kingdom should 'leak' into another. Northern Ireland is routinely viewed as so utterly different from Great Britain that no necessary political lessons for the mainland are perceived to flow from what happens there (except, of course, when it suits, as in the area of security and anti-terrorism measures). This is all the more so if, as seems likely, the Northern Irish equality of opportunity measures are part of a strategy, com-

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

mencing with the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which has as its long-term goal the 'solution' of the Northern Ireland problem (and from Westminster's point of view, this probably means divesting itself of responsibility for the province). On top of all of these considerations, the Conservative Party is unlikely to allow any legislative leakage in this area – Tory backbenchers are unhappy about the proposals in their Northern Irish context, let alone in Great Britain.

Finally, the role of the struggle of the Catholic community – a struggle which has embraced a wide range of options, from constitutional politics to non-violent protest to political violence – is worth considering. While this struggle has been significant in re-establishing Ireland as a political problem for the UK, it has only been influential with respect to economic disadvantage and equality of opportunity insofar as it has been able to mobilise the support of powerful external constituencies, particularly in the United States, although the importance of the Republic of Ireland in the European setting should not be underestimated. Similarly, the possibility of an eventual territorial settlement of the problem has also influenced the ability of struggle to make a difference. It should not be forgotten, however, that reform with respect to equal opportunity in Northern Ireland has been accompanied by ever-more repressive security policies.

All of these things have implications for the potential which the struggles of Britain's black communities have for effecting change, as does the fact that Northern Ireland's Catholics are proportionately more numerous than black Britons and, therefore, capable of being more troublesome. To put it quite simply, while the political struggles of Catholics in Northern Ireland have resulted in legislative and administrative reforms designed to promote greater equality of opportunity, they have also resulted in greater legal and administrative repression. In the British context, however, the more limited struggles of black people, while they may be met by repression, are unlikely to generate further reform. The shame is that, in the face of the state's present intransigence with respect to ethnic equality of opportunity in Great Britain, this may be the only avenue open to black people.

Future prospects

Finally, as we move closer to the 1990s, what of the prospects for the future? Certainly the experience of the past decade makes it difficult to be optimistic about the chances of a radical change in public policy on this issue. As the predominant political ideas have shifted to the right, so the probability of the required political action at the national level to tackle the

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Introduction to the second edition*

xvii

roots of racism and social disadvantage has diminished. At the same time the fundamental changes in the functions of local government which the Thatcher governments have introduced make it more difficult for local authorities to intervene positively to promote racial justice.

The situation, however, is by no means static. The frequency of outbreaks of urban unrest during the 1980s indicates that the continued exclusion of black communities and other inner city residents may result in the repudiation of political authority, manifest as civic indifference, as a refusal to comply with laws and directives or as open conflict and violence. While the excluded black and white citizens of urban areas seem set to continue to suffer deprivations and injustice, it cannot be assumed that they will do so in silence.

References

- Arthur, P. and Jeffery, K. 1988, *Northern Ireland Since 1968*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Benyon, J. and Solomos, J. 1987, *The Roots of Urban Unrest*, Oxford: Pergamon.
- Commission for Racial Equality 1988, *Annual Report 1987*, London: CRE.
- Cormack, R. and Osborne, R.D. 1987, 'Fair shares, fair employment: Northern Ireland today', *Studies*, Autumn, 1987: 273–85.
- 1989, 'Employment and Discrimination in Northern Ireland', *Policy Studies*, 9 no. 3:49–53.
- Department of Economic Development 1986, *Equality of Opportunity in Northern Ireland: Future Strategy Options – A Consultative Paper*, Belfast: HMSO.
- Department of Environment 1988, *Action for Cities*, London: Department of Environment.
- Equal Opportunities Unit 1986, *First Report – Equal Opportunities in the Northern Ireland Civil Service*, Belfast: Department of Finance and Personnel.
- 1987, *Second Report*, Belfast: Northern Ireland Civil Service Equal Opportunities Unit.
- Fair Employment Agency 1983, *Report of an Investigation . . . into the Non-Industrial Civil Service for Northern Ireland*, Belfast: FEA.
- Gordon, P. 1989, *Citizenship For Some? Race and Government Policy 1979–1989*, Runnymede Trust, London.
- House of Commons, *Employment Committee 1987, Discrimination in Employment: Report and Minutes of Evidence*, London: HMSO.
- Jenkins, R. 1988, 'Discrimination and equal opportunity in employment: ethnicity and "race" in the United Kingdom', in D. Gallie (ed.), *Employment in Britain*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- McCormack, I. 1987, 'The long, long march from '68', *Fortnight*, 257, December 1987: 16–18.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii *Introduction to the second edition*

- McCrudden, C. 1987, 'The Commission for Racial Equality', in R. Baldwin and C. McCrudden (eds.), *Regulation and Public Law*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- 1989, 'One step forward, two steps back', *Fortnight*, 270, December 1989:14–15.
- Miller, R. 1986, 'Social stratification and mobility', in P. Clancy, S. Drudy, K. Lynch and L. O'Dowd (eds.), *Ireland: A Sociological Profile*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
- 1988, 'Evaluation Research "Ulster Style"', *Network*, 42, October 1988: 4–7.
- 1989, 'Legislating for Fair Employment', *Journal of Social Policy*, 18:253–264.
- Northern Ireland Office 1988, *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland*, Cmnd 380, London: HMSO.
- O'Dowd, L. 1986, 'Beyond Industrial Society', in P. Clancy, S. Drudy, K. Lynch and L. O'Dowd (eds.), *Ireland: A Sociological Profile*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
- Richmond, D. 1987, 'Discrimination: the politics', *Fortnight*, 257, December 1987: 15–16.
- Smith, D.J., 1988, 'Policy and Research: Employment discrimination in Northern Ireland', *Policy Studies*, 9 no 1:41–59.
- Smith, D.J. and Chambers, G. 1987, *Equality and Inequality in Northern Ireland*, London: Policy Studies Institute.
- Solomos, J. 1989, *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain*, London: Macmillan.
- Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights 1987, *Religious and Political Discrimination and Equality of Opportunity in Northern Ireland: Report of Fair Employment*, Cmnd 237, London: HMSO.
- Stoker, G. 1988, *The Politics of Local Government*, London: Macmillan.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contributors

PETER BRAHAM lectures in the Faculty of Social Sciences at The Open University. Author of a number of papers on race relations, migration and discrimination and disadvantage in employment. Co-editor of *Discrimination and Disadvantage in Employment* (Harper & Row 1981).

MALCOLM CROSS is Principal Research Fellow at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick. He has written widely on race relations, migrant labour, unemployment, youth training and economic restructuring in the inner cities. Co-author of a forthcoming book on *Race and the Urban System* and co-editor of a book on *Black Youth and YTS*.

JOHN DARBY is Professor of Social Administration and Policy at the University of Ulster in Coleraine. He is also Director of the Centre for the Study of Conflict, which defines his general research interest. He has written two books – *Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Gill and Macmillan (Dublin) 1976, and *Dressed to Kill: Cartoonists and the Northern Irish Conflict*, Appletree Press (Belfast) 1983 – and edited two books – *Violence and the Social Services in Northern Ireland* (with Arthur Williamson) Heinemann 1978, and *Northern Ireland, the Background to the Conflict*, Appletree and Syracuse University Press 1983.

RICHARD JENKINS is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University College, Swansea. Among his publications are *Hightown Rules* (National Youth Bureau, 1982), *Lads, Citizens and Ordinary Kids* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), *Racism and Recruitment* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), *Taking the Strain* (with Sue Hutson, Open University Press, 1980) and *The Myth of the Hidden Economy* (with Phil Harding, Open University Press, 1989).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xx *Contributors*

NICK JEWSON is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Leicester. Recently he has been conducting research, in collaboration with David Mason, into 'racial' and gender inequalities in the labour market. He also has a long standing interest in the sociology of health.

GLORIA LEE is Director of Postgraduate Studies in the Management Centre, Aston University. Author of a number of papers on discrimination in the labour market, the position of young blacks in the labour market, and trade unions and racism. Co-author of *Skill Seekers – black youth, apprenticeships and disadvantage* (National Youth Bureau 1983).

LAURENCE LUSTGARTEN is Senior Lecturer in Law at Warwick University, where he has been teaching a course in Race Relations Law of his own devising for the last decade. He is the author of *Legal Control of Racial Discrimination* (Macmillan 1980), a policy orientated analysis of British anti-discrimination legislation, and of the recently-published *The Governance of Police* (Sweet and Maxwell 1986).

DAVID MASON is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Leicester. He has a long standing interest in the sociology of 'race' and recently has been conducting research, in collaboration with Nick Jewson, into 'racial' and gender inequalities in the labour market.

ED RHODES lectures in the Faculty of Technology at The Open University. Has written widely on discrimination and disadvantage in employment, migration and employment, and the impact of the recession on black workers. Co-editor of *Discrimination and Disadvantage in Employment* (Harper & Row 1981).

JOHN SOLOMOS is a Lecturer in Public Policy in the Department of Politics and Sociology at Birkbeck College, University of London. He has edited *The Roots of Urban Unrest* (Pergamon 1987) and has recently published *Black Youth, Racism and the State* (Cambridge University Press 1988).

JOHN WRENCH is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick. From 1976 to 1980 he was a lecturer in the Sociology Group, Aston University; from 1980 to 1983, Lecturer in Aston University Management Centre. He has researched and published in the areas of industrial safety, ethnic minorities and the labour market, shiftworking, and trade unions and equal opportunity policies. He is currently working on a study of ethnic minorities and the careers service.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contributors

xxi

KEN YOUNG is Professor of Local Government Studies and Director of INLOGOV at the University of Birmingham. Author of numerous studies of the politics of local government, inner city policies and race and the local state. Co-author of *Policy and Practice in the Multi-Racial City* (Policy Studies Institute 1981) and co-editor of *Ethnic Pluralism and Public Policy* (Heinemann 1983).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-38968-6 - Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s, Second Edition

Edited by Richard Jenkins and John Solomos

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

This collection is the product of a two-day workshop concerned with the issue of equal opportunity in employment, which the editors organised at the SSRC Research Unit on Ethnic Relations at the University of Aston in Birmingham in July 1983. We are grateful to the Unit, and its then Director, Professor John Rex, for financial support and subsequent encouragement for this venture.

Since the workshop, a number of problems have delayed the final publication of this volume. First, one of us, Jenkins, left the Unit in September 1983 to take up an appointment elsewhere. Second, as a result of the workshop a number of areas which we had neglected were identified; papers specifically concerned with these topics had then to be commissioned. Third, one erstwhile contributor withdrew his contribution immediately before the (then) deadline and a replacement contributor had to be found. Fourth, a couple of contributors delayed their contributions, due to the pressures of their own work. Finally, there were unfortunate delays during the book's production process which were beyond our control. All in all, an editor's task is thankless and fraught with complications. However, despite the time lapse between the initial preparation and final publication of many of the papers, we have made every effort to ensure that, where necessary, information has been updated. As a consequence, we are confident that the usefulness of the collection has not been reduced.

Finally, we owe a heartfelt debt of gratitude to the support staff of the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at Warwick, who prepared the manuscripts for publication. Without the unstinting work of Rose Goodwin and Gurbakhsh Hundal, in particular, our task would have been even more difficult.

Richard Jenkins
John Solomos

16 January 1987