

**ATTITUDES TOWARDS RACISM  
IN SCOTLAND**

**JULY 2001**

Prepared for:  
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And  
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14 August 2001

# Contents

<b>A. Background and Method .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B. Main Findings .....</b>	<b>3</b>
B.1. Ethnicity.....	3
B.2. Exposure to racism.....	4
B.3. Self-assessment as racist .....	6
B.4. Racism as a problem in Scotland.....	8
B.5. Attitudes towards race-related issues.....	8
B.6. Racism demographically .....	10
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>11</b>
i) Attitude battery summary tables .....	11
ii) Note on sampling.....	13
iii) Questionnaire.....	14

## A. Background and Method

The Scottish Executive is planning to launch a major advertising campaign as part of its long-term strategy to address problems of racism in Scotland. Both to feed in to the development of this campaign and to provide a benchmark against which future progress might be assessed, research was commissioned to investigate current attitudes towards race-related issues among the Scottish adult population.

Since the survey timing required did not fit with the monthly schedule of our omnibus, Scottish Opinion Survey, we adopted the same sampling approach on an ad hoc basis, to ensure that any follow-up measures taken in future might use the omnibus then and still be compatible. A sample of 1081 adults aged 16 and over was interviewed in-home in 40 sampling points throughout Scotland over the period 21-25 July 2001. A note on sampling is appended. To ensure that the sample was representative of the adult population in terms of gender, age and socio-economic grouping (SEG), it was weighted to match population estimates from the National Readership Survey of April 1998-March 1999. The sample profile, both unweighted and weighted, is shown below.

**Table 1 - Sample profile**  
Base: 1081 (%)

		Unweighted	Weighted
SEX:	Male	45	48
	Female	55	52
AGE:	16-24	12	14
	25-34	22	19
	35-44	21	19
	45-54	14	15
	55-64	13	13
	65+	19	20
SEG:	AB	18	19
	C1	26	28
	C2	20	20
	DE	37	33

Although respondents were recruited and classification data collected in a face-to-face interview situation, in view of the potentially sensitive nature of the subject matter and to encourage honesty in responding, the questions on racism were answered on a self-completion basis. Respondents were invited to complete the questionnaire privately and seal it in an envelope before returning this to the interviewer. By providing this degree of confidentiality in responding, we can ourselves have greater confidence in the accuracy of the data as reliably representative of Scottish attitudes and opinion.

## B. Main Findings

The main findings are highlighted in this section of the report.

### B.1. Ethnicity

As background to the attitudinal data, respondents were asked to classify themselves in terms of both ethnic group and country of birth, since either of these might have a bearing on exposure to racism.

**Table 2 - Ethnic group**

Base: All respondents

	(%)
White	97
Black African	*
Black Caribbean	*
Indian	1
Pakistani	*
Bangladeshi	*
Chinese	-
Other	*
Don't know/not stated	1
<b>N (Unweighted):</b>	<b>1081</b>

(\* = less than 1%, but not zero)

Overall, 2% identified themselves as non-white, which is in line with estimates of the size of the minority ethnic population in Scotland.

**Table 3 - Country of birth**

Base: All respondents

	(%)
Scotland	90
England	6
Wales	*
Northern Ireland	1
Republic of Ireland	*
India	*
Pakistan	*
Other	2
Don't know/not stated	*
<b>N (Unweighted):</b>	<b>1081</b>

(\* = less than 1%, but not zero)

90% of the sample were Scottish by birth, with the majority of the remainder (6%) born in England. On the whole, respondents were largely white Scots, with no more than 1 in 8 falling outwith this classification on the grounds of either ethnicity or country of birth.

## B.2. Exposure to racism

Data were collected on the level of exposure to racist behaviour either as victim, perpetrator or witness. The general picture was as follows.

**Table 4 - Exposure to racist behaviour**

Base: All respondents

	(%)
Personally a victim	11
Responsible for racist abuse	4
Witnessed racial abuse	36
Any exposure	40
<b>N (Unweighted):</b>	<b>1081</b>

A significant 40% had been exposed to racial abuse of another on account of their nationality or ethnic background at some time, primarily through having witnessed such behaviour (36%). 11% had actually been the victim of racist abuse, whereas 4% admitted to having been responsible for racial abuse of another.

Of those who had been victims of racist abuse, 9% were non-white, as against 2% of the total sample. Over half of the small number of non-whites in the sample had been victims of racist abuse. Analysis by country of birth reveals that 65% of victims were born in Scotland, 22% in England and 5% in Northern Ireland. This confirms that such abuse is not simply an issue of skin colour, but also extends to nationality. A number of Scots felt that they had been victimised, presumably outwith Scotland, on account of their nationality, and the relatively high percentage of English-born victims may reflect some anti-English sentiment in Scotland also.

Exposure to racist abuse within demographic sub-groups is shown in the table below. Figures are shown as row percentages - that is, the percentage in each sub-group exposed to racist behaviour in that category.

**Table 5 - Exposure to racist behaviour by demographics**

Base: All respondents

		Victim	Responsible	Witnessed
GENDER:	Male	12	6	43
	Female	10	3	30
AGE:	16-24	17	13	49
	25-34	14	3	51
	35-44	12	2	42
	45-54	13	4	35
	55-64	6	4	28
	65+	4	3	16
SEG:	AB	13	3	41
	C1	13	5	42
	C2	8	3	31
	DE	9	5	32

Due to the smaller base sizes within some sub-groups, it is perhaps the general patterns rather than absolute percentages which should be noted.

Age is the main discriminator, with younger people more likely to have been exposed to racist behaviour in all three contexts. This is clearly a cause for concern, if those who should be most

familiar with a multi-cultural society as the norm are also the most likely to be involved in behaviour of a racist nature.

In terms of gender, men tended to be more exposed to racist behaviour than women, and indeed were more often responsible for this.

The situation in relation to socio-economic grouping is perhaps the most surprising, in that it is the higher rather than lower groupings which show the highest incidence of both victimisation and witnessing racial abuse, when the opposite might have been expected. In addition, responsibility for such behaviour was equally common among the former as the latter. While this may in part reflect greater sensitivity among the higher groupings in describing behaviour as racist, it does run counter to the perception that racist behaviour is more prevalent down-market, as discussed later in the report.

### B.3. Self-assessment as racist

While it is possible to identify those of a more racist nature from their response to the battery of attitude statements, respondents were also asked directly to assess their stance towards people from an ethnic background or nationality different from their own. Results are shown below.

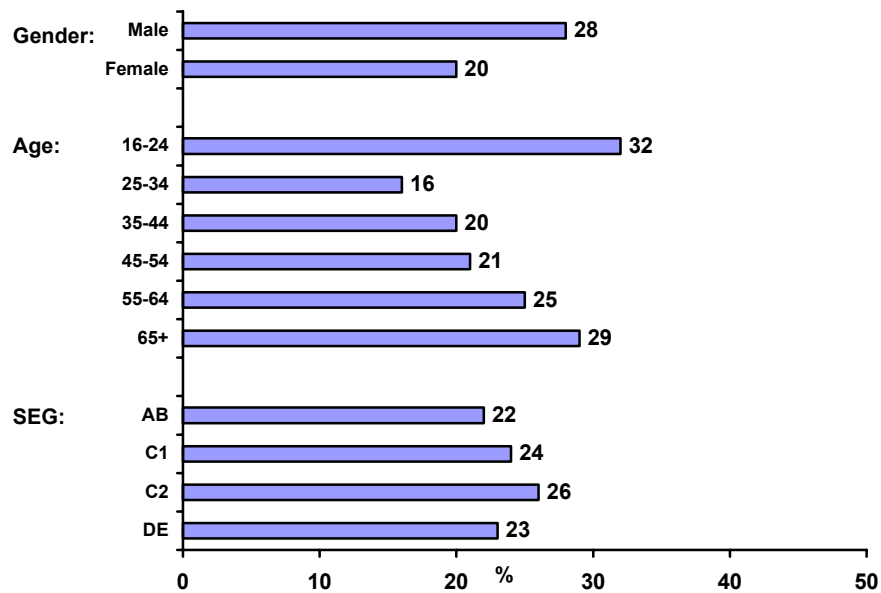
**Table 6 - Own attitudes toward people of different ethnic background/nationality**  
Base: All respondents

	(%)
Strongly racist	2
Slightly racist	22
Not racist at all	76
Don't know/not stated	1
<b>N (Unweighted):</b>	<b>1081</b>

Even with the confidentiality offered by the self-completion approach, some reluctance to admit to a racist attitude was to be expected. It is therefore significant that almost 1 in 4 (24%) of those interviewed did in fact describe themselves as at least slightly racist in attitude. There is clearly a sizeable undercurrent of racism throughout Scottish society. The chart overleaf illustrates the spread of this attitude demographically.

**Figure 1 - Strongly/slightly racist, by demographics**

Base: All respondents [N (Unweighted): 1081]



Based on this self-assessment, men emerged as more racist in attitude than women. In terms of age, the youngest age group (16-24s) proved to be the most racist, although it is interesting to note that racist attitudes were also more in evidence among older respondents. Socio-economically, there was no pronounced pattern, with ABs equally as likely to be racist in attitude as DEs on this measure.

It is interesting to note that, among those who had been victims of racist abuse, 33% described themselves as at least slightly racist. This might suggest that, having been subjected to racist abuse themselves, some victims adopt a more racist attitude personally in response. Racist abuse can encourage a racist reaction.

#### B.4. Racism as a problem in Scotland

A four point scale was used to assess perceptions of the seriousness of racism as a problem in Scotland today, with the following results.

**Table 7 - Seriousness of racism as a problem**

Base: All respondents

	(%)
A very serious problem	13.
A serious problem	33
A slight problem	41
Not a problem at all	8
Don't know/not stated	5
<b>N (Unweighted):</b>	<b>1081</b>

While there was general acknowledgement that racism is an issue at all, there was no consensus on the seriousness of the problem. Whereas 46% regarded this as either 'very serious' (13%) or, more commonly, as 'serious' (33%), 41% regarded racism as only a slight problem in Scotland. Since fieldwork was conducted prior to the recent incidents involving asylum seekers in Glasgow, it is likely that a quite different response would be recorded if this question were to be repeated now. Perception will be directly influenced by the coverage given to incidents of a racist nature in the media. For the 49% who regarded racism as, at worst, a slight problem, such incidents which have been reported previously have either had little impact or been seen as isolated, rather than as evidence of a wider underlying problem of racism in Scotland.

#### B.5. Attitudes towards race-related issues

Respondents were asked to indicate the strength of their agreement or disagreement with a series of attitude statements concerning race-related issues. A five point scale of Agree strongly (+2) - Disagree strongly (-2) was used for rating purposes, with the figures in brackets denoting the range of values ascribed to ratings in calculating mean scores. It should be noted that the purpose of mean scores on rating scales is purely for comparison of attitudes between sub-groups within the sample. The table in the Appendix presents a summary of the statements used, percentage ratings and also the mean scores recorded on each.

On the surface, we have the stereotypical view of Scottish people as generally warm and friendly towards people from other backgrounds who live here (78% agreement). However it would appear that the reality is quite different:

- 51% agreed that racist attacks on people and their property are a common occurrence in some parts of Scotland
- 44% agreed that Scottish people don't do enough to respect the different cultures of other ethnic groups who live here (27% disagreed)
- 38% agreed that they would be worried if the number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Scotland was to increase (35% disagreed).

Scottish people are perhaps less open and friendly than some would like to believe. Equally, however, there is a perception that this is not a one-sided issue, and that minority ethnic groups contribute to the situation through their own attitudes and behaviour:

- 64% agreed that people from different ethnic backgrounds can be racist in their attitudes towards Scottish people
- 40% agreed that people from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Scotland don't do enough to fit in with the Scottish way of life (29% disagreed).

It is significant that 69% agreed that people will always be a bit racist in their attitudes towards other nationalities or ethnic groups, since this lies at the heart of the problem. People from no matter what ethnic background will feel proud and protective of their national identity and culture. The problem arises when this develops into an antagonistic attitude towards others from different backgrounds, which can exist equally within minority as in majority groupings. This is perhaps reflected in the acknowledgement by 55% that, if things don't improve, there is a real danger of race riots occurring in parts of Scotland. Against this background, a clear majority of 72% agreed that people in Scotland ought to do more to stop racism occurring here.

If the attitudes expressed above are taken in conjunction with perceptions of the seriousness of racism as a problem in Scotland, one might conclude that racism is in fact more of an issue than many are prepared to accept or recognise. The spread of responses across the scale on a number of statements in the battery, including a relatively high uncommitted response, indicates not only a lack of consensus, but perhaps also a lack of awareness and appreciation of the issue of racism generally. It is not something which has been addressed openly in Scotland to any extent and might benefit from being so.

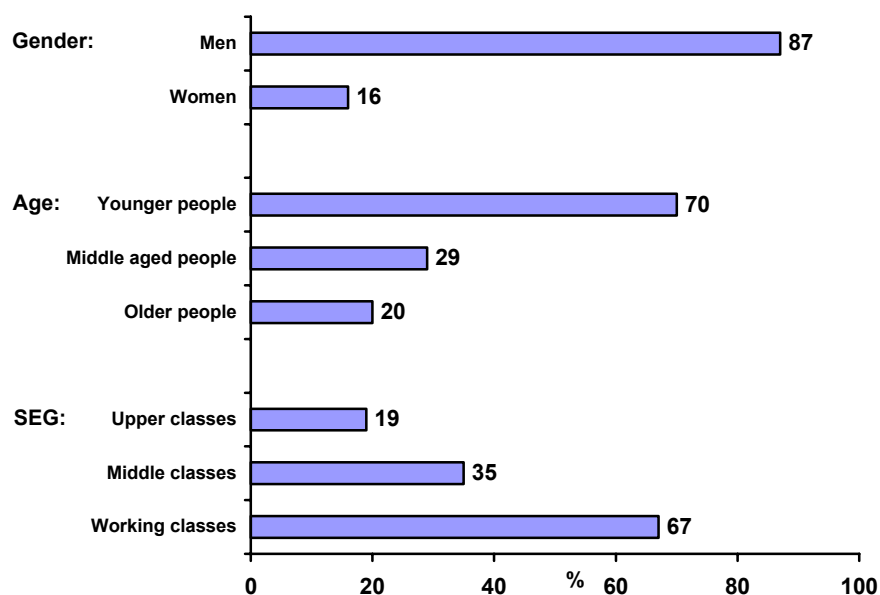
Demographically, it is worth noting that attitudes were potentially more racist among the older age groups and lower socio-economic groupings than among other sub-groups. On age, this is consistent with the picture among older people on the self-assessment as racist, but less so on SEG, on which there was no particular pattern. This might suggest that the lower groupings did not fully recognise or acknowledge their attitudes as racist in that particular context.

### B.6. Racism demographically

To establish whether racism is associated with any particular sectors of the population in public perception, respondents were asked to identify in respect of gender, age and social class which groups they regarded as more racist in their attitude and behaviour in Scotland. Views are illustrated in the chart below.

**Figure 2 - Demographic sub-group tending to be most racist**

Base: All respondents [N (Unweighted): 1081]



The perception is therefore that men are significantly more likely to be racist than women, that racism is strongest among younger people and declines with age, and similarly increases down the social scale.

These views are not entirely supported by other survey evidence. The latter does indicate that men and young people are more racist in attitude. At the same time, however, older people are generally more racist than many would believe, and it is also the case that such attitudes are more broadly spread socio-economically than expected. Racism is an issue which extends across Scottish society and is not confined to particular sub-groups.

# Appendix

## i) Attitude battery summary tables

**Table 8 - Attitudes towards race-related issues**

Base: 1081 (%)

		Agree strongly (+2)	Agree Slightly (+1)	Neither agree nor disagree (0)	Disagree slightly (-1)	Disagree strongly (-2)	Mean score
a)	Scottish people are generally warm and friendly towards people from other backgrounds who live here	37	41	11	9	2	+1.01
b)	Scottish people don't do enough to respect the different cultures of other ethnic groups who live here	10	34	28	17	10	+0.18
c)	I would be worried if the number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Scotland were to increase	12	26	26	15	20	-0.06
d)	I would be unhappy if someone from a different ethnic background to me moved in to live next door	7	10	25	14	42	-0.75
e)	Racist attacks on people and their property are a common occurrence in some parts of Scotland	18	33	25	15	9	+0.37
f)	People will always be a bit racist in their attitudes towards other nationalities or ethnic groups	20	49	13	10	7	+0.67
g)	People are justified in verbally attacking asylum seekers who get housing and benefits in Scotland	10	16	15	14	43	-0.67
h)	Many complaints of racism are an over-reaction to a harmless bit of name-calling	12	24	20	21	22	-0.18
i)	People from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Scotland don't do enough to fit in with the Scottish way of life	13	27	30	16	13	+0.10
j)	People from different ethnic backgrounds can be racist in their attitudes towards Scottish people	20	44	21	9	5	+0.67
k)	People in Scotland ought to do more to stop racism occurring here	38	34	17	6	4	+0.99
l)	If things don't improve, there is a real danger of race riots occurring in parts of Scotland	25	30	21	12	11	+0.46

**ii) Note on sampling**

Sampling points are selected firstly on the basis of Scottish Parliamentary constituencies, to reflect the general population distribution geographically. A specific sampling point is then allocated within the constituency, although interviewers are free to move areas within their allotted constituency if necessary for quota purposes. The range of constituencies and sampling points covered varies each month.

Within each sampling point, a quota sampling method is adopted for respondent selection, with quotas set in relation to demographics and working status. Only one interview is permitted per household. Statistical theory dictates that only probability sampling allows for the calculation of error rates and confidence intervals. Any estimates of change as significant within the report are therefore empirically based and should be regarded as indicative, rather than absolute.

**iii) Questionnaire****TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RESPONDENT PERSONALLY****Name:** .....

This survey is being carried out as part of an investigation into racism in Scotland. By racism, we mean a situation when one person treats another differently or is verbally or physically abusive to another or his/her property on account of their nationality, colour or ethnic origin. Please answer all questions and then seal your questionnaire in the envelope provided. Your answers will be treated in confidence and not identified with you personally. They will be added to all the other replies we receive from around 1000 people throughout the country to form a picture of the situation on racism within Scotland.

- Q.1 How much of a problem do you think racism is in Scotland today? Please tick one answer only (20)
- |  |                          |                        |   |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | A very serious problem | 1 |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | A serious problem      | 2 |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | A slight problem       | 3 |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not a problem at all   | 4 |
- Q.2 Listed below are a number of statements which have been made about how people in Scotland think and behave towards others of a different nationality or ethnic background. How much do **you** agree or disagree with each one? Please tick a box to show how strongly you agree or disagree with each, from **your** point of view. Even if you are not sure, we are still interested in your impressions. Please ask the interviewer to show you what to do if this is not clear, and please do tick an answer for each statement.
- |  | Agree<br>strongly        | Agree<br>slightly        | Neither<br>agree nor<br>disagree | Disagree<br>slightly     | Disagree<br>strongly     |      |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------|
| a) Scottish people are generally warm and friendly towards people from other backgrounds who live here             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (21) |
| b) I would be worried if the number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Scotland were to increase | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (22) |
| c) People will always be a bit racist in their attitudes towards other nationalities or ethnic groups              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (23) |
| d) Racist attacks on people and their property are a common occurrence in some parts of Scotland                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (24) |
| e) People are justified in verbally attacking asylum seekers who get housing and benefits in Scotland              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (25) |
| f) People from different ethnic backgrounds can be racist in their attitudes towards Scottish people               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (26) |
| g) I would be unhappy if someone from a different ethnic background to me moved in to live next door               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (27) |

- h) People from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Scotland don't do enough to fit in with the Scottish way of life      (28)
- i) Scottish people don't do enough to respect the different cultures of other ethnic groups who live here      (29)
- j) Many complaints of racism are an over-reaction to a harmless bit of name-calling      (30)
- k) People in Scotland ought to do more to stop racism occurring here      (31)
- l) If things don't improve, there is a real danger of race riots occurring in parts of Scotland      (32)

**NOW PLEASE TURN OVER AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE BACK OF THIS SHEET**

Q.3 Who do you think tend to be more racist in their attitude and behaviour in Scotland?

- a) Which sex? (33)
- Men 1
- Women 2
- b) Which age group(s)? (34)
- Younger people 1
- Middle aged people 2
- Older people 3
- b) Which social class(es)? (35)
- Upper classes 1
- Middle classes 2
- Working classes 3

Q.4 Being as honest with yourself as you can, how would you describe your own attitudes towards people from an ethnic background or nationality different from your own?

- (36)
- Strongly racist 1
- Slightly racist 2
- Not racist at all 3

Q.5 Have you personally ever **been a victim** of racist abuse, verbal or physical, on account of your nationality or ethnic background?

- (37)
- Yes 1
- No 2

- Q.6 Have you personally ever been **personally responsible** for racist abuse of another, either verbal or physical including name-calling, in relation to their nationality or ethnic background? (38)
- |                          |     |   |
|--------------------------|-----|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No  | 2 |
- Q.7 Have you ever **witnessed** someone being racially abused in relation to their nationality or ethnic background? (39)
- |                          |     |   |
|--------------------------|-----|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No  | 2 |
- Q.8 To which of these groups do you consider yourself to belong? (40)
- |                          |                        |   |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | White                  | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Black African          | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Black Caribbean        | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Indian                 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pakistani              | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bangladeshi            | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese                | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (WRITE IN) ..... |   |
- Q.9 And what is the country of your birth? (41)
- |                          |                        |   |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Scotland               | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | England                | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Wales                  | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Northern Ireland       | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Republic of Ireland    | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | India                  | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pakistan               | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (WRITE IN) ..... |   |

**PLEASE NOW FOLD THIS SHEET, SEAL IT IN THE ENVELOPE SUPPLIED AND RETURN IT TO THE INTERVIEWER. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE ON THIS IMPORTANT SECTION OF THE INTERVIEW**