

Chapter 12
Tribe and D. Airey (eds)
(2007)
Developments in Tourism Research
Elsevier, London

The Socio-Political Implications of Rural Racism and Tourism Experiences

Marcus L. Stephenson

Introduction

For the purpose of this paper, the term 'black' commonly refers to individuals of African origin and recent Caribbean descent, sometimes referred to as 'Afro-Caribbean' or 'black Caribbean'. Importantly, 'black' represents a state of political consciousness and a 'positive source of identity' (Pilkington, 2003, p. 37), and is arguably a more appropriate form of expression than the conceptual application of 'black British'. The prevailing need for first- and second-generation populations to connect and/or reconnect with the ancestral homeland is indicative of people's reluctance to identify with British and/or English attributes of identity (Stephenson, 2002, 2004). Despite recent conceptual movements toward locating 'black Britishness' as a significant appellation for Britain's black community (Ownusu, 2000), this chapter deliberately avoids using this term as a possible descriptor because of the ideological and cultural implications associated with racialised dimensions of a 'British identity'.

The forthcoming discussion emphasises the point that members of the UK black community do not necessarily share a national way of life, exemplified by their marginalisation from popular social activities such as countryside travel. Their self- and collective-identities are not necessarily adaptable or biddable as the (relatively new) 'black British' concept implies. Popular representations of the countryside as an expression of Englishness and/or Britishness have the desired effect of disenfranchising black minorities from appreciating rural environments. Attempts personally to reconstruct or renegotiate a sense of black Britishness would thus imply that individuals are capable of adopting some form of double consciousness during their countryside visits. However, the debate draws attention to how British/English forms of ethnic identification appear to be inconsequential because of the degree to which racialised countryside experiences prevent black individuals from empathising with the national experience.

Developments in Tourism Research
Copyright © 2007 by Elsevier Ltd.
All rights of reproduction in any form reserved.
ISBN: 978-0-080-45328-6

Racism is often defined as a process by which individuals and groups stereotype members of another race on the basis of possessing inherent (physical) characteristics (e.g., pigmentation) (Yeboah, 1988). This categorisation works on the belief that some races are naturally superior to other races. However, racism is arguably a social construct, relating to the ways in which powerful ethnic groups develop racialised categories and stereotypical representations of those perceived to be socially and culturally inferior. These constructs have the effect of producing what Balibar (1991, p. 18) terms — the 'stigmata of otherness', i.e., a social disposition which has implications beyond biological determinism.

Racism arguably celebrates not only biological supremacy but also cultural difference and social superiority (Barker, 1981; Gilroy, 1987). Barker (1981) maintains that nationalist discourses often construct definitions of the 'British Nation' on the basis of socio-biological beliefs, appropriated by the dominant ethnic group in an endeavour to preserve its status and position in society. Racism thus functions on the assumption that it is not natural for people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to be part of a 'bounded community' or a 'nation' (1981, p. 21). It can transpire through territorial claims and acts of physical exclusion, which effectively impede the socio-political rights of those classified as 'outsiders'. As the chapter illustrates, racial abuse toward black minorities and their physical disenfranchisement from the civilised enjoyment of rural (white-populated) domains seriously questions the extent to which black minorities are perceived as UK citizens, possessing the necessary citizenship entitlements as their white counterparts; particularly rights to social and cultural forms of citizenship.

National culture has been defined and redefined through the gradual development of racial boundaries, which exclude those individuals who are perceived to be a threat to the cultural values of the nation. English nationalism is arguably one of the most potent determinants of racial exclusion because it operates through the political and ideological role of the British state. As Gilroy (1993, p. 75) reminds us, the British state can exist without a need for a unique British culture because English nationalism has an all-defining capacity to construct and dictate the 'cultural content' of 'authentic' national life. Popular representations of the English countryside pertinently illustrate how national life is presented and constructed, where countryside ideals and pastoral myths reinforce Anglo-centric notions of identity and tradition; an issue that will be discussed at length in the forthcoming discussion.

Members of the black community frequently experience difficulties in attaining equal opportunities and benefits of British citizenship. Evidence suggests that racial inequality is prevalent within the housing and education sectors (Pilkington, 2003). The denial of equal opportunities and benefits of citizenship has the effect of disenfranchising significant sections of the community from society, whether as a consequence of intentional or unintentional racial practices. Critical inquiries have profiled the range of racial problems that black communities face: economic exploitation (Rex & Tomlinson, 1979), racial violence (Keith, 1995) and racial surveillance (Lyon, 2003). Such problems are thought to prevail within urban (multi-racial) communities, where racism affects socially excluded and economically marginal (inner city) societies. Racism is thus commonly perceived as an urban concern, based on the assumption that 'racism only spatially occurs where black people live' (Watt, 1998, p. 688). This perspective is being challenged through 'growing recognition of the existence of racism in new spatial contexts' (Watt, 1998, pp. 689–690). Enquiries have seriously addressed the role of racism in countryside environments (Agyeman & Spooner, 1997; Neal,

2002; Chakrabarti & Garland, 2004). Nevertheless, despite several initial observations (Stephenson, 2004; Stephenson & Hughes, 2005; Prieto Arranz, 2006), analysts have not significantly embraced the study of countryside tourism and racism.

A critical appreciation of the problems of rural racism perhaps illustrates that racism is not a 'monolithic' construct, but something, which operates uniquely in 'differing local, geographic, social, economic contexts' (Neal, 2002, p. 456). Nevertheless, there are underlying political ramifications associated with the way in which power-bound relations lead to the social exclusion of 'black others' from rural spaces and places. This observation encourages ontological-based debates concerning the 'right to travel', 'citizenship rights' and 'multi-racial forms of mobility'. The discussion generally emphasises that, although ethnic minority movements can be perceived as elements of risk because of the social and geo-political threats that such groups seemingly pose to ethnic majority communities, relations of power ensure that minority groups are marginalised from the countryside. Importantly, this paper suggests ways in which tourism researchers can approach the study of tourism, racism and the countryside.

The 'English'/'British' Countryside: Racial Prejudice and Notions of 'Insidership'

Non-white minorities, visiting or considering visiting rural environments, potentially anticipate or encounter racial prejudice. People's personal experiences suggest that the countryside can generate uncomfortable feelings for black visitors. The novelist, Andrea Levy, explains her feelings of visiting countryside environments:

As soon as I step outside a major city, I feel self-conscious and it's unpleasant. It has made me feel vulnerable. I've had unpleasant experiences in pubs, comments made. When people look at me they look at me as different. That comes into my head like a Pavlovian reaction. You just want to blend in and fear that you won't (Guardian, 2004a).

Watt's (1998) study, concerning opinions of 'out-of-town' visits and places in southeast England, illustrates that non-urban (white) places are often perceived by non-white groups as places which harbour significant levels of racial conflict. One of his research informants, for instance, expressed his opinion of a nearby commuter village, commenting:

...I don't feel safe to walk around there...that place is so racist, they don't like black people up there...yeah, white area, up there if you spot a black man up there walking, that's it, you've got about one or two black people up there (Watt, 1998, p. 698).

It is difficult to quantify the extent to which ethnic minority groups travel to the UK countryside, particularly as government bodies and rural organisations have not significantly monitored the ethnic backgrounds of countryside users. Only recently have the

Ramblers' Association and the National Trust recognised the importance of ethnic monitoring (Guardian, 2004a). Nevertheless, compared to white suburbanites/urbanites, black (and Asian) minorities are far less likely to travel into the countryside because of increased levels of racial violence. Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, announced that the countryside sustains a 'passive apartheid', by claiming a 'gradual shift toward a difficult situation in which people from ethnic minorities feel uncomfortable' (Guardian, 2004b).

Based on the number of racially recorded incidents in comparison to the size of local ethnic minority populations, it was estimated that racial violence is ten times more likely to occur in rural areas than in urban areas (Observer, 2001). Yet rural incidents have more than doubled since 2001 (Rayner, 2005), a possible outcome of the intensification of racism and xenophobia in the aftermath of the 11 September, 2001 incident. Although Cumbria is now ranked as the most racist region in England and Wales, other 'danger areas' are Cornwall and Devon, most of Wales, Cleveland, Durham and Norfolk. However, the southwest region has attracted significant attention from the regional press, where headlined stories have reported on the range of racialised incidents occurring in such popular tourist destinations as Bodmin (Cornwall) (Western Morning News, 2004a), Exeter (Devon) (Western Morning News, 2004b) and Torquay (Devon) (Torbay Herald Express, 2004).

In addition to racial motivation and intent, other factors responsible for limiting black people's opportunities to travel to the countryside have been identified: lack of free time and limited disposable income (Agyeman & Spooner, 1997), inadequate (and overly traditional) publicity material concerning countryside recreation (Prieto Arranz, 2006) and limited cultural familiarity with a rural life (Stephenson & Hughes, 1995). Accordingly, countryside communities naturally establish their own cultural sense of 'insidership', which excludes the interests of outsiders. Rural-based studies have identified factors enabling village communities to distinguish themselves from the world outside: strong kinship ties, interactive social networks and 'insider knowledge' of rural folklore and tradition (see Cohen, 1982). For individuals to appreciate countryside life and experience hospitable environments, they may have to acquire deep-seated knowledge of local social systems and cultural processes. This indeed is an arduous undertaking for black (urban) minorities as they do not necessarily have strong kinship connections and regular social contact with rural communities.

Pahl (1968) highlights the complex 'social mix' of rural residents: large (traditional) property owners, middle-class professionals, former (retired) urban workers, commuters who work in urban areas and local workers who work beyond their environments. Yet it would be naive to claim that socio-cultural distinctions between rural communities and urban societies are always significantly distinctive, particularly as the physical boundaries between the two locales are becoming less spatially demarcated as suburban and rural spaces are increasingly appropriated by migrating urban (middle-class) populations (Phillips, 1993), or what Jedrej and Nutall (1996) appropriately term — the 'white settlers'. Nevertheless, the social constitution of village life inadvertently elevates the racialised differences between the white middle-class inhabitants and ethnic minority populations, especially in places where the former group seek to define, redefine and/or uphold the socio-cultural conventions of village life (Tyler, 2003). Despite the social changes affecting rural societies, black minorities still predominantly reside in spatially distinct areas of the inner city.

Countryside Representations: National Values and Ideals

Although lack of contact and limited familiarity with the rural way of life may explain why members of this community have little opportunity fully to appreciate countryside environments, it could be that media representations (e.g., countryside magazines, television programmes and brochures) and popular perceptions of rurality indirectly safeguard the racialised boundaries of countryside communities; creating an impression of the countryside as a domain exclusive to the interests of (white) English populations. Even if it is no longer appropriate to perceive rural environments as having a distinctive way of life based on consciously shared interests, harmonised socio-cultural systems and strong community values, they are popularly represented as 'homogeneous', 'timeless', 'idyllic', 'uniform' and 'natural'. The 'countryside milieu', constructed through authentic notions of 'Englishness', powerfully signifies national values and customs.

The rural idyll has a crucial role to play in classic literary works (e.g., Thomas Hardy's (1974), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*), autobiographies (e.g., Hannah Hauxwell's (1990), *Seasons of My Life: Story of a Solitary Daleswoman*) and radio soaps (e.g., *The Archers*); as well as television soap operas (e.g., *Heartbeat*), comedies (e.g., *The Good Life*), dramas (e.g., *All Creatures Great and Small*) and films (e.g., *Cider with Rosie*). Cider with Rosie, a dramatisation of Laurie Lee's (1959) novel concerning his childhood experiences in a secluded Cotswold valley, recalls the halcyon days of 'flower-fill meadows', 'church outings' and 'home-made wines'. It presents the rural idyll through the eyes of a child who fails to appreciate the hardships of rural life. Tess of the D'Urbervilles also reinforces the pastoral and romantic images of an agrarian (Wessex) lifestyle, with the image of Tess and her village friends dancing together in white dresses on the village green. In a subtle manner the novel implicates the external effects that industrialism and urban life can have on rural life, with a passionate message conveying that rural life ought to be firmly protected from external threats.

Place marketers have cultivated the image of the countryside as a bucolic idyll, rich in heritage and tradition. Romantic depictions of the UK rural destinations have been formalised through the strategic process of 'branding', where marketers have devised and promoted nostalgic connections between particular places and famous English personalities. This is illustrated through the tourism logos of 'Shakespeare Country' (south Warwickshire), 'Wordsworth's Country' (Cumbria), 'Bronte Country' (west Yorkshire) and 'Hardy's Wessex' (Dorset).

In his book *England: An Elegy*, right-wing philosopher Roger Scruton (2000) plaintively accounts for ways in which English virtues and conventions have been threatened by the ill effects of modernisation: urban expansion, industrial pollution and social entropy. He laments over the demise of country houses and the uprooting of hedgerows. The hedgerow, a consequence of the rapid enclosure of land in the late eighteenth century, purposefully protected livestock and those who lived and worked within its borders. The hedge was a 'symbol of Englishness' and a 'reminder to the English that the thing which defines them — the land itself — is also being removed from them' (2000, p. 242). Scruton's (2000) work suggests that the 'enchanting' and 'sacred' nature of rural environments should inspire inhabitants with a sense of confidence and social purpose; so as to ensure that remaining areas and landscapes are clearly preserved. The countryside should be 'fought for before all lesser things' (2000, pp. 41–42).

Nevertheless, Scruton's (2000, pp. 234–243) account of the English countryside is overly sentimental, lacking critical appraisal of the rural realities of social division, racial exclusion, ethnic dominance and intercultural discord. His discussion concerning the key attributes of Englishness pays little attention to socio-political constructions of English ethnicity and ways in which Englishness historically reflects a hybrid race (see Young, 2005).

The national project, manifested in the cultural attributes of rural life and romanticised perceptions of the countryside, is synonymously reinforced through conceptions of rural areas as 'safe havens' for white communities. The projection (and protection) of the 'English way of life' has an affect in making the countryside less accessible to black visitors. However, black minorities are not only being denied access to countryside environments but 'symbolic access to the icons of nationhood' (Kinsman, 1995, p. 301). Neal (2002, pp. 444–445) draws attention to the racial implications of presenting the countryside as a symbol of national identity, stating:

In contemporary Britain the deployment of rurality as a symbol of national identity is at odds with its multi-ethnic composition because nostalgic notions of rurality re-inscribe and treasure hyper-whitened and thereby exclusive versions of Englishness.

Unsurprisingly, the countryside has been targeted by the British National Party (BNP) in an endeavour to raise its share of the public vote. This intention reinforces the BNP's wider socio-political ambitions for the maintenance and expansion of multi-cultural free zones. This political organisation has recently campaigned in such places as Dorchester (Dorset), Malmesbury (Wiltshire), Newlyn (Cornwall) and Penzance (Cornwall) (Cornish Guardian, 2004; Guardian, 2004c; Western Daily Press, 2004).

There are clear historical associations between ethnic minorities and the countryside, which have been disregarded from national heritage representations. Neal (2002), for instance, acknowledges the historical link between ethnic minorities and the English countryside, illustrating that some of England's stately homes were built from capital generated by the transatlantic slave trade. She also asserts that the prevalence of village public houses with such names as 'Jamaica Inn' and 'Indian Queens', and one might also add 'Black Boy', authenticates the countryside's colonial legacy (2002, p. 445). There are various examples of situations where non-white persons either occupied or frequented the British countryside. Agyeman (1995) describes how soldiers from North Africa were used to protect Hadrian's Wall during the Roman Empire, while Brown (1998) acknowledges the presence of Sikh pedlars in the Scottish Highlands in the early 20th century. Regrettably, countryside heritage is popularly imagined through mono-cultural and mono-ethnic narratives of rural life.

Social and Cultural Perceptions of 'Black Others'

The mass production of spurious images of black communities may also influence the establishment of social divisions between black visitors and white hosts, as well as negatively impacting the way in which 'black others' are viewed in public places and spaces. The social construction of popular myths of black criminality, i.e., black people as 'drug pushers', 'thieves' and 'muggers', illustrates ways in which black societies are stereotypically portrayed,

socially perceived and culturally construed (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978). Poet Benjamin Zephaniah's experience illustrates the degree to which black individuals are instantaneously perceived as a threat or danger to the rural community. He recalls:

I was in Essex on a friend's farm and went for a long jog. Never left his land. When I got back to his house, the place was surrounded by police, a helicopter circling above. 'We have had reports of a suspicious jogger', the police said. My friend was outraged (Guardian, 2004a).

The perceived threat that 'black others' pose to local lifestyles and the cultural mores of the community depends on the extent to which they are commonly viewed as sources of cultural pollution and social danger. Although these constructs are widely addressed in anthropological enquiries concerning cultural manifestations of the human body (Douglas, 1984), their application to the study of inter-ethnic relations in host environments could help to explain reasons why racialised encounters and exchanges develop. They importantly indicate why symbolic frames of expression and communication (e.g., verbal insults, intense staring and physical provocation) are directed at those considered to be ethnically and racially different from the expected norm.

In his ethnographic study of tourism and travel experiences by first- and second-generation members of Manchester's black community, Stephenson (1997) highlights occasions where individuals experienced direct racial provocation during countryside visits. Stephenson's research confederate, Junior, drew attention to one incident when he and several (black) colleagues were 'car chased' from a Shropshire village, commenting:

They were closely behind hasslin' us. It wasn't as if we were not familiar with this sort of thing... I wasn't taking any risk. When we stopped I got hold of two pieces of brick, cos' you never know! ... I was terrified and very worried. Fortunately, we must have lost them... I like the countryside... the scenery mainly, but you can be vulnerable. You know what we say in Jamaica, 'Trouble doesn't settle like rain'. Wherever you go, you are always thinking of what's around the corner... I wouldn't go 'back to that place again (1997, p. 139).

Continual awareness and anticipation of risk encounters in countryside environments is of fundamental importance to members of the black community, especially in terms of self-preservation and personal protection. The restriction and control of black people's access to white spaces signifies how 'blackness' is perceived to pollute 'whiteness', and how there are subsequent attempts by the dominant group to 'purify' the primary space. Scruton (2000, p. 50) emphasises that 'physical existence exposes you to a danger of contamination. Strangers must remain strangers, lest they pollute you with their intimacy'. His justification for this claim relates to his observation concerning the English entitlement of privacy, where the home and the land were valued social gifts. He further claims:

To the English there was no more valued freedom than the freedom to close a door. The Englishman's home was not just a castle, but an island of 'mine' in

an ocean of 'ours'. The English saw their country as home and the land as their entitlement; hence they could not be content without a piece of it (Scruton, 2000, p. 51).

Gardens, lawns and floral borders were symbolic of people's desire to affirm an 'inalienable right of possession to the plot of land that was theirs' (Scruton, 2000, p. 52). Nonetheless, the need to maintain physical distance relates to the fear of exposure to those polluting elements associated with social encroachment and cultural intrusion, rather than the sole need to protect commercial interests and the values associated with private ownership and land entitlement. However, as members of the black community are popularly perceived to belong to the urban domain, the perception of 'blackness' as a source of pollution ought to be contextualised within an analytical framework that accounts for socio-spatial representations of black (urban) societies. Conceptions of urban domains are often guided by popular images of social decay and environmental contamination. The functional myths and representations of the rural idyll symbolise a contrast to the dysfunctional images of the inner city as a place of chaos and squalor. According to Agyeman and Spooner:

In the white imagination people of colour are confined to town and cities, resenting an urban, 'alien' environment, and the white landscape of rurality is aligned with 'nativeness' and the absence of evil or danger (1997, p. 199).

Black populated areas of inner cities have not attracted considerable attention of the 'tourist gaze', nor have they been significantly selected by tourism marketers as sites for 'visual consumption' (Urry, 1992, p. 19). The perception of the inner city as a source of social pollution seemingly discourages mass interest. Yet the supposed inherent 'whiteness' of rural spaces is often the subtext for concerns over the housing and accommodation of asylum seekers, where such people (immigrants/non-whites) are assumed not to be 'suited' to rural life and to be located 'elsewhere', i.e., in the inner city. Accordingly, resident and community groups have firmly opposed government proposals to construct asylum centres and hostels in such rural areas as Bichester (Oxfordshire), Over Stowey (Somerset) and Throckmorton (Worcestershire) (Guardian, 2000, 2002, 2003). Lowe, Murdoch and Cox (1995) claim that:

...in recent times, as the countryside has become of increasing value as a 'positional good', tied to the cultural construction of 'Anglo-centricity', the need to exclude undesirable, multi-ethnic 'others' has become of increasing concern to both rural residents and the central state... the 'urban' must be kept at bay (1995, p. 66).

The representational disconnections between rural and urban locales suggests that the view emphasising that people from all social backgrounds are becoming increasingly exposed to the lifestyles and private spaces of others (Urry, 2002) and that different cultures and societies are becoming more interdependent (Rojek, 1993), is not necessarily productive in explaining social distances between those who live in rural communities and minorities who live in urban societies. These distances are created as a consequence of the complex interplay between ideologically informed representations of rurality, ideologies of local

and national identity, social constructions and perceptions of black cultures and societies and relations of power.

Power-Bound Relationships, Citizenship Rights and Identity Issues

Cheong and Miller (2000, p. 383) maintain that it is important to acknowledge the extent to which tourists and visitors can be perceived as 'primary objects' of the 'local gaze', especially as their physical, cultural and economic presence can instigate intense local surveillance and suspicion. Thus locals can be antagonistic toward tourists by acting 'as agents in power relations by galvanizing (active or passive) resistance to tourists' (2000, p. 382). If this perspective seriously accounted for the ethnic and racial status of tourists/visitors, it would apply more directly to an understanding of the ways in which black tourists/visitors are received in rural (host) environments than to tourists *per se*, especially as such visitors are seemingly more subjected to power-bound relationships than their white (tourist) counterparts. If white tourists do encounter displays of aggression in non-white (host) communities, then this may be partly understood as a reaction to their economic superiority and racial status. The racially imperious nature of tourist quests and encounters is a dominant concern in provocative critiques of Western forms of travel/tourism (Kincaid, 1988; Dunn, 2004, pp. 483–496), for instance, examines ways in which Africa has been constructed and consumed by the 'Western tourist gaze', with the undesired affect of fixing 'African otherness' as well as freezing 'de-evolving' and 'primitive' images of Africa.

The claim that tourists can be perceived as 'targets of power' (Cheong & Miller, 2000, pp. 380–382) should be reevaluated once issues of racial dominance and inequality are considered. Studies concerning power-bound relationships in tourism should thus account for racialised encounters and inequalities that transpire between (and within) different cultures, societies and ethnic groups.

For members of the black community, the desire or need for secure and safe encounters may be a more important personal priority than the need to indulge in chance encounters and experiential experiences. Consequently, black people's aspirations and perceptions do not seemingly conform to post-modernist theories concerning tourists' sensibilities, particularly the increasing desire independently to explore isolated destinations and new territories. This aspiration apparently belongs to the 'post- (mass) tourist', i.e., someone who is prepared to take chances and experience challenging situations (Feifer, 1985, p. 259). Individuals may actually aspire to travel to destinations that limit their exposure to socially dislocated experiences and the consequent threat of racialised encounters. Accordingly, travel could be less threatening in places where there is a significant presence of 'black others'. The homelands of the Caribbean are likely destinations for the UK black Caribbean visitors to feel a sense of safety and comfort, especially as racialised encounters are expected to be nominal (Stephenson, 2002). This form of travel is likely to encourage individuals to undergo a process of ethnic and cultural familiarisation, contributing to a clear understanding of the multi-cultural (and multi-racial) dynamics of travel and mobility.

Confrontational encounters occurring between black visitors and white locals are politically problematic because black citizens supposedly have legal rights associated with British citizenship, i.e., the right to live and work in any area of the UK. Therefore, racially inspired

reactions and hostile encounters politically restrict people's socio-physical access to public spaces. These constraining and threatening elements, which hinder the rights and freedoms of ethnic minority nationals to establish, express or extend citizenship entitlements, actually reflect a continuation of the experiences and encounters of the black (African–Caribbean) diaspora: incarceration, relocation, containment, deportation and enforcement (see Clifford, 1997).

Marshall (1950, 1963), who wrote a series of thought provoking essays on the nature of citizenship in post-World War II Britain, suggests that a civilised society ought to acknowledge people's right to 'live the life of a civilised being according to standards set in society' and their right to 'share to the full in the social heritage' of the nation (1963, p. 74). Although Marshall's view has deep nationalist undertones, with implications that citizenship ought to be achieved through cultural assimilation and social obligation, the underlying message suggests that some kind of 'social citizenship' ought to exist on the basis of acknowledging the social rights and roles of all individuals within a civilised society. Nonetheless, members of the UK black community are arguably denied full status as 'social citizens' because of their limited ability to experience complete participation in the valued activities of the wider community. Restricted access to such socially oriented activities as countryside tourism indicates that sections of the national community are deprived of certain social citizenship entitlements, especially if it is to be accepted that countryside recreation is an important social (and cultural) entitlement in post-industrial societies.

Increased access to the countryside could be viewed as a movement toward the reclamation of citizenship rights, particularly if rights of citizenship are to be interpreted along social lines. Attempts to gain access to the countryside are not just an issue of challenging forms of British racism but an attempt to make black Britishness and perhaps black Englishness no longer oxymoronic. In this context, the view of black people from 'elsewhere' (i.e., 'foreign lands'), together with the belief that the countryside is a signifier of white Britishness/Englishness, could be disrupted and partially dissolved. For this situation to take effect rural communities would need to undergo a process of 'de-racialisation'. The prevailing socio-political climate of rural communities would make this task difficult to achieve, ambitiously entailing a complete delimitation of boundaries of ethnicity, race and nationality — not forgetting social class.

Nevertheless, if individuals are restricted from entering countryside environments then they are seemingly prevented from attaining rights to full cultural participation, particularly if they are denied rights to 'symbolic presence and visibility', 'dignifying representation', 'propagation of identity' and 'maintenance of lifestyle' (Pakulski, 1997, p. 80). Consequently, we are not only just dealing with elements of social citizenship but also aspects of 'cultural citizenship'. These two aspects of citizenship clearly illustrate that the right to travel is a politically important objective in achieving societal-based equality, despite the fact that black minorities arguably have a legitimate and legal right to British citizenship.

Conclusion and Research Implications

Racial prejudice inhibits minorities from actively participating in rural tourism. It can thus be assumed that individuals are restricted from experiencing the social benefits of countryside recreation. Countryside destinations are perceived to harbour racial resentment and host

communities are thought to negate opportunities for productive forms of social exchange. Although racialised rural experiences represent social conflict and racial interaction existing between black and white groups within the wider societal (urban) context, rural racism has unique features in that it targets individuals and/or small groups as opposed to physically immobile and geographically static (minority) communities.

The black visitor can become an 'element of spectacle' in white communities and destinations — viewed and censored by the prevailing power of the 'white gaze'. Although the 'white gaze' may not always be founded on hypercritical perceptions and harmful images of 'black others', it does have a unifying ability to provoke feelings of desolation in white areas. It may be difficult to convince members of the black community that public perceptions are not always racially motivated. Past experiences of racism, whether encountered personally or encountered by 'significant others' (e.g., friends and family members), would explain why individuals may be overtly suspicious of the 'white gaze'; whether or not it is racially intended. Unlike post-tourists, who are often provided with the opportunity to seek out 'new places to visit and capture' (Urry, 1992, p. 5), it could be the case that members of the black community are compelled to travel to known destinations which personify familiarity and offer a sense of security.

Black visitors are seemingly viewed as a threat to the social order and norms of (white) rural communities. Their association with the urban environment reinforces their 'outsider' status, especially as popular representations of urban life endorse the need to retain rural societies as domains where white communities feel safe and secure. Racial representations of 'black others', together with ethnic representations of Englishness and the rural idyll, strengthen the racialised boundaries that pre-exist between black visitors and white hosts. Therefore, racial boundaries and divisions potentially reinforce black people's self- and collective-identities, especially as racialised experiences and encounters contribute to the fortification of an identification process that venerates a sense of being black but at the same time denigrates any sense of being British.

Nonetheless, black people's increased access to rural space would represent a challenge to the countryside's national iconographic status. The de-territorialisation of white space could enable members of the black community to rethink the configuration of their own identities, particularly as increased representation in white-dominated spaces and places could confirm black people's permanency in British society and national life.

As this paper indicates that it is a citizenship entitlement to enjoy the benefits of countryside travel without prejudice or discrimination, it would also be useful for future studies to seriously address the socio-political (and cultural) rights of ethnic minorities to travel to places unrestricted by the actions and/or reactions of others; specifically focusing on the socio-political ramifications of power-bound relations pre-existing in white (host) environments (see Stephenson, 2006). Consequent strategies for achieving mutual exchanges, constructive experiences and positive encounters may then develop to the socio-cultural advantage of ethnic minority groups. Immediate attention ought to be drawn to the range of ethnic minorities groups experiencing racism in rural areas in ways that reflect ethnic, religious and gendered diversities, thereby enabling enquiries to acknowledge the complexities of power-bound relations inherent in multi-racial forms of mobility.

An important research feature would be to examine differences in perceptions and experiences between minority ethnic tourists and 'fixed' minority ethnic rural households,

contributing to a clearer understanding of the problems associated with 'tourism racism'. It would also be appropriate for enquiries to consider the fragmented constitution of white ethnic identities in rural England, especially in terms of geographical location and social class. This line of enquiry would help produce multi-dimensional perspectives concerning ways in which differing social compositions of inhabitants perceive 'racialised others'. It is imperative, however, that racialised perceptions are fervently challenged. Consequently, it is of fundamental importance to remove the 'white gaze' as being the only or dominant way to observe and make sense of the world.

References

- Agyeman, J. (1995). Environment, heritage and multiculturalism. *Interpretation: A Journal of Heritage and Environmental Interpretation*, 1(1), 5–6.
- Agyeman, J., & Spooner, R. (1997). Ethnicity and the rural environment. In: P. Cloke, & J. Little (Eds.), *Contested countryside cultures: Otherness, marginalisation and rurality* (pp. 197–217). London: Routledge.
- Balibar, E. (1991). Is there a neo-racism? In: E. Balibar, & I. Wallerstein (Eds.), *Race, nation, class: Ambiguous identities* (pp. 17–28). London: Verso.
- Barker, M. (1981). *The new racism*. London: Junction Books.
- Brown, M. (1998). The unheard cries. *Connections: A CRE Publication*, Summer, 8–9.
- Chakraborti, N., & Garland, J. (Eds.), (2004). *Rural racism*. Devon: Willan Publishing.
- Cheong, S.M., & Miller, M. L. (2000). Power and tourism: A Foucauldian observation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2), 371–390.
- Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cohen, A. P. (1982). *Belonging: Identity and social organisation in British rural cultures*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cornish Guardian. (2004). BNP not welcome says MP as members visit Penzance, 12 February.
- Douglas, M. (1984). *Purity and danger: An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Dunn, K. C. (2004). Fear of a black planet: Anarchy anxieties and postcolonial travel to Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, 25(3), 483–499.
- Feifer, M. (1985). *Going places: The ways of the tourist from imperial Rome to the present day*. London: Macmillan.
- Gilroy, P. (1987). *There ain't no Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Gilroy, P. (1993). *Small acts: Thoughts on the politics of Black cultures*. London: Serpent's Tail.
- Guardian. (2000). Rural revolt over asylum seekers' hostel (Gibbs, G.), 17 June.
- Guardian. (2002). Protesters rally at asylum centre site (Dodd, V.), 8 July.
- Guardian. (2003). Stitch-up over rural asylum centre (Hall, S.), 20 August.
- Guardian. (2004a). Countryside retreat (Prasad, R.), 28 January.
- Guardian. (2004b). Villagers bristle at accusation of rural prejudice (Smith, L.), 9 August.
- Guardian. (2004c). BNP trawls for votes in quiet Cornish port (Taylor, M.), 25 February.
- Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., & Roberts, B. (1978). *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order*. London: Macmillan.
- Hardy, T. (1974). *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. London: Macmillan (first published 1891).

- Hauxwell, H., & Cockcroft, B. (1990). *Seasons of my life: Story of a solitary daleswoman*. London: Arrow Books Ltd.
- Jedrej, C., & Nuttall, M. (1996). *White settlers: The impact on rural repopulation in Scotland*. Luxembourg: Harwood.
- Keith, M. (1995). Making the street visible: Placing racial violence in context. *New Community*, 21(4), 551–565.
- Kincaid, J. (1988). *A small place*. London: Virago Press.
- Kinsman, P. (1995). Landscape, race and national identity: The photography of Ingrid Pollard. *Area*, 27(4), 300–310.
- Lee, L. (1959). *Cider with Rosie*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Lowe, P., Murdoch, J., & Cox, G. (1995). A civilised retreat? Anti-urbanism, rurality and the making of an anglo-centric culture. In: P. Healey, S. Davoudi, S. Graham, & A. Madani-Pour (Eds.), *Managing cities: The new urban context* (pp. 63–82). London: Wiley.
- Lyon, D. (2003). *Surveillance after September 11*. London: Polity.
- Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and social class and other essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marshall, T. H. (1963). *Sociology at the crossroads and other essays*. London: Heinemann.
- Neal, S. (2002). Rural landscapes, representations and racism: Examining multicultural citizenship and policy making in the English countryside. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25(3), 442–461.
- Observer. (2001). Race attacks risk is higher outside cities (Rayner, J.), 18 February, p. 2.
- Owusu, K. (2000). *Black British culture and society*. London: Routledge.
- Pahl, R. (1968). The Rural-urban continuum. In: R. Pahl (Ed.), *Readings in urban sociology* (pp. 263–305). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Pakulski, J. (1997). Cultural citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, 1, 73–86.
- Phillips, M. (1993). Rural gentrification and the process of class colonialisation. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 28(9), 123–140.
- Pilkington, A. (2003). *Racial Disadvantage and Ethnic Diversity in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Prieto Arranz, J. I. (2006). Rural, White and straight: The ETC's vision of England. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 4(1), 19–52.
- Rayner, J. (2005). Racist attacks on the rise in rural Britain. *Observer*, 27 March, p. 1, 16.
- Rex, J., & Tomlinson, S. (1979). *Colonial immigrants in a British city: A class analysis*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Rojek, C. (1993). *Ways of escape: Modern transformations in leisure and travel*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Scutnon, R. (2000). *England: An elegy*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Stephenson, M. L. (1997). Tourism, race and ethnicity. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester.
- Stephenson, M. L. (2002). Travelling to the ancestral homelands: The aspirations and experiences of a UK Caribbean community. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 5(5), 378–425.
- Stephenson, M. L. (2004). Tourism, racism and the UK Afro-Caribbean diaspora. In: T. Coles, & D. J. Timothy (Eds.), *Tourism, Diasporas and Space* (pp. 62–77). London: Routledge.
- Stephenson, M. L. (2006). Travel and the 'freedom of movement': Racialised encounters and experiences amongst ethnic minority tourists in the EU. *Mobilities*, 1(2), 285–306.
- Stephenson, M. L., & Hughes, H. L. (1995). Holidays and the UK Afro-Caribbean community. *Tourism Management*, 16(6), 429–435.
- Stephenson, M. L., & Hughes, H. L. (2005). Racialised boundaries in tourism and travel: A case study of the UK Black Caribbean Community. *Leisure Studies*, 24(3), 137–160.
- Torbay Herald Express. (2004). Racial Abuse Youth's Booze Night Shame, 25 February.
- Tyler, K. (2003). The racialised and classed constitution of English village life. *ETHNOS*, 68(3), 391–421.
- Urry, J. (1992). The tourist gaze and the environment. *Theory Culture and Society*, 9(3), 1–26.
- Urry, J. (2002). The tourist gaze: Leisure and travel in contemporary societies (2nd ed.). London: Sage (first published in 1990).
- Wait, P. (1999). Going out of town: Youth, 'race', and place in the South East of England. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 16(6), 687–703.
- Western Daily Press. (2004). Fury as British National Party targets West's market towns, 20 February.
- Western Morning News. (2004a). Racism in the shadows (Young, N.), 14 February.
- Western Morning News. (2004b). Drunken woman's race tirade at doc, 23 February.
- Yeboah, S. K. (1988). *The ideology of racism*. London: Hansib Publishing Limited.
- Young, R. J. (2005). *The idea of English ethnicity*. Oxford: Blackwell.