

**A SOCIOLOGICAL TABLEAU OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN HUDDERSFIELD:  
THE DUNCAN SCOTT ARCHIVE AT HERITAGE QUAY**

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Commonwealth migration after 1945 has notably shaped the face of modern Britain. However, the social history of Commonwealth migrants in Britain is yet to receive the full attention it merits from historians. A chance to somewhat redress this has recently materialised in the form of an exciting donation to the University of Huddersfield's archive located in Heritage Quay. It contains sources collected in the town during the 1960s and 1970s which will be of great interest and utility to historians researching Commonwealth migration. The benefactor, Duncan Scott, collected the materials for his own doctoral thesis, 'A Political Sociology of Minorities', which was submitted in 1972; notwithstanding the quality of this work – which is very high – the main attraction is a set of thematically arranged folders packed with relevant newspaper clippings, notes and photographs. Scott's own written works are themselves full of insight; however, due to the scale and depth of his investigations a far more useful source emerges when they are examined together with his interview and field notes.<sup>1</sup> This is in part because Scott attempted too much, and his research contained a confusing number of dimensions. This must have been somewhat disorienting to interpret at the time, although, it is the scale of Scott's research that makes his

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<sup>1</sup> Scott never fully developed his PhD in a published form – although it underpinned his career in higher education – but he did release several outputs that were drawn from his work in Huddersfield: 'West Pakistanis in Huddersfield: Aspects of race relations in local politics', *New Community* (1973), pp. 38-43; 'The National Front in Local Politics: Some Interpretations', in Ivor Crewe (ed.), *British Political Sociology Yearbook, Volume 2: The Politics of Race* (London, 1975). The latter was an academic reshaping of an article Scott written in October 1971 for *Race Today*. Scott used the pseudonym 'John Armitage' for that article which was titled, 'The National Front in Huddersfield'. Despite this attempt at anonymity a successful libel case was brought against Scott by one of Huddersfield's high standing National Front members who after reading it recognised that only Scott could have created the article. Scott is still active and is currently pursuing his interest in the realities of social research with the Third Sector Research Centre at University of Birmingham. His most recent work deals with the contexts that shape social research from conception to publication. For example, Duncan Scott, *Slightly above the Weavers: The Making and Remaking of a Social Researcher* (2014), which is available at: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/duncan-scott/slightly-above-the-weavers/paperback/product-21443705.html>.

donation so propitious for historians now. The essence of Scott's task was to acquaint himself with a diverse and strategically relevant pool of individuals and groups from Huddersfield. He succeeded to the point that examining the collection creates in the reader's mind an animated panorama of the emergence of multiculturalism in Huddersfield. Scott's research captured a key moment in recent British history, and laid bare the diversities and adversities in experience amongst newly arrived migrants in post-war Britain, as well as the 'host' population's reactions.

Despite lacking an academic background in History, Scott's work forms an early part of the historiography on post-Second World War migration to Britain. While Scott was not entirely alone in carrying out such research, the predominance of working class histories and class based analyses in that era ensured that few others then also sought to highlight the dehumanising effect of racialisation on British migrants.<sup>2</sup> Despite there being a long way to go there has been some progress in academia. Several journals currently in print deal – to varying degrees – with the history of migration in Britain; including *Immigrants & Minorities*, which exclusively publishes historical writings on the subject. Correspondingly, academic books on the political history of migration after 1945, or works encompassing the social history of Commonwealth migrants within a longer migration survey of Britain, are also now relatively plentiful.<sup>3</sup> Despite this the topic remains dominated by the other social sciences. Furthermore, 'mainstream' histories of modern Britain barely, if at all, cover the social history of migrants in Britain.<sup>4</sup> Perusing the contents of Arthur Marwick's, *A History of the Modern British Isles: 1914-1999*, for example, could lead anyone to assume that migration

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<sup>2</sup> Scott was not entirely alone in writing academically about the history and experience of Commonwealth migrants in Britain in the early 1970s. There were other social scientists, and even journalists writing about ethnicity and migration. For example, Dilip Hiro, *Black British White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain* (London, 1971)

<sup>3</sup> For example, Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1984), Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871-1971* (London, 1988), Arun Kundnani, *The End of Tolerance: Racism in 21st Century Britain* (London, 2007), Micheal H. Fisher, Shompa Lahiri and Shinder S. Thandi, *A South Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-Continent* (Oxford, 2007), and Panikos Panayi, *An Immigration History of Modern Britain: Multicultural Racism Since 1800* (London, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Describing any historical writing as mainstream is problematic, but in this instance it is intended to refer to books commonly read by undergraduates in history, and even possibly by the general public.

after 1945 was a non-event.<sup>5</sup> Martin Pugh's fourth revision of his work on *Social and Political History of Britain since 1870* contains only two pages devoted to race and migration.<sup>6</sup> Carnaveli and Strange's, *Twentieth-Century Britain*, is somewhat more progressive but its editors still only gave Panikos Panayi fifteen pages for his chapter on the three major themes of 'Immigration, multiculturalism and racism'.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the perceived ongoing nature of issues relating to inter-ethnic relations and migration means that the historicity of migration after 1945 is doubted by many historians. This would somewhat explain why the more policy driven social sciences still command the topic. Moreover, when migration in Britain is discussed by historians, as in the above mentioned works, migrants are rarely treated as human agents. As David Palmer notes in his study of recent arrived Ethiopian refugees in Britain, '[t]he experience, "voice," and perceptions of the "individual refugee" is conspicuous by its virtual absence from academic research'. In addition, Palmer's characterisation of recent forced migrants in academic literature as merely 'recipients of policy', also reflects much of the treatment received by British migrants in historical writing.<sup>8</sup> Migration after 1945 has been examined within a longer history of migration to Britain; its impact on politics and the economy has also been relatively well scrutinised. It is clear, however, that a social history detailing the lived experience of migrants to Britain since the Second World War, which examines them fully, remains to be written.

Scott utilised participant observation during his research.<sup>9</sup> This methodology is why his notes hold so much valuable information for historians in the present. Scott's methods were also indicative of his unconventional early academic career. He was in his early

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur Marwick, *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1914-1999: Circumstances, Events and Outcomes* (Oxford, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Martin Pugh, *State and Society: A Social and Political History of Britain since 1870* (London, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Francesca Carnevali & Julie-Marie Strange (eds.), *Twentieth-Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Harlow, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> David Palmer, "Every morning before you open the door you have to watch for that brown envelope": Complexities and Challenges of Undertaking Oral History with Ethiopian Forced Migrants in London, U.K.', *The Oral History Review*, 37, 1, (2010), p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> William Whyte, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, (Chicago, 1943). This was an early work that utilised participant observation to examine Western societies. It received little attention when it was first published, but, after being re-issued in 1955, it had finally had the attention of British academics by the time Scott was beginning his work in the late-1960s.

twenties when he first became interested in migrants. It was the mid-1960s, and Scott was living a short distance from the centre of Huddersfield in a large multi-occupied Victorian house alongside different groups and families of migrants. Then employed as a secondary school teacher at Holme Valley Grammar School, and having studied Human Geography at Durham University, Scott began writing about different ethnic groups through co-authoring a report on 'coloured' immigrant school leavers. This research saw him accepted onto a PhD at the University of Bristol under the well-known British social anthropologist, Michael Banton.<sup>10</sup> In addition to his eminent supervisor, Scott was also influenced by authors such as Herbert Gans and John Rex.<sup>11</sup> Their studies also focused upon ethnic minorities before they could be adequately researched in an archive. This was because those who arrived after 1945 had not resided in Britain long enough to enter the historical record, but it was also due to the lack of understanding towards migrants in the press where they were consistently misrepresented. As with Gans and Rex, for Scott the solution was to actively seek to speak to, work with, and essentially live alongside the people he was studying.

Scott's social group, which consisted at the time of radical Socialists and Quakers, had perhaps an even greater impact on his research than his academic influences. Even more influential were his 'gatekeepers'.<sup>12</sup> These individuals made introductions, helped Scott find relevant participants, and their influence heavily directed his research. Participant observation studies work to the principle that an outsider could not accurately examine a community without thoroughly involving themselves in said community. Another principle is that observers should utilise the knowledge of individuals within their studied community. Historians now call this co-production; as Elizabeth Pente et al asserted in 2015, 'by encouraging a diverse range of people to participate in the research process', co-producing historical knowledge 'allows for a deeper comprehension of people's self-identities'.<sup>13</sup> In Scott's case, one individual had a greater impact than most. The man, Zadiqui, was Scott's main gatekeeper, and route into Huddersfield's Pakistani

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Banton, *Race Relations* (Tavistock, 1967).

<sup>11</sup> Herbert Gans, *Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York, 1962); John Rex and Robert Moore, *Race Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook* (London, 1967).

<sup>12</sup> This is the term Scott used to describe these individuals.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Pente et al, 'The Co-production of Historical Knowledge: Implications for the History of Identities', *A Journal of British and Irish Studies*, 1, 1 (2015), p. 32.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5920/idp.2015.1132>

communities.<sup>14</sup> He remains a life-long friend of Scott's having introduced himself after witnessing Scott lecture in Huddersfield on his immigrant school leavers research.<sup>15</sup> Zadiqui was and still is an important figure in the Pakistani community in Huddersfield. He clearly saw something in the young academic as his subsequent influence was the driving force behind Scott's research. Zadiqui identified interviewees, arranged introductions, and made suggestions which directed Scott. The depth of Scott's research and the validity of his academic insights strengthen the argument for co-producing historical knowledge with interviewees and community figures.<sup>16</sup>

The description provided by the University of Huddersfield's archive service will reveal more about the content of Scott's work than there is space for in this essay.<sup>17</sup> It seems appropriate, however, to briefly describe his efforts. Scott commenced his research by acquiring a job in textiles at Kings Mill. This gained him the chance to informally chat with migrant workers. To develop and understand migrant's experiences outside of work Scott began attending religious events at the local mosque, the Sikh gurdwara, and sermons at different West Indian congregations. Scott also frequented bars and clubs that were owned, patronised, and managed by migrants. He also befriended Asian businessmen and exchanged odd-jobs for conversation. Scott helped pack tinned curries in a small factory, and drove around Huddersfield and its surrounding areas distributing Urdu and Punjabi newspapers. Through his different contacts Scott's presence as a 'student' was generally accepted. He was allowed to witness meetings of different inner circles and he had the chance to interview eminent community figures. Another notable source came from Scott

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<sup>14</sup> This is a pseudonym. The same one used by Scott in his research.

<sup>15</sup> I interviewed Scott twice about his work over the phone on the 18, and 23 November 2015.

<sup>16</sup> My own research focuses upon 'bussing out', also known as dispersal policy, in Huddersfield. I am using an oral history methodology to examine the effects of the policy upon Commonwealth immigrant school children between 1965 and 1975. While Scott's work did not deal with the issue, it provides an incredibly useful factual backdrop to my research. His research has essentially set the scene of Huddersfield during the emergence of multiculturalism. Furthermore, as I state above, the manner in which he worked with his interviewees to create a more representative and accurate history is inspiring and is surely the key to success for any outsider working on the history of minority ethnic groups.

<sup>17</sup> This can be found at <http://heritagequay.org/archives/SCT/>

tutoring a teenage Sikh girl.<sup>18</sup> He gained the trust of her family, and through conversation and formal interview recorded their migration history and details of their experience living in Britain. The broad impact of migration upon the identities of the different family members is laid bare in Scott's notes. These also contain an illuminating short series of essays written by his teenage pupil on the topic of integration. Through these profuse and varied efforts, Scott captured many of the interesting elements of the histories of immigrant groups and their institutions in Huddersfield.

Scott's research focused sharply upon the impact of political marginalisation on Huddersfield's migrants. He also devoted extensive amounts of time to examining Huddersfield's relatively strong National Front movement, and to a lesser extent the impact of Enoch Powell; the Conservative politician whose famous racist speech in 1968 argued that Commonwealth migration in Britain would lead to rivers of blood. Due to the potentially scandalous nature of the discrimination and conflict which Scott uncovered, he was forced to take great pains to avoid charges of libel, which is why he anonymised the town of Huddersfield with the pseudonym 'Fettlersbridge'.<sup>19</sup> Despite assertions from local politicians and other eminent figures, which can be found in several of the newspaper clippings collected by Scott, that Huddersfield was a relatively tolerant place, his work uncovered discrimination in many local businesses and institutions. Through interviewing textile, transport and engineering workers, Scott was also privy to many startling confessions of racist beliefs. More notably, however, through his interviews with union representatives and administrative staff, Scott uncovered a well-developed culture of discrimination which denied migrants access to better paid work amongst Huddersfield's engineers. Through spending his evenings at Huddersfield clubs such as Venn Street and the Shalimar, Scott also witnessed the extent of police harassment towards local immigrant businessmen and organisations. Unsurprisingly, considering he was close to migrants with

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<sup>18</sup> Scott tutored the girl as a result of working with the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants. He tutored her for free and saw it as a way to give something back to people who had willingly shared personal information with him. Scott never paid his interview participants, and work he did for and with them, such as helping pack curry and deliver newspapers, was generally done so that he could interview and observe his interviewees, as well as participating in their lives, in a way that did not take up their free time.

<sup>19</sup> Fettlerbridge was chosen as a name because of the colloquialisms, 'Fettler' and 'Fettle'. A fettler was someone who cleared up or put things in order as in 'fine fettle', which described Scott's own hopes for his PhD.

communist sympathies whilst interviewing members of Huddersfield's National Front, Scott was accused of being a spy by more than one individual and group which, like much of the rest of his research, highlights the uncomfortable extent of racialised conflict at the time of Scott's research.

The evidence Scott collected regarding discrimination in Huddersfield's engineering unions was particularly shocking. During 1970 Scott interviewed a former Chairman of Meltham Village Council, and ex-convenor for the Amalgamated Union of Engineering and Foundry Workers (A.E.F.) at David Brown's tractors who claimed that the 'absence of coloured immigrant labour' there could be explained by the fact that migrants could not do the semi-skilled work available. The man also claimed that 'coloured' migrants were not able to function properly in the climates of Huddersfield and Meltham.<sup>20</sup> An interview with another Huddersfield engineer was similarly illuminating. He informed Scott that '[t]he A.E.F. boys are none too keen on the immigrants'. In explanation he recounted a story from his time working at Hopkinson's in Birkby, stating 'the management were going to get rid of some white lads on the principle of "last in, first out", but the [A.E.F.] resisted this. Some West Indians were moved to another department, the white lads stayed and the compromise was accepted'.<sup>21</sup> Another A.E.F. works convenor at David Brown's admitted to Scott that each of his shop steward colleagues and the 'majority of the production workers' would have been against the introduction of 'coloured' workers.<sup>22</sup> The testimony of an A.E.F. convenor at Brooks Motors in the village of Honley suggests that this was also the case in other local factories. He spoke about personally witnessing an incident at Hopkinson's where a naturalised Polish worker, despite being a British citizen, and a member of the union, was denied a job and told 'you are a Pole, I can tell by your voice - you can't become British by signing forms'. Furthermore, he asserted that prior to the Race Relations Act of 1968 Hopkinson's, and Broadbent's, another local engineering firm, both operated

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<sup>20</sup> Interview notes: Duncan Scott Archive, SCT/1/2. The archive itself contains a great deal of personal information which Scott acquired during the process of his research. The names and other personal information of his interview participants have not been included in this piece. It is un-fair to publicly associate these individuals, who may still be alive today, with views which they expressed to Scott nearly forty years ago that may no longer represent their beliefs.

<sup>21</sup> Interview notes: SCT/1/2.

<sup>22</sup> Interview notes: SCT/1/2.

restrictions on 'coloured' migrants of ten and five per cent respectively.<sup>23</sup> The Chief Welfare Officer at Brooks Motors provided Scott with evidence that her employers also operated a colour bar. She estimated in 1967, that across the whole company there were only fifty 'or so' non-white migrants, and fifty 'or so white foreign born', and confided that '[p]ersonal preference [of the management] will prevent coloured girls from being employed in admin...whatever their qualifications'.<sup>24</sup>

One of the most insightful sections of Scott's thesis gives an example of how this kind of discrimination was tolerated by politicians and the press. In 1969, Huddersfield was visited by MP's from the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration who were investigating the condition of coloured immigrant school leavers. Scott astutely deconstructed a meeting between the MPs and the selected 'representatives' of Huddersfield's immigrant groups. He showed that while often well meaning, these individuals were generally either opportunists or active citizens mischievously or pragmatically misrepresented in an attempt to pretend that all was in order. One 'representative', for example, was a local Jamaican hairdresser. She had previously run a West Indian welfare association, which, by 1969, had not met for several years, and which at its peak only ever had twenty to thirty members.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, during the Select Committee the immigrant 'representatives' were also put in a position where they had to comment on topics on which they were unknowledgeable. Scott stated that 'throughout the discussion, conversation was carefully structured so that immigrants who had previously claimed little or no knowledge found themselves agreeing that there wasn't really any problem'.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, when one man, the then Secretary of the local branch of the Indian Workers Association, insisted to the committee that there was considerable discrimination in

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<sup>23</sup> Interview notes: SCT/1/2. As a side note, Hopkinson's also donated their collection of records to the University's archive service, and information regarding wages in the company is available for this era, so further research into their case could be done.

<sup>24</sup> Interview notes: SCT/1/2.

<sup>25</sup> Duncan Scott, 'A Political Sociology of Minorities', unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Bristol, 1972, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Scott, 'A Political Sociology of Minorities', p. 22.



Huddersfield his evidence was ignored. The next day the man's comments were singled out by the local press who presented his views as isolated and incorrect.<sup>27</sup>

Discrimination and denial were not the only evident reactions amongst Huddersfield's White British to the Commonwealth newcomers. Scott's interviews captured White opinion on 'the coloured immigrant' at a fascinating juncture. In the early days of the late 1940s and 1950s, Commonwealth migrants were seen as oddities. Mr Singh, an early post-war Indian immigrant to Huddersfield, told Scott in 1969 that 'English people always try to buy drinks and pleased to talk with us, but things changed about 1956. When only a few, okay, but with more have own groups and English people not as close with us'.<sup>28</sup> Mr Singh's views were probably generally accurate, but by the time Scott interviewed him many people in Huddersfield had lived and worked alongside Commonwealth migrants for several years. Certain White interviewees expressed to Scott progressive sounding opinions yet still utilised profoundly racist language. Their words testify to a time when strong language and cultural barriers ensured that social interactions between different ethnic groups were confusing for all. Furthermore, the 'host' society was clearly still struggling to understand their relationship with migrants. A Huddersfield Transport worker and union representative exemplified this during his interviews with Scott in 1969:

Asians - they're the boss. It's not so much a happy family on the bus. They can't joke and banter. If there's a chap smoking on the lower deck they haven't the technique to tell people off without a row. I can joke and yet be firm... The Pakistani facial expressions can put you off, they're more serious and because of their colour they stand out, and soon people say "all Pakis are too serious". [Say, for example] two lads [are messing about] ringing the bell [I might say] "You rang up a nice little tune, can we have an encore? Cut it out!" You've got to start gradually and build up to what you mean. The Pakistani doesn't know how to start and apply the pressure.<sup>29</sup>

In his own way, this man demonstrated an awareness of the complex social barriers to inter-ethnic integration, and a desire for positive change. He used an example which demonstrated the antagonisms between South Asian migrants and the 'native' population's but in doing so used problematic terminology. The man also provided similarly illuminating

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<sup>27</sup> Under the scrutiny of the Select Committee the man was only able to cite two minor examples of discrimination involving his son at primary school and a bus-driver. *The Examiner* on 3 March 1969, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Interview notes: SCT/1/4.

<sup>29</sup> Interview notes: SCT/1/2.

information about the introduction of West Indian workers to Huddersfield's transport service around 1955:

At first quite a lot of people were not so much prejudiced as wary... the girls refused to give any Negro lads training as conductors...but we tended to get the better type of chap because of our methods of selection and so what with them marrying local girls and bringing their kids to our Christmas party they have begun to settle in real well. I must admit I was prejudiced myself at first and wouldn't readily drink from the same cup as them in the canteen but I realised particularly through having a West Indian chap with me - he was a real smart lad, gone through college now and made his way - that the lads could call em "bastards", but not "coloured bastards". As far as my position in the "T.G." is concerned I deal with drivers and conductors, not colours.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps it would not be too cynical to argue that this man was a slightly atypical case, and that amongst his White colleagues it might have been the racist attitudes which shone through over a relatively hopeful and inspiring view on integration. Regardless, his words demonstrate that some White British people were then beginning to realise that the others living amongst them were just as human and deserving of equal treatment as themselves.

In summation, there is an extensive amount of material in the Duncan Scott Archive for researchers to utilise. While presenting some illustrative examples this article has attempted to delineate the utility of Scott's collection without simply reproducing it. In the accompanying notes provided by Scott along with his donation he admits that 'the enormity of the detail is sometimes hard to follow'. This reflects how Scott was, at the time, dealing with as many issues as possible because there was so much to know. He was one of the pioneers of studying the social, economic, and pre-migration histories of Britain's newly arrived groups; which was something he had to do before he could begin making sense of their political sociology. Furthermore, by extensively working with his interviewees and 'gatekeepers', Scott was also a pioneer in co-producing historical knowledge. As a result of developing close relationships with his interviewees, and through availing himself of their advice, Scott absorbed an immense amount of insider knowledge which allowed him to vividly capture a moment when the process of integration and the forces of inter-ethnic conflict were physically and socially reshaping Huddersfield, as they were the rest of Britain. As opposed to what must have been a confusing amount of qualitative data to interpret at the time, Scott's collection is now a treasure trove of useful sources which also

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<sup>30</sup> Interview notes: SCT1/1.

suggests how useful the research materials from other similar projects could potentially be to the historical record.

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Joe Hopkinson became a graduate in History at the University of Huddersfield in 2015 having received a First Class degree with Honours, and the prize for best dissertation in contemporary history. Joe has worked on various public history projects relating to the Great War, and is currently undertaking an MA by Research at Huddersfield. His current focus is the history of educating immigrant children during the 1960s and 1970s, and he has a particular interest in the government's controversial dispersal bussing policy.

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