

**BRADFORD AND RACE: THE TV EXPERIMENT THAT
AIMS TO CHANGE PERCEPTION AND PREJUDICE.**

**PARTICIPANTS IN C4 SERIES TELL WHAT DIFFERENCE IT HAS MADE TO
THEIR ATTITUDES BY SARFRAZ MANZOOR**

[...] In *Make Bradford British*, eight people, all of whom live in the city but come from different backgrounds, were asked to live together. [...]

The two-part series gave some participants their first experience of mixing with people of a different background. “I used to play rugby, so I
5 have intermingled with the British,” said Rashid, 37. “But this was the first time that I have lived with anyone from a different culture, religion and background and I believe you don’t really get to know anyone unless you live with them. “

Rashid is a devout Muslim whose insistence on praying five times a
10 day in the mosque led to tensions in the house as his prayer schedule made it difficult for him to discharge house duties such as buying food for the evening meal. He shared a room with 24-year-old sheet metal worker Damon, who lives in a predominantly white part of the city. “Bradford is very segregated,” he told me. “There are white areas and Asian areas and
15 you just grow up not having any reason to mix.”

The eight participants in *Make Bradford British* spent four days living in a shared house, then split into pairs and spent time with each others’ families. “I have lived in Bradford for more than 30 years and I have never
20 been invited by an Asian to have Sunday lunch or a cup of tea,” said Audrey, 48, who runs a pub in the city centre.

[...] The programme-makers say that the purpose of the series was to see whether people from different religions, backgrounds and cultures could live together and in doing so find out what it means to be British.

During their time together, the eight found that their assumptions and
25 prejudices were challenged. Jens, who in the past had breezily used the phrase “black bastard”, is taken to task by Desmond, who is still traumatised by the racist beating that he suffered almost 20 years ago. Sabbiyah, a young, headscarf-wearing Muslim, had attended a largely white school and studied a course at university where she was the only
30 non-white. She entered the house confident she was as British as anyone

else, but in the documentary she is confronted by a beery man in a pub who demands to know how she thinks she can be British when she isn't wearing a mini-skirt and low-cut top. It is shocking to watch, and recalling it Sabbiyah admits that she had been "naively optimistic" about
 35 integration.

"I come from a very middle class background so all my life I have been in a bit of a bubble with all my friends being liberal, educated and tolerant," she said. "So I had a happy-clappy, wishy-washy, whimsical approach to integration – it was only when I went to mixing with people
 40 from a different class that was a big shock. It wasn't just race, it was class. The experience has sobered me up about the reality; that integration is hard work and a long process."

Since the series was made, the participants have remained in contact and they recently met for a reunion meal. One lesson of the series is that
 45 even a few days of mixing with people from other communities can make a dramatic difference. Damon and Rashid are now friends and Damon was even invited to Rashid's sister's wedding. "The series changed my mind about Muslims," Damon told me. "I used to think they were all
 50 evil."

Damon has talked to friends about his experience and he told me he hoped that it would help them to challenge their prejudices.

Rashid revealed that the lesson he learnt from the series was that bringing people together requires compromises and sometimes
 55 suppressing one's own desires. "Maybe there isn't enough give and take in Bradford," he said.

But if the series illustrated how much can be achieved in a short space of time, it also highlighted the limits of what television can do and the challenges for politicians wishing to improve community relations. [...]

Source:

Manzoor, Sarfraz. "Bradford and race: the TV experiment that aims to change perceptions and prejudice" The Observer 26 Feb. 2012.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/feb/26/bradford-race-identity-c4/print>.

Annotations:

Subheading

C4: short for: Channel 4

