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Runnymede Perspectives

The Runnymede School Report

Race, Education and Inequality in Contemporary Britain

Edited by Claire Alexander, Debbie Weekes-Bernard and Jason Arday

Runnymede: Intelligence for a Multi-ethnic Britain

Runnymede is the UK's leading independent thinktank on race equality and race relations. Through high-quality research and thought leadership, we:

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This publication is part of the Runnymede Perspectives series, the aim of which is to foment free and exploratory thinking on race, ethnicity and equality. The facts presented and views expressed in this publication are, however, those of the individual authors and not necessariliy those of the Runnymede Trust.

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Foreword

I am delighted to be writing the foreword for the Runnymede Trust's Perspectives report on Race, Education and Inequality. We know that education can and does play a vital part in improving a child's life chances as well as improving society as a whole. It can be the great equaliser – showing it does not matter where you came from but where you are going. However as this report shows, the opportunities that formal education provide to enable our children and young people to get on in life are not available to everyone. Inequalities in education based on race and ethnicity still exist at every stage of the education journey, from early years to primary, secondary school, and beyond including university or apprenticeships.

Most worryingly 30 years on from the Swann Report, issues of racial discrimination and stereotyping still exist. Together with the trend of a narrowing curriculum, a focus on utilitarianism and increasing child poverty, these issues may not simply continue but get worse. The implications are that we will become a more divided and untrusting society than ever. And that affects all of us.

This report should be a wakeup call for politicians, educators and educational administrators. We must make sure that all of our children have the same opportunities to fulfil their potential. We must change attitudes and practice that prevents this and challenge policy that reinforces inequality in education. As part of this, we need to have measures in place to monitor and regularly report on education inequality by race and ethnicity. We will be failing our children if we do not act.

Debbie Abrahams MP

Introduction: Race and Education – Contemporary Contexts and Challenges

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Education has long been a key site in the struggle for racial and ethnic equality in Britain. Seen as both a mechanism for social mobility and a means of cultural integration and reproduction, schools (as institutions) and schooling (as a practice) lie at the heart of the pursuit of a successful future for multi-ethnic Britain. As David Cameron proclaimed in 2011:

> *[E]ducation doesn't just give people the tools to make a good living – it gives them the character to live a good life, to be good citizens. So, for the future of our economy, and for the future of our society, we need a first-class education for every child.* (Cameron, 2011)

Nevertheless, 30 years on from The Swann Report (DES, 1985), which argued for 'Education for All', issues of racial and ethnic inequality in our schools are as pertinent as ever. Education remains a primary arena for both the maintenance of entrenched racial stereotyping and discrimination, on the one hand, and anti-racist activism, on the other. Concerns over structural racism, low educational attainment, poor teacher expectations and stereotyping, ethnocentric curricula and high levels of school exclusions for some groups remain entrenched features of our school system. The fragile gains made in the wake of The Macpherson Report (Macpherson, 1999) and the Race Relations Amendment Act of 2000, imposing a duty on schools to promote race equality, have been eroded in the promotion of refocusing on 'fundamental British values', a narrowing of the curriculum, and the inculcation of an exclusionary and utilitarian version of citizenship which has pushed issues of race equality and diversity to the margins.

At the same time, the face of Britain's schools is changing. Nearly 17 per cent of children aged 0–15 in England and Wales are from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, making up over 23 per cent of state funded secondary schools and nearly 28 per cent of state funded primary schools (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Patterns of settlement mean that in urban areas, the school population will often be predominantly Black and Asian. Recent figures (DfE, 2015) suggest that educational attainment for BME young people is improving, with Indian and Chinese young people consistently outperforming White British students, Bangladeshi and African descent young people achieving near or above the national average for GCSE attainment, and African Caribbean and Pakistani descent young people showing clear gains in the past decade.[1] Nevertheless, BME young people are underrepresented at Russell Group universities (Alexander and Arday, 2015) and on apprenticeship schemes and overrepresented in the figures for unemployment and the prison system.[2] Clearly 'a first class' education counts more for some groups than others.

Recent years have seen a radical transformation of the school system in England and Wales, with the proliferation of free schools, academies and faith schools. The extent to which this increasing diversity of schools has the potential to exacerbate existing racial inequalities remains an issue of concern, whether in view of the lack of real school choice for BME families when seeking to access them for their children (Weekes-Bernard, 2007), the failure of some free schools to comply with equality legislation (Race on the Agenda, 2013), or the often difficult educational experiences that some BME pupils face within them (Gillborn and Drew, 2005). The National Curriculum has been overhauled to herald a return to 'traditional' subjects and teaching methods which have sought to overturn decades of more diverse, socially inclusive and multicultural curricula (Alexander et al., 2015). In the wake of the so-called 'Trojan Horse' affair, schools have become an ideological battleground for competing versions of 'Britishness' and have been increasingly positioned on the frontline of the 'war on terror' at home, with an emphasis on the surveillance and control of BME students rather than their education.

The current collection, by leading and emerging scholars in the field, traces some of the contours of the education system in contemporary England, exploring the contexts and challenges facing the struggle for racial, ethnic and religious equality in an increasingly fraught and fractured policy and political climate. The collection arises out of a Runnymede Academic Forum seminar held at the Centre for Research in Race and Education at the University of Birmingham in March 2015. The papers included here explore school cultures, curricula, rates of pupil achievement, teacher training and classroom practices, and offer provocative and revealing insights into our secondary education system 'at work'.

This collection raises important questions about the way that discourses about educational success both work to exclude and marginalise some pupils, while simultaneously (but often only temporarily) privileging others. It also insists, furthermore, that educational success for minority ethnic groups also needs to address broader issues – for example, cultural capital, role modelling and the transition from school to university or work – that affect not just children themselves, but broader minority ethnic families and communities, and our vision for a more inclusive and fairer society.

The papers should be read alongside our recent examination of Higher Education in Britain, *Aiming Higher* (Alexander and Arday, 2015), as part of a broader exploration of the changing face of education and its role in perpetuating and addressing racial and ethnic inequality in Britain today.

Notes

1. 78.5% Chinese and 74.4% Indian students achieve five or more GCSEs compared to 58% nationally; 59.7% Bangladeshi and 57.9% Black African students; 52.6% of Pakistani and 48.6% of black Caribbean heritage pupils. The lowest achieving groups are Travellers, Gypsies and Roma people, with 17.5% of Irish Travellers and 10.8% Gypsy or Roma students achieving five or more GCSEs including maths and English.
2. Seven per cent of apprenticeships were awarded to BME young people (BTEG). Cf. also Abrahams (2012).

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We are grateful to all of the contributors and participants who attended the Academic Forum Race and Education seminar on which this collection is based and those who have written specifically for this publication. We are grateful to the Arts and Humanities Council (AHRC) for their support of this event, publication and the Runnymede Academic Forum (AH/K007564/1), which has made the Academic Forum seminar series possible.

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SECTION I: IDEOLOGIES

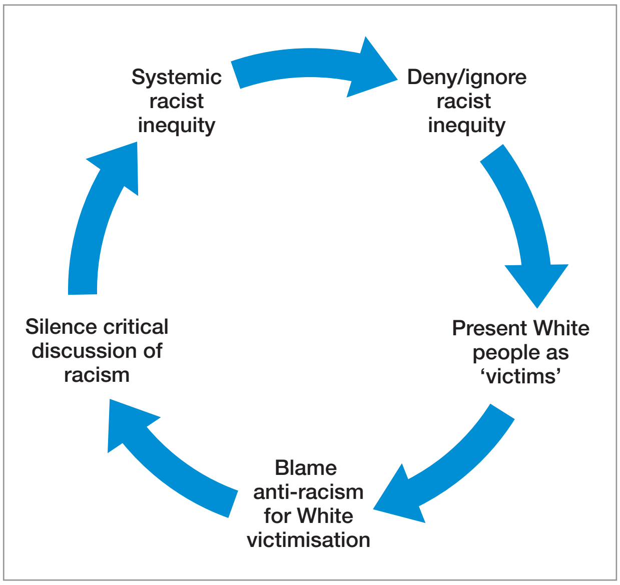
1. The Monsterisation of Race Equality: How Hate Became Honourable

David Gillborn
University of Birmingham

> ***We will reform human rights law and our legal system***
> *We have stopped prisoners from having the vote, and have deported suspected terrorists such as Abu Qatada, despite all the problems created by Labour's human rights laws. The next Conservative Government will scrap the Human Rights Act, and introduce a British Bill of Rights.*
> (Conservative Party, 2015: 60)

The Conservative Government's attack on Human Rights legislation is part of a wider assault on civil liberties in general and race equality protections in particular. The attacks create a monstrous image of equality protections as an affront to liberty and a direct attack on the rights of White people. The attacks are part of a process that not only hides the reality of race discrimination, but also actively works to silence anti-racist debate and creates the conditions for growing racist inequity in the future (see Figure 1). These discourses have been a growing feature of political debate for almost a decade and have been encouraged by governments of all political persuasions, from New Labour in the late-2000s and throughout the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition. In the field of education the process relies on the presentation of 'White working class' students as a disadvantaged racial group.

Figure 1. The monsterisation of race equality

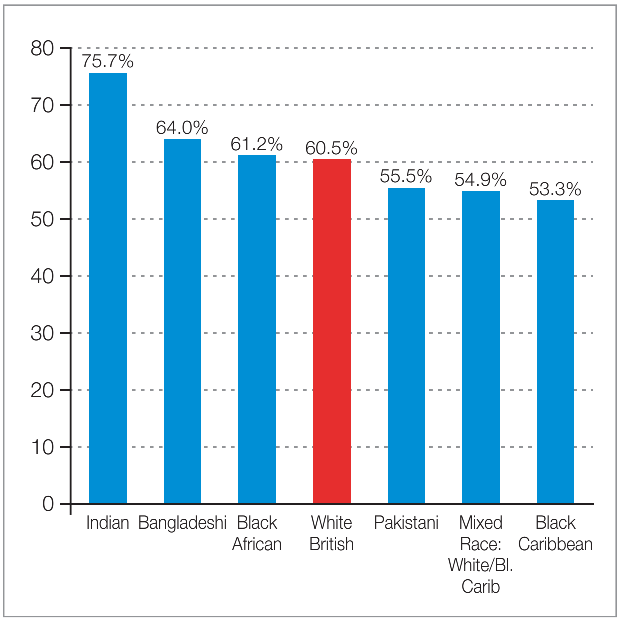

Systemic racist inequity
Deny/ignore racist inequity
Present White people as 'victims'
Blame anti-racism for White victimisation
Silence critical discussion of racism

How to Make White People Look Like Victims

Education debate has come to be dominated by the supposed educational failure of the White working class. This has been a recurrent theme in press coverage of education and grew to such an extent that the Education Select Committee launched a special investigation. Before looking at the committee's findings, it is worth seeing how the image of White failure has been created by the selective use of achievement statistics. *First, we are encouraged to ignore the achievements of most school students.*

Figure 2 shows educational achievement by the largest ethnic groups (those with at least 5000

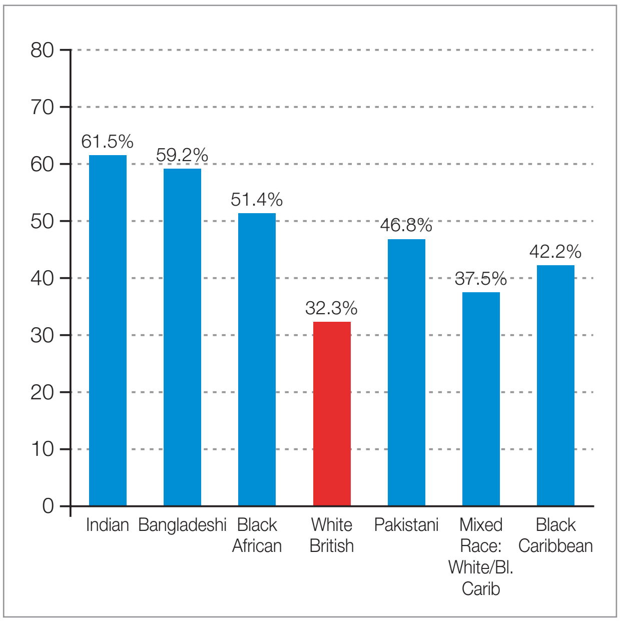
Figure 2. Percentage 5+ (A*–C) GCSEs inc. English & maths – All Pupils (2013)



Source: Department for Education. 5+ higher grade GCSEs incl. Eng. & maths, 2013, by ethnic origin, state maintained schools, England.

students in a year group). It is clear that White students are not the highest achievers but neither are they the lowest. Politicians and the media, however, do not focus on these overall figures any more. Since the late-2000s most attention has focused on a fraction of the school population; namely, students who receive free school meals (FSM). These students live in pronounced economic disadvantage and make up around 14 per cent of the pupil population (one in seven). When statisticians look at this group in isolation the achievement of White students is strikingly different. As you can see from Figure 3, White FSM students are less likely to achieve GCSE success than FSM peers in the other major ethnic groups.

Figure 3. Percentage 5+ (A*– C) GCSEs inc. English & maths – Free school meal pupils only (2013)



Source: Department for Education. 5+ higher grade GCSEs incl. Eng. & maths, 2013, by ethnic origin, state maintained schools, England.

The next stage in creating White victims involves ignoring smaller minority groups who do worse than White students even after controlling for free school meal status. In particular, this means ignoring Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students. White FSM students achieve at around *three times* the rate of their Gypsy, Roma and Traveller peers but this rarely appears in political and media debate.

A final stage in creating a sense of widespread White grievance is achieved by referring to FSM students as ‘working class’. In reality, this move does not make sense: around 60 per cent of the adult population describe themselves as ‘working class’ (see CRRE, 2013). By referring to FSM data as *if* it described the working class, therefore, an enormous misrepresentation is taking place. Up to 60 per cent of the population will read the headlines about ‘White working class’ failure and imagine incorrectly that it means *their* children. When we combine the focus on FSM students with the label ‘working class’ and a decision to ignore Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students, the result is headlines such as:

> *White working-class boys ‘worst performers at school’.* (Daily Telegraph, 2008)
> *White working-class the worst GCSE students, study finds.* (The Guardian, 2008. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2008/mar/27/schools.uk4)

And this misrepresentation of the statistics is no accident. When the Education Select Committee looked at this issue they accepted that the use of FSM data could be misleading: ‘The logical result of equating FSM with working class was that 85% of children were being characterised as middle class or above’ (Education Select Committee, 2014: 8). Nevertheless, they declared that ‘Pragmatism has led us to pursue analyses of free school meals data as an insight into the issue… ‘ (Education Select Committee, 2014: 10–11). Not surprisingly, the Committee’s report led to headlines that echoed the pattern established years earlier:

> *White working-class children ‘performing worst at school’.* (ITV News, 2014)

> *White working-class pupils ‘unseen’ and underperforming: White working-class pupils perform worse in their GCSEs than any other ethnic group.* (Channel 4 News, 2014)

Prioritising White People

The presentation of the ‘White working class’ as race victims has a direct bearing on policy. Tim Leunig, Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Analyst at the Department for Education, said this on the basis of data specifically about FSM students:

> *Why is it that white kids are doing so much worse? We have to tackle that as a society. For the future of Britain it obviously matters more to tackle white underperformance just because there are more white people. You cannot have your dominant racial group doing badly in school and expect to flourish as a country in the next generation and beyond.* (Quoted in Daily Telegraph, 2013)

Under the coalition government, race equality funding for schools is no longer ring-fenced; in many areas funding has been cut or withdrawn entirely; and all dedicated programmes to support the recruitment and retention of Black and minority ethnic (BME) teachers have been cancelled (Gillborn, 2014).

This strident focus on White people is enabled by a simultaneous attack on race equality and those who advocate for anti-racist change.

Monsterising Anti-Racism

By constructing an image of White people as the new race victims, a situation is created where concerns about race equality seem at best irrelevant, and at worst as explicitly damaging, even racist (against White people). A wide range of voices now rush to condemn race equality as dangerous, self-serving and destructive. The blogosphere is especially active on this front, even away from the most extreme right-wing forums. A university professor and past joint president of the UCU (the largest union in further and higher education), for example, has suggested that anti-racist educators pursue their studies as 'a nice little earner' that views all White people as racist and creates 'permanent hostility between racialised groups' (Hayes, 2013). BBC News Online (2014) has quoted an official from the schools inspectorate, Ofsted, suggesting that teachers have become so dedicated to anti-racism that they feel 'discomfort' when addressing the needs of White students.

A particularly dangerous twist in the monsterisation of race equality is the shift to a position that views almost any reference to race and race equality as, by definition, *racist* in that it treats people as members of a racial group and threatens the interests of White people. This position is gaining popularity on the political left and right. Following international protests about US police forces killing unarmed Black people (see Williams, 2013), for example, one commentator observed the following:

> *In the political and media tumult that followed the recent American police killings of two black men, one thing has been very striking: the most rigid racialised commentary has come, not from the police or the state, but from the protesting liberals and radicals … it hasn't been American officialdom that has explicitly played the race card, talking about whole sections of society as homogenous entities with particular characteristics that need to be closely monitored and possibly corrected. No, it's the supposedly progressive side in the debate that has done this …. The irony is almost unbearable: there's a powerful strain of racial superiority to these supposedly anti-racist protests….* (O'Neill, 2014)

By this kind of inverted logic, the only true advocate of racial harmony is someone who attacks anti-racism. In this upside-down world anyone advocating for positive action to address race inequity is now condemned as a racist. For example, Philip Davies (a Conservative MP) used a Select Committee appearance to attack the Director General of the BBC, Tony Hall, when it was proposed to increase the representation of BME staff:

> *'I personally consider it to be a racist approach', Davies said, confronting Hall in a Commons culture, media and sport select committee session on the future of the BBC on Tuesday. 'I think that the true racist sees everything in terms of race, or colour. Surely what we should be aiming to be is colour blind.'* (The Guardian, 2014)

And there we have it, from a member of the ruling political party: 'the true racist' is defined by reference to someone trying to improve the representation of minority ethnic people in their workplace. This is the monsterisation of race equality: White people are portrayed as race victims; anti-racism is recast as racism; and the conditions are created for further and more extreme race inequity under the banner of 'colour-blindness'.

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2. Fundamental British Values

Sally Tomlinson

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Schools are used to being asked to solve all society's problems. Poverty, disadvantage, under-achievement, unemployment, sexism, racism, homophobia and much more, can all be overcome if only schools would get it right – or so the message goes. But requiring schools to 'actively promote' fundamental British values (FBV) adds another and somewhat contradictory requirement. Non-statutory advice from the Department of Education, issued in November 2014 to all maintained schools (non-maintained have their own guidance) is that 'Schools should promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014: 4). They are expected to do this via the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum (SMSC) and teachers are firmly told that under the Teachers Standards they must not undermine fundamental British values. In checking up on whether this is happening, the buck is passed to Ofsted, this organisation being expected to publish its own handbook on how it will go about the assessment.

The most obvious retort to the requirement is to question whether these values are just British, or whether they could also be, say, European, American, Canadian, Australian or Indian. Indeed, the 1949 Indian Constitution explicitly supports democracy, the rule of law, liberty and tolerance, but it had the added advantage of declaring the country 'secular' despite the numerous religions. This promotion of British values is actually a response to fears of extremist religious ideologies, terrorism and Muslim sharia law, and on page 5 of the guidance a reference is made to the reissued 'Prevent' strategy (Home Office, 2011) which actually defines extremism as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'. The guidelines are also a response to the 'Trojan Horse' affair in Birmingham schools, in which some school governors were reported as attempting to bring an Islamic agenda into the school curriculum. (Insted Consultancy, 2014). In effect schools are to be in the front line of the ideological and religious wars of the 21st century. Contradictions are obvious in that faith schools of all kinds are allowed under English law (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and others), but will be required to give priority to secular law and teaching while still teaching their own religious beliefs. Recent Ofsted inspections have in fact 'failed' a number of schools, including Catholic, Jewish and Muslim schools, for not adequately teaching 'tolerance'. Contradictions were apparent from the time Academy schools were 'freed' from local authority or other independent oversight and governing bodies given more opportunity to influence the curriculum, teaching and organisation. Further contradictions are between parental duties and responsibilities and state requirements. Both the state and some religious groups are blurring the line between the public and the private, religion previously being regarded as part of a private sphere.

But the major problem is the question as to what values are being passed on through the entire school curriculum. At a time when the United Kingdom is threatened with break-up, and a possible withdrawal from the European Union, and with the 'end of Empire' – still a cause for regret, especially among older people – what actually constitutes British values is highly debatable and cannot be reduced to a three-line slogan. It was the report by Lord Swann (DES, 1985) which decisively pointed out that, in a post-colonial world, offering all students a relevant and up-to-date education for life in Britain and the world would involve considerable change to a curriculum which still reflected ethnocentric attitudes and values (DES, 1985: 315). At that time the curriculum was still influenced by a period of imperial enthusiasm which had coincided with the rise of mass education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was during this period that many aspects of what is regarded as 'British culture' and 'traditional British values' came to be reflected in the school curriculum. Some of these values were highly questionable in terms of democracy, tolerance and social and racial justice. Historians of British society have dated the period from the 1880s to the 1960s as a time when a core ideology emerged characterised by values of moral superiority, race patriotism and xenophobia (MacKenzie, 1984; Tomlinson, 1989). Readers of popular newspapers and followers on some social media can hardly doubt that feelings of moral superiority and offensive views of other nations are still part of 'traditional British values'. Education Minister Keith Joseph responded to The Swann Report (DES, 1985) with his view that 'British history and cultural traditions are part of the cultural heritage of all who live in this country… schools should be responsible for trying to transmit British culture - enriched by so many traditions' (Joseph, 1986) Some reactions to this unproblematic view of British culture were that 'many black people and no few whites regard the majority culture as based upon and upholding prejudiced and discriminatory structures and behaviour' (Klein, 1986).

Developing a curriculum involves crucial cultural choices and also political choices. Who actually controls the selection of curriculum knowledge and which social groups or controlling elites have the power to influence curriculum decisions? In the early 20th century it was the values of a dominant social and political elite that came to influence mass education via the public school curriculum. It was the public school which provided the imperial administrators, generals, missionaries, traders and educationalists and there was a deliberate cultivation of a militaristic imperialism which filtered down into state schooling. Values comprising elements of nationalism, militarism, racial arrogance, and superior moral and Christian benevolence were incorporated into a mass school system. Roberts' 1971 account of a childhood in a *Classic Slum* (Roberts, 1971) detailed the way that state schoolteachers copied their public school 'superiors' in fostering ethnocentric views and a patriotism based on notions of racial superiority. He also noted the way that children welcomed the parades, flag-waving, bands, uniforms and free patriotic mugs and chocolate, as a break from routine, and the militaristic ideologies appealed to young working class males as it reflected some of their cultural 'traditions' – fighting, gang warfare over street territory and assertions of masculinity. Those at school up to the 1960s remember the maps on the wall with large sections coloured pink that 'belonged to us' and school geography textbooks that asserted, for example that 'Under the guidance of Europeans, Africa is steadily being opened up… missionaries and teachers are educating the people… and Europeans have brought civilization to the peoples of Africa' (Stembridge, 1956: 347). It took Chinua Achebe's multi-million selling 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart* to offer an antidote to this kind of propaganda (Achebe, 1958/2006).

The outpouring of literature and comment from every ideological, academic and practical viewpoint on the subject of multicultural anti-racist education during the 1980s and early 1990s far surpassed any action in schools (Tomlinson, 2008). But it was teacher-led movements which from the 1970s recognised that a curriculum which took no account of the presence of minorities led to a perpetuation of stereotypes and misinformation and fed popular racism. Teachers, textbooks and publishers began to give serious thought to the incorporation of multicultural and global approaches to all subjects. Barry Troyna's (1987) much-quoted dismissal of 'saris, samosas and steel bands' (actually first quoted by Canadian Kogila Moodley, 1983) as multicultural tokenism was soon proved debatable as sari-making and selling became a multimillion pound industry, samosas appeared in every supermarket and steel bands played at festivals and concerts around the country. By the 1990s opponents of curriculum change had become more vocal, dismissing it as left-of-centre egalitarianism, political subversion and a threat to British values and culture. Mrs Thatcher told the Conservative party conference that inner city children were having opportunity 'snatched away from them by hard-left authorities and extremist teachers' who were apparently teaching anti-racist mathematics (Thatcher, 1987), and she tried hard to interfere with the post-1988 GCSE history curriculum, which she felt did not contain enough traditional British history. While religious issues had not yet assumed the importance of later decades some Muslims were challenging the secular basis of British society, asserting a religious identity, and claiming separate Muslim schools on a par with other faith schools – a request granted by 1999. Teacher education courses as preparation for teaching in a diverse society gradually disappeared, but the effects of the early multicultural education attempts were largely positive, and politicians of (almost) all parties ritually assert that we are a plural, diverse society, even if the word 'multicultural' is currently out of favour. Roshan Doug, former poet laureate in Birmingham noted that he was a product of Birmingham's 1970s and 1980s multicultural education policy: 'The government then seemed to have confidence in teachers to create a well-balanced curriculum, irrespective of cultural, religious ethnic or class make-up of the pupils'. His schooling meant broadening pupil's awareness of others and not 'cocooning children inside their own communities' (Doug, 2015). His view, probably shared by many, is that education should free young people from the shackles of reactionary thinking and cultural parochialism, whether in Birmingham or its surrounding (mainly White) villages.

Whether minority or majority, parents and students of all groups have little choice but to accept whatever curriculum is currently assessed by exam boards, who in turn are largely subject to current political pressures, if they want to acquire the credentials and certificates that lead onto the next level of education, training or employment. In 2014 Education Secretary Gove appeared to be more successful than Mrs Thatcher in influencing the curriculum towards a more 'traditional' stance. In English literature students will study what was available in 1950s grammar schools – a Shakespeare play, the romantic English poets, a 19th century novel and a modern British novel, this last at least including Kazuo Ishiguro and Meera Syal. American literature is frowned upon, perhaps because *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* might encourage too much discussion of poverty, disability, slavery and race hatred. Those who (like myself) studied Shakespeare, Dickens and other 19th century novelists in the 1950s did, however, become acquainted with sex, violence, tribal and national hatreds, poverty and class wars, the demonisation of women and much else which is useful to understanding the modern world.

While immediate questions for schools and teachers are how exactly they are to 'teach' these fundamental British values, either in time set aside for SMSC, or incorporated into the whole curriculum, the premise on which this requirement is based needs careful study and debate. If the target is religious extremists, either in Northern Ireland or in Muslim communities around the UK, how far can schools influence and combat the ideologies? The experience of separate religious schooling in Northern Ireland hardly supports the view that schools can combat external violence. Manuel Castells wrote in 1998 that 'There is an explosion of fundamentalist movements that take up the Qu'ran, the Bible, or any holy text and interpret it and use it as a banner of their despair and a weapon of their rage' (Castells, 1998). But the recent growth and appeal of Islam now appears to be linked by government only to terrorism and fundamentalism, and current policies in the UK are indeed demonising all Muslims. A saner approach would be to study, for example, Aminul Hoque's recent book on *British–Islamic Identity: Third Generation Bangladeshis in East London* (Hoque, 2015) to understand how young Muslims in Britain are accommodating to the country they were born and educated and hopefully will work in, while embracing an Islamic identity. There are also considerable problems for schools in explaining, for example, why Britain regards countries who have no regard for democracy and support punitive religious laws, as friends and allies. It was interesting that after the DfE guidance was published, a number of schools published what they were doing to support FBV on their websites and in statements. Aldridge school, for example, part of the Aldridge Foundation, issued an FBV Statement in December 2014 explaining that the democratic process was carried out via house and school councils, and the importance of teaching the law in school and country. It was a pity that one of the Aldridge Academy Heads had to resign the same month accused of registering low-attaining students as 'guest students', thus boosting GCSE results (Mansell, 2015). Perish the thought that cheating could be a fundamental British value!

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3. Narrative, Nation and Classrooms: The Latest Twists and Turns in a Perennial Debate

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Secret Reservoir of Values

‘Stories,’ Ben Okri has observed, ‘are the secret reservoir of values: change the stories individuals and nations live by and tell themselves and you change the individuals and nations’. He continues: ‘Nations and peoples are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowerings’ (Okri, 1995). Stories, whether lies or truths, and whether about nations or about individuals, have political addresses – they are to do with maintaining or challenging and changing the status quo, the distribution of power, they are to do with freedom, with flowering, flourishing.

Referring to his documentary film *Bitter Lake* about recent world history, Adam Curtis (2014) remarks that ‘politicians used to have the confidence to tell stories that made sense of the chaos of world events. But now there are no big stories and politicians react randomly to every new crisis, leaving us bewildered and disorientated, and journalism – that used to tell a grand, unfurling narrative – now also just relays disjointed and often wildly contradictory fragments of information. Events come and go like waves of a fever. We – and the journalists – live in a state of continual delirium, constantly waiting for the next news event to loom out of the fog and then disappear again, unexplained.’

Events that come and go like waves of a fever in a state of continual delirium are so much ODTAA, one damn thing after another. Even ODTAA narratives, though, chime with or challenge certain material interests and therefore have political addresses. Frequently, for example, they conveniently imply that the most plausible explanation for an event, or even the only explanation for an event, is that it’s caused by pure evil, in other words by ‘people who hate us’. There’s a war on between good and evil, namely between us-equals-good and them-equals-evil, and we should trust our political leaders to fight evil in any way they think fit. ‘We don’t negotiate with evil,’ said Dick Cheney, ‘we defeat it’. *Bitter Lake*, says Curtis, is ‘a counterpoint to the thin, narrow and increasingly destructive stories told by those in power today’.

What sort of stories about the nation should we be telling the young? The brief remarks from Okri and Curtis suggest some preliminary ways of answering it. Stories should be explanatory, not about ODTAA; nuanced, not about good versus evil or us versus them; and should face unpalatable truths not peddle consoling lies. If they are none of these things they will be merely ‘thin, narrow and increasingly destructive … told by those in power’. Alas, there are stories currently being told in Britain’s classrooms – more precisely, in England’s classrooms – that are thin, narrow and destructive. The purveyors of these stories include the secretary of state for education and her colleagues in the Cabinet; the opposition spokesperson for education and his colleagues in the shadow cabinet; Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector for Schools and his senior colleagues at Ofsted; and, judging by their schools’ websites, quite a lot of headteachers. Thin and narrow stories are destructive for the children who do not get characterised as White British in censuses. They are destructive for millions on millions of the White British, too. At the present time they are central in the government project known as ‘fundamental British values’, FBV for short.

The FBV Project

The FBV project in education was announced on Monday 9 June 2014 within a speech by Michael Gove about the Trojan Horse affair in Birmingham. Its origins, however, go back in time much further than that. Trojan Horse was a catalyst or trigger for FBV, but not the cause. It is nevertheless relevant to revisit the Trojan Horse story, for it was the story of a gift horse – *equus donatus troianus* – and to understand the origins and features of FBV requires consideration of who the people were who welcomed the gift, and why they did not look it in the mouth, let alone study the dental records.

A lie, it has been said, can be half way round the world before the truth has put its boots on. A lie travels particularly fast, without even cursory checking let alone dutiful scrutiny, when it reflects and reinforces fantasies and ignorance which already exist. The fake document known as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, for example, was widely accepted at face value in its day because it accorded with anti-semitic conspiracy theories which were already prevalent. Further, a lie gets easy passage when it gives emotional energy, or can readily be used to give such energy, to a pre-existing programme or agenda. Thus the Trojan Horse forgery in Birmingham not only reflected Islamophobic tropes, fantasies and simplicities which already existed but also acted as a gift horse for certain pre-existing agendas and interests. The grateful recipients of the gift in this respect included an axis of three principal and overlapping and mutually reinforcing groups, creating between them high levels of synergy:

a) Assimilationists, aka island storytellers.

They are disturbed by and opposed to multiculturalism, anti-racism and political correctness, and wish to promote a cohesive society by returning to, as they see it, a single grand narrative about British identity and about ‘our island story’. The voices of these people have been influential in the education system at least since the days of the New Right and the *Salisbury Review* in the 1980s, and in society more generally for at least 100 years.

b) The Islamophobia industry

This is a loose network of think tanks, journalists, funding organisations and right-wing politicians in western countries which in domestic affairs seek to justify patterns of inequality that perpetuate the disadvantage and exclusion of Muslim communities and neighbourhoods and that in foreign affairs seek to justify western policies in the Middle East, including Israel/Palestine.

c) Securocrats

These are civil servants, think tanks, intelligence services and surveillance agencies seeking recognition and additional resources for their operations, and for their theories about the nature and causes of extremism and radicalisation, and about how to deal with these ‘upstream’ – or, in different words, about ‘what goes on before the bomb goes off’.

It was securocrats engaged in counter-terrorism operations, not educationists concerned with teaching and learning, who coined the term FBV. They did so within what they claimed was a definition of extremism. The purpose of the definition was to explain how they would decide whether or not to talk to, work with and give funds to Muslim organisations and groups. It was based on the theory that the root cause of terrorist acts perpetrated by people of Muslim heritage is the ideology or narrative known as Islamism. Islamists are not necessarily criminals. They are, however, ‘non-violent extremists’. In a well-known metaphor, they are to criminals what swamps are to crocodiles and mosquitos – they are a conducive environment. Not all Muslims are Islamists, securocrats acknowledge, but all are assumed to be part of the swamp, part of the suspect community in which criminal terrorists hide and thrive. Securocrats not only coined the actual term FBV, as outlined above, but also devised the new counter-terrorism and security requirements which came into force in July 2015 and which have far-reaching implications for universities and schools (including nursery schools), and which complement and reinforce the FBV agenda. This worldview of securocrats is endorsed by the government, and alas not challenged by the opposition. It is both wrong and counter-productive.

These three sets of interests were not the only ones which benefited from the *equus donatus troianus*. They are particularly relevant and threatening, however, in relation to FBV. For the record, other beneficiaries of the gift include the sections of the media that prosper and profit from peddling moral panics about plots, threats and dangers; politicians of all parties seeking to demonstrate, in the run-up to the 2015 general election, that they can reliably be more negative than any of their rivals towards immigration in general and Muslims and Islam in particular; participants in arguments for and against the academisation of schools; people involved in employment disputes, or else wanting to settle old scores from disputes in the past; officials and elected members in central and local government; and people involved in rivalries and contests between denominations, schools of thought and theological traditions within British Islam, for example between the Barelwi and Deobandi traditions, and between different takes on modernity.

Be that as it all may, it is the axis of a) island storytellers, b) the Islamophobia industry and c) securocrats, and the synergy amongst these three, that provides the principal impetus and energy behind FBV. The axis has caused, is causing and will cause much damage in the education system. Much critical, corrective and restorative work needs therefore to be done.

For restorative work to be effective there needs to be substantial discussion and clarification through dialogue, and this has to be bottom-upwards from young people and their teachers and parents, not top-down from the government; greater respect for the professional experience and insights of teachers and subject communities, particularly in the fields of citizenship education, history teaching, religious education and SMSC development; greater trust and cooperation, both locally and nationally, between Muslim and non-Muslim organisations and communities; greater attention to Islamic values, wisdom and pedagogy in the field of education; renewed emphasis on the role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate as a critical friend who identifies, commends and promotes good practice; and much higher levels of due regard for the values enshrined in equalities legislation.

National Identity

Throughout the deliberation that is required there needs to be recognition that a political community such as Britain is defined and constituted by the common public commitment of its citizens. Its identity, that is to say, is in the first instance political not ethnic or cultural, a crucial distinction that is obscured by the term 'national identity'. No political community can be stable and cohesive without a common sense of belonging among its citizens. This was a major emphasis in the Runnymede Trust's commission on multi-ethnic Britain, chaired by Bhikhu Parekh in 1998–2000 (Parekh et al., 2000). Citizens are required to pay taxes that may benefit others more than themselves, to delay their own demands in order that the more pressing demands of others may be met first, and to abide by certain rules of procedure and due process that may not be in their own immediate best interests. They do these things believing and trusting that others will behave similarly. It follows that belonging to a political community involves not only civic responsibilities (clumsily summarised by the government as 'fundamental British values', though there *is* indeed something important that needs to be summarised) but also a shared sense of belonging to an imagined community, that is, a community which has shared images.

Education should develop, it follows, not only political knowledge and participation skills but also a reservoir of shared images – icons, sights, stories, sounds, jokes, sense of history. One excellent example of a treasure-trove of shared images was provided by Danny Boyle's opening ceremony at the 2012 Olympic Games. Not every image on that occasion was shared by everyone in Britain. That would have been neither possible nor, indeed, desirable. But the vast majority of British people saw things, episodes and people in the ceremony they could relate to, and therefore things that made them feel they belong here, and that all other people in the political community belong here too. Danny Boyle's island story was immensely more dynamic, generous, inclusive, creative and hopeful than the government's mean and ill-considered FBV project.

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SECTION II: BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC PUPIL PROGRESS

4. Aspirations, Language and Poverty: Attainment and Ethnicity

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Introduction

Success in school is often seen as an ‘escape route’ – a way out of poverty, a chance to do well in life despite growing up in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. There are of course many such stories, but here is one from a woman who moved on from growing up on Chicago’s South Shore to join one of the US’s most prestigious law firms after graduating from Harvard Law School. She said: ‘There was nothing in my story that would land me here. I wasn’t raised with wealth or resources or any social standing to speak of…’. ‘If you want to know the reason why I’m standing here, it’s because of education. I never cut class. … . I liked being smart. I loved being on time. I loved getting my work done. I thought being smart was cooler than anything in the world’ (Michelle Obama, 2009, speaking to pupils in an Islington school).

This is an important reason to be interested in the educational attainment of pupils from ethnic minorities, though obviously not all such students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Education is of course important for many other reasons too, but its role as a channel of social mobility is key.

In this paper, I present an overview of how different ethnic groups get on in secondary school, and also how attainment evolves differently through the whole of compulsory schooling. Then I focus on three particular issues that are important to the understanding of attainment: aspirations, poverty and language.

There is one more introductory point to be made. The availability of the National Pupil Database (NPD) means that this is a subject we can actually address. We can undertake detailed studies of attainment outcomes for different groups and track progress throughout the school careers of all pupils in England. We now have the data to be able to do this over more than a decade, so the scope for better understanding is great. This can be contrasted with the situation in France where no data are collected on ethnicity: ‘The French will be considered according to their colour, their origins, their neighbourhood? No. We can see what’s happening according to where people live. No need for statistics on ethnicity’ (President Hollande quoted in Wadham, 2015: 48). No doubt there are arguments on both sides, but some information is surely useful.

Attainment in GCSEs

In Table 1 I present a breakdown of different GCSE outcome measures for different ethnic groups. The data throughout refer to all pupils in state-funded schools in England, who make up around 93 per cent of all pupils. All in all, this is based on over 500,000 pupils per year.

The table shows a range of performance and perhaps some unexpected outcomes. The first column describes overall GCSE performance most fully, simply totalling up the GCSE grades for each student’s best eight GCSE scores. This is then normalised to have mean zero (and a standard deviation of one for easier comparison with other studies). We see a familiar pattern of Indian and Chinese students doing very well, Black Caribbean students doing less well and also White British students doing less well. This pattern is also reflected in the ‘headline’ figure in column 3, showing the percentage of each group achieving at least five good passes.

However, the second and fourth columns tell a slightly different story. These data describe student progress – how they do at GCSEs compared to how

Table 1: GCSE Attainment by Ethnic Group

Pupil's ethnicity	Normalised GCSE points	GCSE Points Progress	Percentage achieving at least 5 A* - C grades	Achieving 5A*C grades Progress	Number of Pupils
Bangladeshi	0.074	0.246	84.290	0.062	5514
Indian	0.379	0.292	90.888	0.060	12,170
Pakistani	-0.002	0.215	83.385	0.067	14,851
Black African	0.007	0.243	84.038	0.079	11,795
Black Caribbean	-0.155	0.011	80.397	0.023	6767
Chinese	0.597	0.430	92.997	0.060	1639
Mixed Ethnicity	0.025	-0.012	83.528	0.000	18,974
White British	-0.011	-0.040	82.359	-0.011	416,918
Other White	-0.099	0.191	79.100	0.040	14,493
Other Ethnic Group	0.033	0.185	83.170	0.047	17,495
Total	0	0	82.624	0	520,616

1. Best 8 GCSE point scores; normalised to be mean 0, SD 1 over England.
2. Progress is measured as the residuals from regressing the normalised GCSE points scores on KS2 fine scores in English, maths and science.
3. Pupil population is for those with non-missing progress measure.

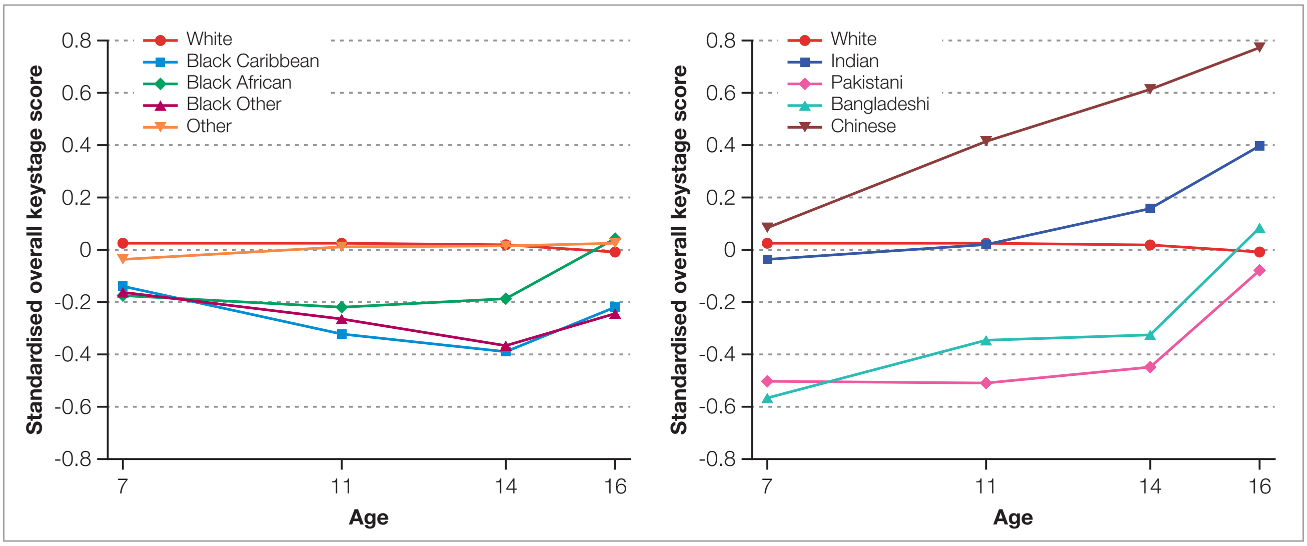
they were doing when they started secondary school after taking their Keystage 2 (KS2) tests. In terms of student progress, the pattern is different. Indian ethnicity students continue to do well, and students with Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Black African ethnicity do about as well. In terms of progress, the worst performing group is White British students. Again this pattern is reflected in the progress version of the 'five good passes' measure.

What are we to make of this? Some students from minority ethnic groups start secondary school a long way behind their White British peers in terms of KS2 scores, but catch up or overtake five years later when the high-stakes GCSE tests are taken.

A different perspective on the same phenomenon is displayed in Figure 1.[1] This splits students up into nine groups, displayed across two panels, and shows average progress through all key stages of compulsory schooling. It confirms that most minority students start on average some way below White students. During secondary school, and particularly the two years at the end of compulsory schooling that matter the most, these groups catch up partially, totally, or overtake White students. Black African heritage students catch up significantly over these years, and Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian ethnicity students spectacularly so. Black Caribbean students also make relative progress towards the high-stakes exams at 16, but only enough to offset a relative decline from age 7 to 14 and an initial disadvantage.

Clearly, determining why this overtaking takes place (on average, not for every student) is a key question. We do not know the full answer yet by any means,

Figure 1: Evolution of attainment through compulsory schooling



Source: Burgess, Wilson and Worth (2009) but I explore some possible components below. These are: aspirations, poverty and language.

Aspirations

Material things such as books and computers at home and educationally-useful trips matter for attainment. But so does what is in a student's head: what her aims and hopes are, how she sees her educational success helping her to achieve them. Aspirations affect effort and engagement at school, which in turn influences attainment. Of course, this is a complex phenomenon and aspirations and attainment will co-evolve, with attainment influencing aspirations as well as the reverse. But we can get a snapshot of aspirations at a crucial age from the Longitudinal Study of Young Persons in England (LSYPE). Students were asked about a relatively modest aspiration: what they wanted to do at age 16, to stay on at school for further study or not. This is explicitly what they wanted to do (aspiration); they were asked separately about what they thought would happen (expectation). For more about this data and the analysis that this commentary draws from, see Burgess, Wilson and Piebalga (2009). Most interestingly, their parents were asked exactly the same pair of questions.

Two results are shown in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 focuses just on the students, and in particular the relationship between their prior attainment (KS2 scores again) and their aspiration. The red line displays the overall relationship across all the individual students in the dataset: a strong positive correlation. But also displayed are the averages for each ethnic group. The average for White students is very close to the line (they form 71.4% of this dataset). But for the other groups, the aspiration responses are very different. Much higher fractions of these students want to stay on at school after age 16 than would be expected from their earlier attainment. Well over 90 per cent of students with Black African, Bangladeshi, Indian or Pakistani ethnicities want to remain in school as long as they can. This compares to less than 80 per cent for the White students.

Figure 2: Aspirations and prior attainment

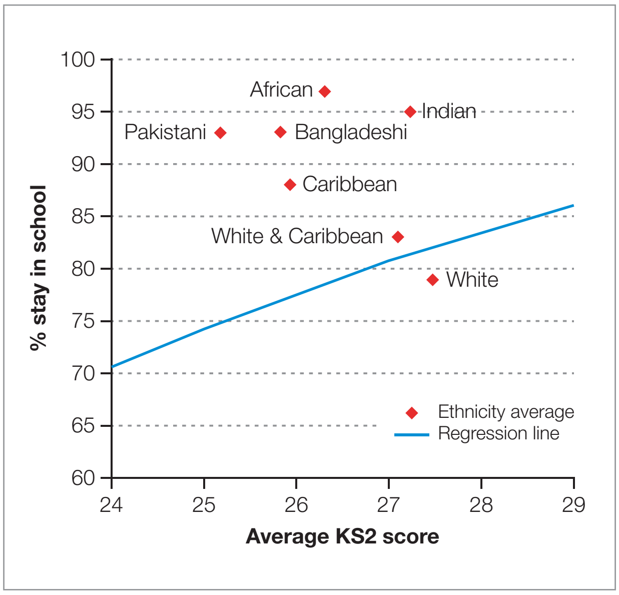
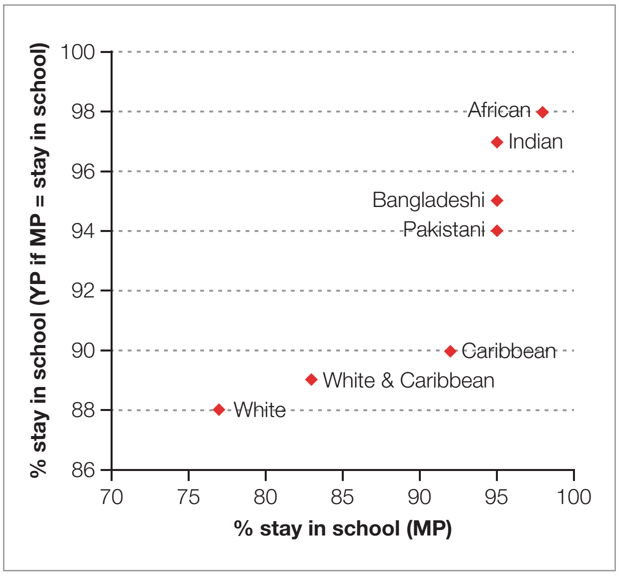


Figure 3 brings their parents into the picture. The horizontal axis plots the educational aspirations of the parents for their children, answering the same question. We see a similar pattern to Figure 2 – very substantial differences between the parents of White pupils and the parents of ethnic minority students. The vertical axis plots the aspirations of the students just among those whose parents wanted them to stay at school beyond age 16. There is a gap here too – students with Black African, Bangladeshi, Indian or Pakistani ethnicities are more likely to want the same as their parents (94–98%) than Black Caribbean (90%) or White students (88%).

Figure 3: Pupil and parental aspirations



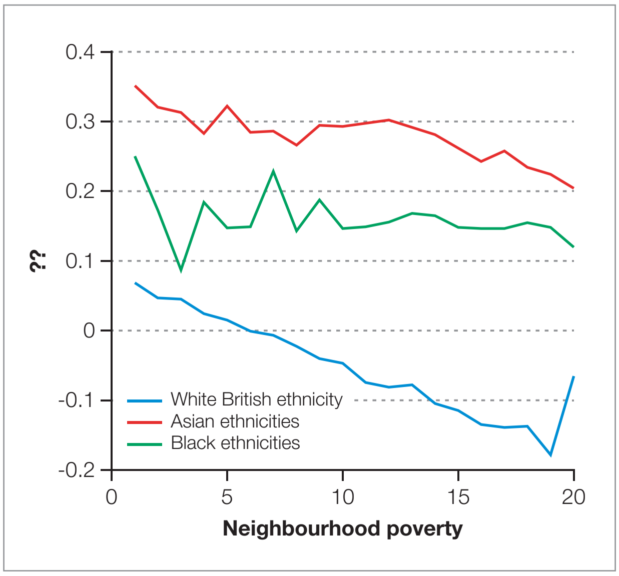
To summarise, there are significant differences in educational aspirations between students from different ethnic groups, in part related to differences in their parents' views, but in part also autonomous. It seems likely – but certainly not proven here – that this would affect their commitment to their education and their success.

Poverty

It is clear that coming from a poor family and a poor neighbourhood reduces a student's chances of excelling at school. It is not deterministic, and many children from disadvantaged backgrounds do well; but poverty does not help.

But poverty affects different students in different ways, and there is something different about the correlation between poverty and attainment comparing different ethnic groups. Figure 4 uses data from 2013 GCSE performance and a measure of neighbourhood poverty[2] to explore this. The blue line shows the expected pattern for White students: average progress to GCSEs declines steadily for students living in increasingly poor neighbourhoods. But the green line for students of Black heritage and the red line for students of Asian ethnicity show a different pattern. These relationships are higher (reflecting what we saw in Table 1) and also much flatter. That is, living in a deprived neighbourhood has much less impact on these students than it does on White students. It is this difference that is principally responsible for the boast of the school system in London that it does particularly well for disadvantaged students (see Burgess, 2014).

Figure 4: Pupil attainment and neighbourhood poverty



There may be a number of reasons for this. Disadvantage is sometimes seen as a proxy for parental levels of education – which obviously also matters a lot for attainment – and it is likely that this correlation is quite different for students who are the children of recent immigrants. For example, Jonathan Wadsworth (2015) shows using Labour Force Survey data that immigrants are typically more highly educated than those born in the UK. For example, in the working age population, 23 per cent of UK-born individuals left school at age 21 or older, compared to 44 per cent of all immigrants.

Language

Ethnic minority status is obviously not the same as immigration status. Some ethnic minority families have been in UK for many generations, some for many centuries. But for some groups they are correlated and significant numbers of some ethnic minority groups are recent immigrants. For those communities, an additional issue in education is language.

Learning at school can be hard enough in one's own language, but is surely harder in a language you are becoming familiar with at the same time. We have data in the NPD that measures this – for each pupil, whether English is an additional language (EAL) for them. This is interpreted as describing what language is spoken at home. This group is likely to be very diverse, ranging from the children of wealthy foreign bankers to the children of penniless refugees.

What is remarkable then is the evidence on pupil progress for this group. In Burgess (2014), I show that on average pupils with EAL make very substantially better progress to GCSEs. That is, taking account of where they started in terms of KS2 test scores, they have dramatically higher GCSE scores than otherwise observably equivalent pupils for who English is their first language. The gap is around 36 per cent of a standard deviation (in technical terms); in more readily interpretable terms, this gain is about three times larger than the typical GCSE penalty experienced by poor students. While some describe this as 'just' the result of learning the language, this does not happen by itself and must reflect a substantial amount of extra effort.

Conclusion

In summary, children from ethnic minorities do well in school in general. This is not to deny that some ethnic minority groups do less well, pupils with Black Caribbean heritage for example. And obviously the numbers reported here are averages. In every ethnic group of children there will be some stellar performances and some weak ones. But both in absolute terms and relative to their prior attainment, despite poverty and, for some, an unfamiliar language, ethnic minority pupils do well in school in general.

This is good for its own sake – education is a 'good thing'. But it is also a means to an end. The next few years will reveal whether that school performance is reflected in higher earnings in the labour market and a rise in prosperity for ethnic minority communities in England.

Notes

1. This graph was prepared for our contribution (Burgess, Wilson and Worth, 2009) to the National Equality Panel report: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28344/1/CASEreport60.pdf
2. This is the IDACI measure: Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index. See http://standards.esd.org.uk/?uri=metricType%2F382&tab=details

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5. Ethnic Education and Labour Market Position in Britain (1972–2013)

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Sociologists and economists place great attachment to human capital in employment. In theory, what employees can contribute to the organisational performance is of a greater importance than their family backgrounds or skin colour. As a key component of human capital, education indicates knowledge and skills, serves as a crucial signal in the recruitment processes, and plays an important role in people's career progression. Yet, research also shows that education does not have the same returns for people in different social positions.

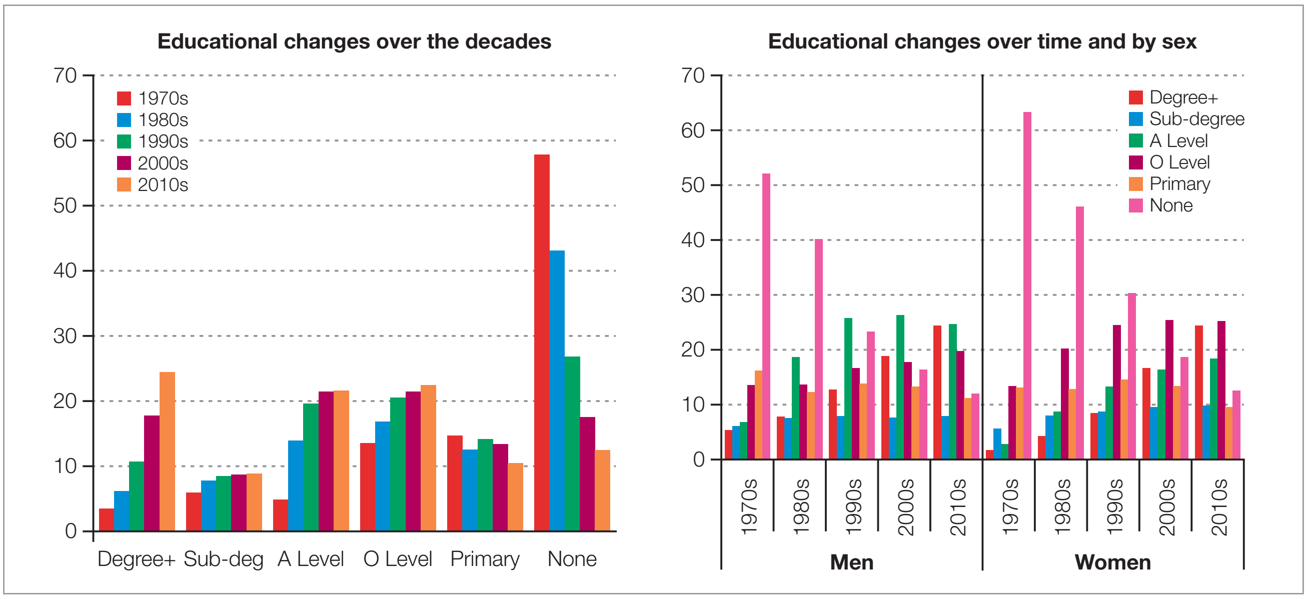
Research in Britain consistently shows that visible ethnic minority groups tend to face numerous disadvantages in the labour market. The most notable of these is the kind of 'hyper-cyclical unemployment', namely, the disproportionately high rates of unemployment they have during the recession years (Li and Heath, 2008). Apart from possible discrimination by employers, the causes of this are sometimes attributed to their poor English, lower levels of education or qualifications acquired in foreign countries which are not recognised as having the same value in the British labour market. Yet, in spite of the considerable research on ethnic disadvantages in unemployment, low occupational status, and poor earnings (Heath and Li, 2008; Li and Heath, 2010, 2014; Li, 2012a, 2015b), there is little systematic research on the changing profile of education by ethnic minority groups in Britain over time and how this is related to their employment and occupational positions in the labour market. Do we witness improvement or deterioration in educational attainment? Do ethnic minorities constantly fall behind Whites in education? And does education bring the same protection against unemployment and poor occupation for the ethnic minorities as it does for Whites? This paper aims to answer some of these questions.

The paper uses data from the *General Household Survey* (GHS 1972–2005) and *Labour Force Survey* (LFS 1983–2013). The analysis is confined to men aged 16–65 and women aged 16–63 who were resident in private households in Great Britain at the time of interview. The sample size used in the analysis is 2,863,511.

Is the Gender Gap Widening?

Let us start by looking at the overall changes in educational attainment and whether gender gaps in education are widening. Do women constantly fall behind men in educational achievement? In Figure 1, we find an educational upgrading from the early

Figure 1. Changing educational profiles



1970s to the present time. In the left panel of the figure, we see that the greatest changes occurred at the two ends of the educational spectrum: people with degrees (first degree or higher), and with no qualifications. The proportions with degrees increased from 4.5 to 24.4 per cent and those with no education declined from 57.8 to 12.3 per cent during the five decades covered. In the right panel of the figure, we see that women made greater progress than men: they started off with poorer education but in the present time they are on an equal footing with men in terms of attainment at the various levels. So the first important finding we have is the increasing gender equality in educational attainment amidst a generally improving educational structure.

Do Ethnic Minorities Trail Behind?

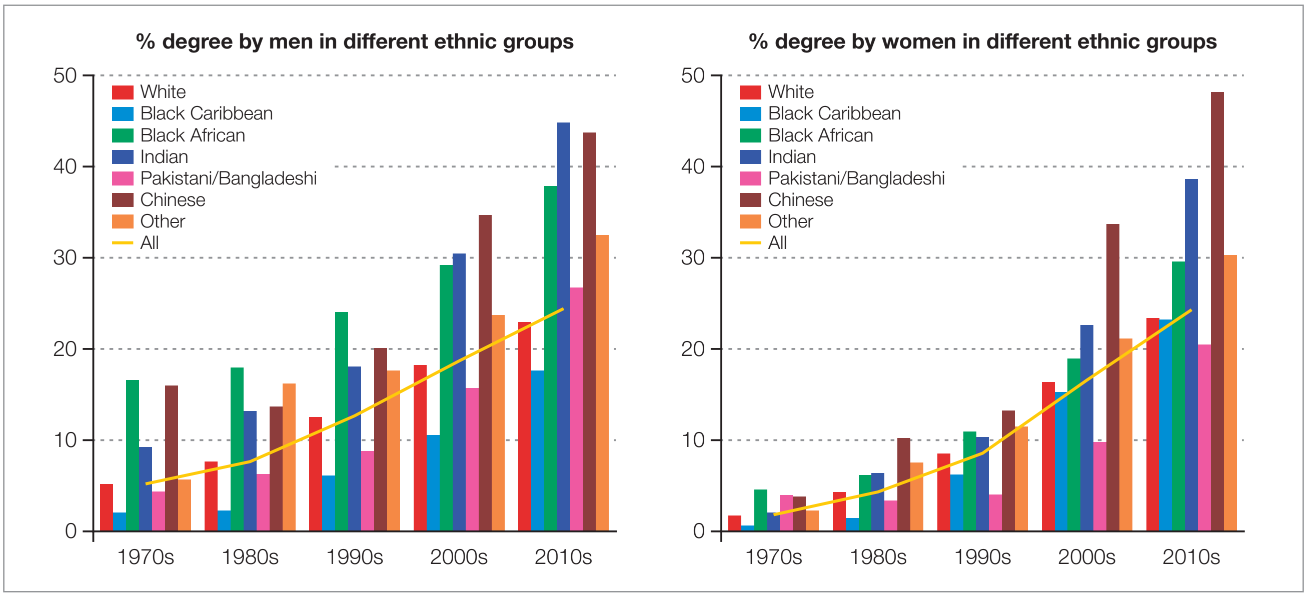
Our second question concerns whether ethnic minorities constantly have lower educational qualifications than Whites which may help to explain their higher unemployment rates and lower occupational standing. There are different ways to make such comparisons, in terms of each of the educational levels shown in Figure 1. As higher levels of education carry greater importance for employment and occupation, we focus on the highest level, namely, first degree or above. Figure 2 shows the data on degree level education by men and women. Also shown in the figure are the mean values for degree level education in each decade so we can compare the relative advantages and disadvantages of each of the ethnic groups. It is noted here that some of the ethnic minorities who were born in Britain or who came at a very young age will have received all their education in the country whereas others who were born abroad and who came in their teens or as adults will have only received part of their education in Britain or may have got all of their education in their countries of origin. We are, however, only comparing the level, but not the 'quality', of education at this stage. We shall control for generational status and age of arrival which would account for the quality of education when we come to address the net ethnic disadvantages.

Somewhat to our surprise, ethnic minorities are generally not behind Whites in degree level education. Men of Black African, Indian and Chinese heritages are more likely than White men to have degrees in each of the periods covered. Pakistani/Bangladeshi men were behind White men in the first four decades but surpassed the latter in the most recent one. Only Black Caribbean men were consistently behind but we can also see signs of them catching up.

With regard to women, we find a similar picture. Women of Black Caribbean origins caught up with White women from 2000s onwards and Pakistani/Bangladeshi women have been making rapid progress and are only marginally behind White women in degree level education at the present time.

The overall picture, both of Indians, Chinese and Black Africans outperforming Whites and of Black Caribbeans and Pakistanis/Bangladeshis quickly catching up suggests that ethnic minorities in Britain are overall 'positively selected', having a high

Figure 2. Degree-level education by ethnicity and gender over time



aspiration for their own and their children's education. Another feature in the figure is the predominant position held by the Chinese and Indians: whilst every group is gaining more degree level qualifications over time, men and women in these two groups are making the greatest progress, leaving all other groups further behind as we move from the earlier to the later periods. (Indian men overtook Chinese men in the last decade.) The evidence in this regard thus shows that ethnic minorities are in generally not poorly-qualified as one might assume and that their disadvantages in the labour market are not, or at least not entirely, due to their lack of human capital in its classical sense.

Ethnic Penalties in the Labour Market

Given the fairly favourable educational profiles of the ethnic minority groups relative to the Whites, one might expect them to fare at least similarly well in employment and occupational attainment. Yet research in employment and occupational attainment has shown otherwise. Due to the limit of space, we are not going to present data on the trends of their employment and occupational attainment in the last five decades. Rather, we focus on the 'net' ethnic disadvantages which would demonstrate how similar levels of educational attainment may bring different labour market returns to different ethnic groups. Of course labour market position is associated with factors beyond education. Ethnic minorities are on the whole younger and young people are less likely to find a job or to reach a higher position. Between half and two thirds of black Africans, Indians, Pakistanis/Bangladeshis and Chinese in our sample were born abroad or came as adults, and around half of them have foreign qualifications, which would negatively affect their employment and career opportunities. Muslim communities comprising predominantly Pakistanis/Bangladeshis have poorer health conditions (18 per cent as compared with 14 per cent of the overall population reporting limiting long-term illness) and a larger number of dependent children (1.7 as compared 0.7 of the whole sample). Furthermore, the economic development across Britain is uneven, with fewer opportunities in the north than in South Eastern England. All this would mean that we need to control for factors most likely to have an impact on the risks of unemployment and on access to the more advantaged social position.

We examine the risk of unemployment and access to the professional-managerial (salariat) positions in the following, controlling for education, age, age squared, marital and health status, number of dependent children under the age of 16 in the household, generational status (including nativity and age of arrival) and region of residence in all the models. The analysis on the risks of unemployment is limited to people who are economically active and the analysis on access to the salariat is confined to those who are in paid employment. Within the limit of data, the analysis seeks to compare like with like and the resulting differences between minority ethnic groups and the White majority could be viewed as 'ethnic penalties', namely, the net differences for people with the same socio-demographic and geographic attributes. For ease of understanding the results are presented as percentage points. The data in Figures 3 and 4 thus show the net differences between the ethnic minority groups and White

Figure 3. Risks of unemployment by ethnicity and by gender

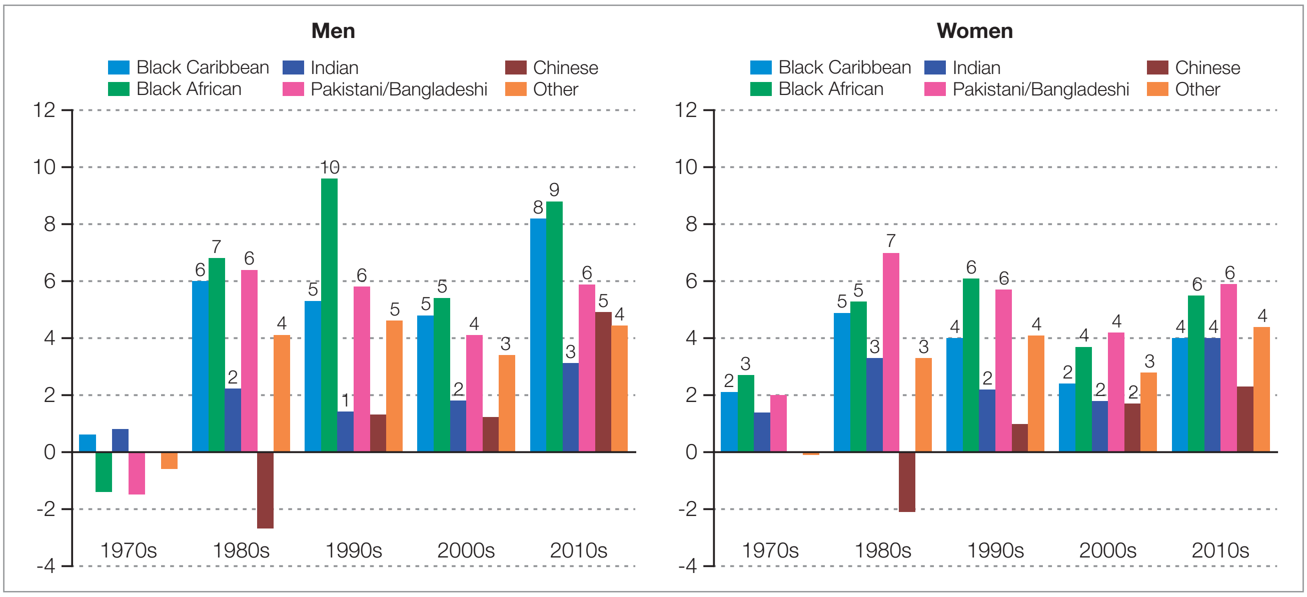
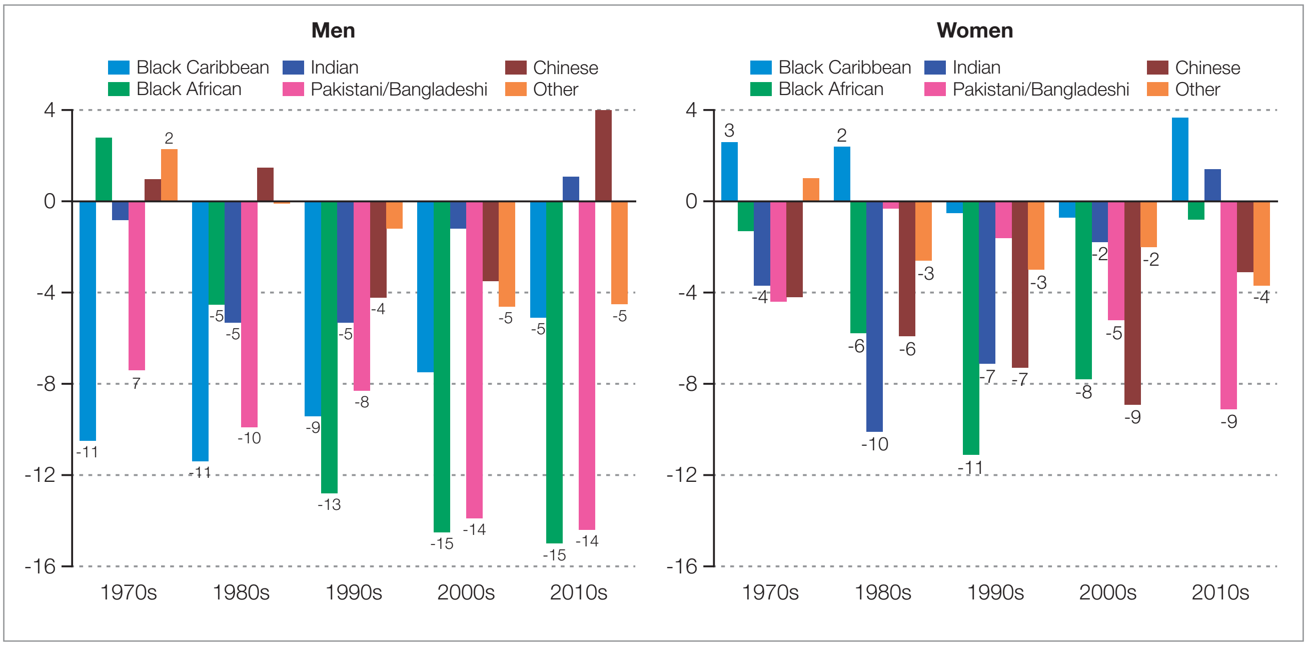


Figure 4. Access to the professional-managerial salariat by ethnicity and by gender



people. Bars with labelled data indicate statistically significant differences between the relevant ethnic minority group and the White people at the five per cent level or above. In the same vein, bars with no labelled data show no significant difference.

Looking firstly at the unemployment data for men, we find that from the 1980s to the early 2010s, most ethnic minority groups were more likely to experience unemployment. Even Chinese men who, as shown above, were nearly twice as likely as White men to have degree-levels of education (44 versus 23 per cent), had unemployment rates five percentage points higher than White men. Black African, Black Caribbean and Pakistani/Bangladeshi men were found to have consistently higher rates of unemployment. This is particularly disheartening for Black African men who, again as shown in Figure 2, had much higher rates of degree-level education than the other two groups. The net rates of ethnic women's unemployment were lower than those of the male counterparts but the shape is similar. A notable exception pertains to the high rates of unemployment for Pakistani/Bangladeshi women. As around two-thirds of Pakistani/Bangladeshi women are economically inactive, those seeking paid employment are less bound by cultural traditions and are, as Lindley, Dale and Dex (2006) show, usually better educated.

Overall, the evidence suggests that even with similar demo-geographical attributes, higher educational achievement failed to protect ethnic minority men and women against unemployment, especially when the overall employment situation was bad, such as during the 1980s, 1990s and in the current recession.

Finally, we turn to chances of gaining professional-managerial (salariat) positions for those who have secured a job as shown in Figure 4 where bars with labelled data show, as with the unemployment data in Figure 3, statistically significant differences with White people. For men, the two Black groups and Pakistanis/Bangladeshis have even greater disadvantages than in employment. We need to remember that these are net disadvantages, and that these net disadvantages are additional to the initial setbacks experienced in trying to find a job. It is also noticeable that the net disadvantages faced by Black Caribbean men were reducing over the periods examined whereas those associated with Black Africans and Pakistanis/Bangladeshis were increasing. Black Caribbeans have on the whole been in the country longer than other groups and are more integrated into the social fabrics of the society as indicated by their higher inter-marriage patterns. The pronounced disadvantages associated with Black African men from the 1990s onwards may be due to the fact that a large proportion (around 20 per cent) within the group are Muslims and, in spite of their higher levels of education, they are less likely to find themselves in the professional and managerial (salariat) positions in the last two decades. With regard to women, we note that Black Caribbean women, who were recruited into the NHS as nurses, were no different from White women in each of the decades. Black African, Indian and Chinese women were disadvantaged from the 1980s to the 2000s. Only Pakistani/Bangladeshi women's positions were deteriorating in the last two decades, namely becoming significantly disadvantaged vis-à-vis their White peers.

Summary

This paper uses the most authoritative data sources and conducts a rigorous analysis of education and labour market position for the ethnic minorities in Britain over five decades. Our main findings are:

- There has been much improvement in education, shown mainly in the increase in degree-level education and in the reduction of illiteracy;
- Women have reached parity with men in educational achievement;
- Ethnic minorities are on the whole better qualified than White people;
- Yet, in spite of their higher qualifications, ethnic minorities, particularly Black people and Muslims, encounter dual disadvantages, firstly in employment and then, when in work, in gaining career advancement.
- However, it is not all a bad story. While Indians and Chinese still face disadvantages in getting a job, they are not particularly handicapped in career progress once in work.

Eliminating the dual handicaps in ethnic employment and career progress, and creating a condition of equal opportunity for all is hard but is something we must strive for.

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SECTION III: TEACHING AND TEACHER TRAINING

6. Challenging Cultures in Initial Teacher Education

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This article is concerned with cultures in English education specifically in relation to teacher education (and the development of student teachers) and the education of Black[1] pupils. The article explores three areas which have informed my perspectives on the cultures in initial teacher education (ITE) and in particular the challenges faced by teacher educators in effectively equipping student teachers to deliver an ethnically inclusive curriculum and raise the attainment of Black children. The areas of focus are: Black underachievement, racism in the classroom and teacher training which examines the education student teachers receive and how this impacts on the type of curriculum they deliver once qualified.

Black Underachievement

I have long been concerned with the education and attainment of Black children, but primarily African-Caribbean children as it would seem that a permanent, unchangeable culture in English school education is the persistent lower attainment of African-Caribbean students (vis-à-vis White British students) in obtaining 5A*–C passes in their GCSE (general certificate in secondary education) examinations including mathematics and English (DfE, 2013a; Strand, 2014a). Despite examples of educational success for African-Caribbean students (e.g. Rhamie 2007; Wright et al., 2010) and higher attainment noticeably for Black girls (Mirza 1992, 2009), over the past five decades African-Caribbean underachievement has become entrenched within the English education system. Such entrenchment has been attributed to institutional racism in the school system (Coard, 1971; DES, 1985; Gillborn, 2008) and the absence of educational equality for Black students. Peart (2013) observes that:

> *While there appears to be an acceptance of the principle of equality in education, not all groups are able to access education in the same way or enjoy similar experience of education. Some groups [including] Black students are systematically disadvantaged in the English education system and experience... academic underachievement.*
> (Peart, 2013: 3)

Arguably, the underachievement of Black children is underpinned by the culture in English schools which is to see Black (but mainly African-Caribbean) children as coming from families who lack cultural capital (i.e. knowledge and skills associated with the White middle classes – Bourdieu and Passeron, 1997) and as not valuing education. It is the presumed absence of the necessary cultural capital to reproduce educational success together with the wherewithal to value education and maintain a supportive educational home culture/environment, which is blamed for the lower attainment of African-Caribbean students (Maylor, 2014; Maylor et al., 2009). Paradoxically, Black African students whose attainment nationally is higher than African-Caribbean students (but who are nevertheless designated as underachieving – DfE, 2013a) are considered to have aspirational, supportive parents who value education which positively influences their own aspirations and educational outcomes (Strand, 2014b).

What is interesting when examining the attainment of Black children as a group is that Strand (2014a:131) acknowledges that ‘the relationship between ethnicity, gender and attainment is not straightforward’, and that when social class as an influencing factor is added the educational attainment of Black students becomes more complex. Having a middle class background is often used to account for the higher attainment of Black African pupils when compared to African-Caribbean pupils (Strand, 2012). However, recent research by Strand (2014a: 223) of national test results for 2836 pupils aged 7 and 11 in 68 primary schools in one London borough, noted that ‘low and high SES (socio-economic status) Black pupils made equally poor progress [at] age 7-11'. Strand's analysis further observed that in the schools studied, 'among Black Caribbean and Black African groups there is almost no SES gradiant at all' (Strand, 2014a: 233). While Strand (2014a) found that social class had little influence on the progression of Black children in primary schools, his research in secondary schools (Strand, 2014b) indicates that lower attainment is not just about social class background or student ability as when compared with White British boys from low SES backgrounds, 'Black Caribbean boys (particularly the more able)' at age 11–16 from low SES backgrounds made 'the least progress' (Strand, 2014b: 131). Equally, the lower attainment of Black students cannot just be attributed to a lack of student (or parental) aspiration as African-Caribbean boys from working class backgrounds, for example, have been found to be more likely to aspire to continue in further education after age 16 than White working-class boys (Strand, 2012). Such aspirations would seem to reflect the aspirational capital that Yosso (2005) posits exists in Black homes/communities.

Racism in the Classroom

Research evidence points to an understanding of aspirational, ethnicity and class factors as being insufficient in trying to ascertain the attainment of Black students from working and middle class backgrounds, especially when research has shown that a middle class background is no guarantee of educational success for Black children (whether Black African or African-Caribbean) in England (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Strand 2011; Vincent et al., 2012). So what accounts for the differential attainment and educational inequality experienced by Black students in English schools? The answer can be found in the culture which exists in English schools/classrooms which is to see/demonise Black pupils as underachievers. This negative depiction is reinforced in lower teacher expectations, and is arguably exemplified in relation to African-Caribbean children by the systematic under-representation of African-Caribbean students in higher tier examinations (Gillborn, 2008; Strand, 2012).

A fundamental problem therefore in African-Caribbean students being entered for lower tiered examinations is that teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers does not challenge the negative/racist positioning of African-Caribbean students in the classroom, and/or lower teacher expectations of this group. This leads me to discussing teacher training.

Teacher Training and Ethnically Inclusive Teaching

Once would expect teacher educators and student teachers to have a shared goal of raising the attainment of all children/students, and that as part of this the lower attainment of Black students as a group would be examined. However, teacher education, which is preoccupied with enabling student teachers to acquire professional competence (so as to deliver the curriculum and fulfil Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspection requirements) and achieve qualified teacher status (QTS), negates the education of Black students per se. It not only negates Black students, but does not acknowledge Black students as an ethnically diverse group with differential attainment with high and low attainment evident amongst Black African and African-Caribbean students. This is because the current QTS standards (DfE, 2012) (introduced as a result of government fears about the 'threat' of multiculturalism) place greater emphasis on student teachers not undermining British values rather than developing teaching skills which facilitate the effective education of children in a multi-ethnic society, which England is. Also absent from the education of student teachers is an acute awareness of the diverse range of ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of pupils (including Black students) in English schools (Maylor et al., 2007), and how stereotypes about different groups can be challenged through their teaching. For me, this is the main contributory factor within teacher education to the entrenchment of educational underachievement for African-Caribbean children, as time is spent equipping student teachers with skills to deliver the curriculum and manage student behaviour, rather than helping them to understand that just because a child is African-Caribbean this does not mean they are destined to underachieve and are therefore not worth educating effectively. Moreover, research suggests that where teacher educators have sought to broaden student teacher understanding of Britain's diverse nation and challenge student teacher racism, this has been met with resistance (Lander, 2011). My own experience of teacher educators suggests that the knowledge of student teachers is unlikely to improve where teacher educators themselves hold naive views about Black children and Black families, and what it is possible for Black students to achieve, such as a PhD.

Every year hundreds of newly qualified teachers join the teaching profession. Yet many, even those about to embark on teaching in multi-ethnic schools, will lack a real understanding of the different ethnic and cultural groups that Britain comprises. Recently, I was at the Tate Britain art gallery in London and they have a timeline (http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/7165) which is illustrative of the British monarchy's presence as well as different historical events from 1500 to the 2000s in Britain, and which Britain has been party to in Europe and more globally. Its primary purpose is to demonstrate how individuals from around the world have contributed to the development of British art. That said, while the timeline marks the arrival of Caribbean migrants on the Empire Windrush in 1948, other minority ethnic communities which arrived afterwards seem to be absent. There is a tendency on the timeline to mark riots and racial tension which occurred in the 1980s in London, Birmingham and Liverpool, and the summer riots in 2012; so there is a negative emphasis on minority ethnic communities as causing racial strife. The timeline which was developed by school pupils for me reflects a key problem in teacher training and teaching, and that is the absence of an in-depth knowledge of Britain as an ethnically diverse society. Also absent is knowledge about the different minority ethnic communities that reside in Britain, including those who came first as immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers and now in some cases have second and third generations born in Britain, as well as more recent arrivals with expansion of the European Union. The timeline itself is not the problem, but rather the fact that not all minority ethnic communities are represented and events concerning minority ethnic communities are presented as historical facts with no analysis or commentary about the events highlighted. It seems appropriate to assume that the pupils received guidance from their teachers in producing the timeline. So if knowledge of minority ethnic communities is absent among teachers in school who also play a key role in mentoring student teachers during their teaching practice placements, how can we expect students/newly qualified teachers to develop ethnically inclusive teaching practice?

Pondering this question recently, I found myself returning to the work of bell hooks (1994: 37) who argues that 'no education is politically neutral'. So just as the national curriculum that is delivered in schools is informed and guided by government education policy decisions and prescriptions, so too is the way that student teachers are educated during their period of training. In this respect, the British government determine which type of teacher knowledge is privileged and which is not, and through Ofsted inspections sanction which knowledge is acceptable if student teachers are to be granted QTS. So if as previously stated government priority in the training of student teachers is ensuring that teachers do not undermine British values in their teaching, then teacher educators are unlikely to prioritise student teachers considering how classrooms can be transformed so the learning experience for all students is ethnically inclusive and recognises individual student experience (including language, culture and ethnicity) 'as central and significant' (hooks, 1994: 37). hooks (1994: 39) points to the need for teachers to critically examine the way they 'conceptualise what the space for learning should be like', but if this is absent from teacher training it will be difficult for student teachers to envisage a multi-ethnic classroom or ethnically inclusive curriculum.

Clearly, English and USA teaching contexts are different. Nonetheless, the work of hooks is insightful because as a Black teacher brought up in an ethnically segregated American environment she confessed to being unprepared when she first entered a multi-ethnic American classroom and to lacking 'the necessary skills' (hooks, 1994: 41) to teach all the students present. As the work of hooks attests it is not just White teachers who are unprepared to teach in a multi-ethnic environment. Notwithstanding, as the majority of teachers in English schools are White (DfE, 2013b) they are often unprepared to teach Black pupils (Maylor et al. 2007). So what does it mean for teachers to be prepared to teach Black pupils? First and foremost it would mean that they would have to recognise and accept Black children as children in the same way that White children are. Here I draw on the work of Goff et al. (2014) in the USA to illustrate what I mean. Goff et al. (2014) in seeking to better understand conceptions of childhood and policing in the USA examined three hypotheses: '(a) that Black boys are seen as less 'childlike' than their White peers; (b) that the characteristics associated with childhood will be applied less when thinking specifically about Black boys relative to White boys; and (c) that these trends would be exacerbated in contexts where Black males are dehumanised by associating them (implicitly) with apes' (Goff et al., 2014: 526). Three of their findings are salient here. First, Black boys were seen as older and less innocent. Secondly, Black boys were found to prompt a less essential conception of childhood than their White same-age peers. Thirdly, there are racial disparities in police violence towards Black children (Goff et al., 2014: 526). These findings though specific to police attitudes in the USA are relevant to teaching and teacher education in England as they resonate with difficulties many Black parents have long complained of – that Black boys in particular in English schools are viewed as older than they are owing to their height and body mass, and also as 'aggressive' which leads to them being treated more harshly than White students when committing similar acts (Maylor, 2014; Maylor et al., 2006) and inevitably experiencing higher levels of school exclusion than their White counterparts (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2012). The persistent higher levels of school exclusion point to the need for teacher educators to equip student teachers to interrogate stereotypes and their own biased perceptions about Black students (including their behaviour) as well as students from other ethnic groups. This is imperative for all student teachers not just White student teachers. Being able to disentangle a stereotype from the reality about Black student groups and challenge biased perspectives will enable student teachers to teach Black students effectively.

Another key step in being able to effectively educate Black students is to comprehend the conception of 'Whiteness' and how it influences the knowledge taught and the knowledge that is accepted as legitimate in the classroom. Student teachers have to be enabled to reject contentions of 'White' knowledge as imbuing cultural capital, as being the only legitimate knowledge and 'accept different ways of knowing [and] new epistemologies' (hooks 1994: 40; Lareau and Horvat 1999; Carter, 2003) from Black students. It is important not just that Whiteness is 'studied, understood, discussed' but 'that everyone learns that affirmation of multiculturalism, and an unbiased inclusive perspective, can and should be present whether or not people of color are present' (hooks, 1994: 43), and that all teachers (whatever their ethnicity) recognise their 'complicity in accepting and perpetuating biases of any kind' (hooks, 1994: 44). Equally important is an understanding by student teachers and teacher educators of why biased perspectives (no matter how painful this is) need to be challenged, and new understandings about different ethnic groups and attainment are generated.

Ultimately, if teacher educators are to produce teachers who care that Black students are enabled to contribute to learning in the classroom, and achieve attainment goals in their examinations and future careers, they will need to teach in ways that transform student teacher consciousness and equip them to become critical educators.

Note

1. In this paper Black is used to refer to children of African-Caribbean and Black African heritage.

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7. *‘Racism, It’s Part of My Everyday Life’*: Black and Minority Ethnic Pupils’ Experiences in a Predominantly White School

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Introduction

The words in the title were spoken by a Black female student in a predominantly White school in southern England. This article is based on a school-initiated enquiry which I was invited to undertake by the headteacher who was shocked by the number of racist incidents in the school within a three-month period. Researchers (Gillborn, 2005; Mirza, 2005) have reported that in the last thirty years the gains made in education related to ethnic diversity in our society appear to have been lost and old-fashioned racism has appeared again.

In a so-called post-racial era we believe that racism has been tackled so schools should be safe places for children. Some teachers and school leaders, especially in areas of low ethnic diversity, operate the ‘no problem here’ attitude (Gaine 1987, 1995, 2001, 2005). Gaine (2005) notes that ‘no problem here’ compounds the notion that Black and minority ethnic (BME) people are the problem and in their absence racism does not exist, but once they are present racism manifests itself since ‘visible targets’ are evident. BME people are seen as the problem rather than the underlying racism which may exist and remain unaddressed in schools and society. In recent years confusion has been created by the ‘pc gone mad’ brigade, some teachers tend not to tackle racism because they are ill-prepared or unsure of what to do (Lander, 2011) despite the legislative imperative.

I argue that the resurgence of racism in schools may well be linked to teachers’ lack of education and understanding about ‘race’, ethnicity and racism as successive Teacher Standards have erased the terms ‘race’, ethnicity, racism and even cultural diversity from the text (Lander, 2011; Smith, 2012). Teachers are ill-prepared to deal with the real life issues that children bring into school from the world outside. Pearce (2014) notes that even BME teachers fail to act in tackling racist incidents such is the power of conformity to fit in to the prevailing post-racial climate in our schools. I would argue that this lack of action in dealing with racist incidents is a product of the structural racism arising from the reform of teacher education to more school-based training which has compounded teachers’ lack of understanding, or ignorance about ‘race’ and ethnicity as key markers of identity and as axes of oppression. During the short training to become a teacher via either university-based postgraduate routes, or School Direct or Teach First, trainee teachers receive little training, or at least no more than the obligatory one-hour lecture on ‘race’. This does not permit any depth of understanding of ‘race’, ethnicity and racism nor how to represent diversity within the curriculum as advised by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Macpherson, 1999), nor why these are important aspects for future teachers to know and understand in a society which is becoming increasingly diverse.

The media coverage about immigration, asylum seekers and refugees, and in some papers, the Islamaphobic rhetoric can affect children and young people’s attitudes especially if teachers are ill-equipped to tackle racism when it presents itself in the classroom or playground. In an article in *The Independent* (Dugan, 2014) 1400 children contacted the charity Childline to seek counselling for racist bullying. This was reported as a 69 per cent increase since the previous year. The children and young people phoned in about racism in their school and reported that teachers were making the situation worse or ignoring their complaints. The article noted how the debate on immigration and what children heard at home prevailed in school. Muslim children were called ‘bombers’ or ‘terrorists’. New arrivals who did not speak English well were called ‘freshies’ or told to go back to where they came from. Gunaratanam (2014) argues that racialised minorities prepare their children for the racism they encounter at school and in life. This is an approach I have employed myself because I know through experience and research that schools and teachers (Kohli 2014; Lander, 2011; Marx, 2006; Pearce, 2014) are inadequately prepared to tackle racism. All schools regardless of their location or the ethnic profile of the pupil population have a duty to prepare all children to live in a multi-ethnic and multicultural society and to tackle racism.

The data presented here was gained from an invitation by the headteacher of a comprehensive school in a low diversity area to meet with a small group of pupils (six) who had been selected by a senior teacher to talk to me about racism in school. I talked to each young person individually for about twenty minutes. The group included three boys and three girls; two BME students; two Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) students and two White British students. Notes were made during the meeting with each pupil and a report was provided to the headteacher who intended to present it to the governors. Consent was gained for the data to be used for academic purposes.

Overt Racism Evident in the School

Five of the six students, White and BME students had heard racist comments or seen racist behaviour in school. One Black student said she hears name-calling all the time and at least three times a week it is directed at her. She usually hears the N-word and it is more boys than girls who are abusive and she does not report it all the time. She said racist name calling:

> *… it's part of my everyday life. I have no option but to put up with it.*
>
> *I have come to their country so they can do whatever they want.*

She reported it only when it was very upsetting, for example, when a girl had called her the N-word and others around her had laughed. Five students said they heard the N-word quite a lot and the racist term Paki used a few times. One student felt it was difficult because the word Nigga was used in Rap music and thought some students felt they could use it too. He felt some people did use it in a racist way but others used it 'like celebrities' but 'you can opt not to use it' he noted. One BME student said he 'takes it as a joke'. He gets called 'fried chicken' but 'it goes too far' when:

> *… they call you a Paki, I say something back, I take it like when they laugh and say it, then it's a joke but when they say it in a serious face then it's not ok.*

He noted how 'we only hear bad things about Muslims, like they are taking over'. Another student said he gets called 'Pikey' and he is likely to experience this at least twice per week. Another student said he has heard, 'Go back to your own country, you Paki'.

The evidence from the students indicates that racist language is used in school and directed at other BME and GRT students. It appeared to go largely unchallenged and used, as indicated above, 'as a joke' in some cases. One White, male student perceptively noted racism occurs because,

> *In society people want to feel better – a social hierarchy, feel superior, some White people feel they should feel superior, they are superior, supposedly superior due to slavery.*

'They Talk about It Being Not Right But They Still Do It'

All the students described racism and the use of racist language as:

> *'nasty'; 'horrible'; 'it hasn't got a place in our society'; 'it's not nice'.*
>
> *'people don't like Black people'.*

It was interesting to note that the young people said that if a racist incident, such as the use of name-calling happened once or twice they would not do anything. But if it was persistent then they would tell someone. The attitude which prevailed was one of 'I can't do anything about it'. The young students were unaware that if they hear racist language, and if it offends them, regardless of whether there is a 'target' or 'victim' they can report it. It seems that someone has to really suffer before they would take action. This seemed to be the prevalent attitude. One student noted, 'I've heard it [racist name calling] I've not joined in' but he felt he could not stop it. Another student said she has heard it a lot, that she felt sorry for the victims, she thinks racist name calling is 'horrible', believes everyone is equal, but people are entitled to their own opinions and she never felt she needed to do anything about it because she did not want to get involved. When asked whether she was afraid of being labelled a 'Nigger/Paki-lover' she said 'Yes'. When asked 'If you don't do something then aren't you part of the problem?' she responded that she would do something if it was persistent.

It appeared that these students did not feel empowered to stand up against the use of racist language or to report it. Yet the Year 10 pupils wrote about racism in English in response to their study of the text *Of Mice and Men* (a few of the students mentioned this) but they did not feel they could challenge racism in their school environment. The study of race and racism seems to be an academic exercise in English, History or RE. They all agreed racism is horrible and nasty. As a BME researcher they may have been influenced to respond in this way but it seemed the students did not know, or were unwilling to make a public stand against racism. They appeared to be uneducated about, and unequipped to challenge, the everyday racism they witnessed in their school.

The Teacher Said 'Just Ignore It'

One student noted that he saw a racist incident where a Black boy was called a 'racist name'. When the child told the teacher, the teacher responded 'Just ignore it, stay away from them'. The students all expressed that in their opinion more should be done to tackle racism. One student said, 'Try to make them [teachers] more strict on racism'; another said 'kick them [perpetrators] out of school'. The students wanted the teachers to do more to address and tackle racism. The following responses were gained when students were asked what teachers should do:

> *'talk to people about racism'.*
>
> *'have assemblies, but that wouldn't stop them'.*
>
> *'talk about it'.*
>
> *'make the consequences clear'.*
>
> *'say more good stuff about Muslims'.*
>
> *'educate more about it'.*

One student noted that she had reported two racist incidents but she did not know what had happened about them.

The students wanted teachers to take action to tackle racism in school. The apparent complicity of students and some teachers through not reporting racist language or incidents as required by the law may be a result of a 'rabbit-in-the headlights' shocked reaction (Lander, 2011) that engenders inaction. This is a response found in areas of low ethnic diversity where the majority of the population are ignorant about the strategies to tackle racism (Gaine, 2005) but ignorance cannot be an excuse when the protection of children is paramount.

Conclusion

In this inquiry, racism was evident, but only a fraction of the racist incidents were reported and the students' perceptions indicated that teachers did little to counter the racism. The limited data suggest that students wanted the teachers to do more to tackle racism. They sought their teachers' support and relied on them to role model the courage required to act lawfully to tackle racism and protect children. The students and teachers needed to be educated and empowered to work together to stamp out racism in their school.

In the absence of education about racism within teacher training a colourblind approach is applied and it is thought, by some teachers (and teacher educators) to be a laudable stance (Lander, 2011). The erasure of race from the initial teacher training standards and the diminution of university-based teacher education in tandem with a colourblind stance has served to compound teachers' ignorance about racism, how it operates and how policy and practice serve to embed the dominant discourse leaving BME pupils the victims of racism in their everyday school lives.

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SECTION IV: SCHOOL CULTURES AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

8. Black and Minority Ethnic Students on the Margins: Self-segregation or Enforced Exclusion?

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Introduction

We often hear it said that we no longer live in a racist society. This has been the justification for steadily obliterating race issues from the education policy and political agendas in the UK. At the same time the 'Black–White' education achievement gap is as wide as ever; Black men are over-represented in the prison system and in the unemployment statistics (Ball, Milmo and Ferguson, 2012). Although the 'Black–White' binary is of course more complex than that and some BME groups – such as Indian heritage and East Asian children and some African groups (Strand 2012) – are doing better than others, the point remains the same: race is still a central societal issue and racism is alive and kicking. In fact evidence of racist attitudes and behaviours is all too prevalent such as those recently displayed by the Chelsea football fans in Paris who chanted that they were 'racist and happy with that' (BBC, 2015). In May 2014 the British Social Attitudes' Survey (Natcen, 2014) reported that a third of all surveyed admitted to being racist. The rise of the Far Right in Europe is another example together with the apparent popularity of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and their xenophobic attitudes. The admission of being racist and manifestations of racism are of course denied. We have seemingly entered the phase of post-race or perhaps more to the point a period of denial. As Bonilla-Silva (2014) has said, we have a situation of 'racism without the racists'.

These overt expressions of racism are indicative of a changed ethos in society: an ethos that creates the environment where people feel it is acceptable to hold and express racist views and sentiments. In many ways this is not surprising given the hyperbole around immigration and the erroneous blame levelled at recent migrants for job losses, housing shortages pressure on the NHS and so on. Added to which, David Cameron (British Coalition Prime Minister, 2010–2015 and Prime Minister, 2015–) has asserted that multiculturalism has failed, arguing that it has led to disharmony and fractured communities and the Coalition Government has imposed a notion of 'Britishness' onto the school curriculum (DfE, 2011). Juxtaposed with this criticism is the racialised angst about terrorism, exacerbating fears of difference and Othering, although this is not new since we have lived with the negative associations of the Terrorism Act and associated policy initiatives since 2000 (Shain, 2011).

Fear of Difference

In 2015 the discourse around 'community cohesion' has shifted (or one might argue shifted back) to assimilation: that BME people, whether British-born or not now have to adopt 'British values', implying that they don't have these and that these values, around 'tolerance', 'fairness', mutual respect, individual liberty and democracy' (DfE, 2011) are presumably only held by a certain type of White British person. It signifies, ironically, a lack of respect and demonstrates an example of, as Said argued: 'The idea of the European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures' (Said, 2003: 7). The discourse around 'difference' has been fuelled and polarised by the implication that BME differences are negative, lacking value and at times are dangerous. The focus on terrorism which has now encroached on schools, has heightened the moral panic and in particular exacerbates Islamophobia. Schools and individual teachers are now expected to monitor the children they teach for signs of extremism, as are university staff (Home Office, 2015). This discourse takes the 'them and us' perspective to another level.

On the Margins: Self-segregation or Enforced Exclusion?

Given these scenarios it is unsurprising that the school and indeed, as I will show, university, contexts create problematic environments for BME students. Labelling and negative stereotypical constructions have changed little over the years. In research I conducted with South Asian families in the North East of England in 2002–2004 (Crozier, 2004) the children of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage were frequently criticised by the teachers for 'not mixing' with the White majority and particularly the boys were accused of forming gangs (Crozier and Davies, 2008). Accusations of gangs comprising South Asian young people on the one hand and Black Caribbean and Black African heritage young people have become commonplace (see for example Alexander, 2000: Joseph and Gunter 2011; Shain 2011); they are also often being blamed for violence and crime and now as we have seen representing the potential for 'extremism' or worse 'terrorist acts' or at best targets for potential extremist grooming (Home Office, 2011).

This apparent failure to mix took a number of forms, and was regarded as being as a result of 'their' culture and religion and linked to this, 'their' reluctance to 'integrate'. The students were accused of not participating in after-school activities or school concerts, joining school residential or day trips, and of 'sticking together' in the playground. Teachers variously described this behaviour as not only missing-out on opportunities but in terms of posing a threat to harmonious relationships in the school. In constructing the South Asian students as 'not mixing', and disassociating themselves from the main stream, the young people were criticised for rejecting what the school had to offer both socially and academically. By contrast the students explained their behaviour as a defensive action against racist harassment and abuse (Crozier and Davies, 2008).

In the past, South Asian pupils have been regarded as 'good', quiet and well behaved. Now they are viewed as troublesome and in some cases, aggressive and threatening. The head of Uplands School, in my 2002–2004 study, said the Bangladeshi children were becoming more 'westernised in the worst aspects'. They had been the group with the least behaviour problems, he said but now they were becoming the group with the most behaviour problems. 'Individuals are becoming more headstrong and they are becoming more confident in resisting authority.' The Pakistani heritage children and 'the community' were depicted as resentful, territorial, and aggressive, referred to as invoking 'mafia' like responses. Although there was evidence from triangulated sources to substantiate the teachers' claim that intra-group conflicts existed amongst the local Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, we found the predominant focus on this to be disproportionate to the reality. This description of conflict and threat is part of the discourse of fear of the Other, fanned by the media hyperbole of Islamic fundamentalists and 'out of control' communities.

Focusing on the gang but also the intra-ethnic conflict, in Alexander's (2000) terms, is a form of cultural pathology rather than recognising structural inequalities. The conflict and troublesomeness in general is located within the South Asian children and the families, often described as out of touch with their children's reality. In this way attention is drawn to ethnicity and its difference rather than the role of the school and society. In none of the schools (Crozier 2004) were there large numbers of South Asian or other minority ethnic students but for some teachers more than one or two South Asian students led to the perception of a gang formation which they saw as threatening. As one teacher said:

> *As the minority has increased the chance to form gangs and groups has increased. So instead of having just one or two Muslim children in the class there might be three or four, five, six, or perhaps even eight. Then they'll form a little clique or a gang; if there's only one or two they'll integrate and make friends....*

And according to another teacher:

> *They're threatening because they hang around in a large group and look threatening. They'll hang around and block an exit, or for the toilet and people look and [say] 'well I'm not going past that lot'. And they do have a gang mentality, and if someone upsets say a boy in year 8, his elder brother and his mates will seek revenge or whatever and it can very much out of hand.*

There is very little evidence provided for the perceived threat that these putative gangs pose: 'They're threatening because… [they] look threatening.' Teachers 'feeling threatened' seems more to do with what they imagined rather than anything of substance. There are reminiscences here of black African Caribbean youth who are demonised because of the colour of their skin and their physical appearance, frequently in their case stereotyped as 'big' (Crozier, 2005; Gillborn, 1990; Hall et al., 1978); here the Asian boys are characterised as intimidating but this is not based on any physical attributes but rather the collective grouping. One or two are 'OK': not threatening; it is when they get together that they are perceived as 'a problem'. These boys who in the past were 'passive, and well behaved', have now turned into bad boys – bad black boys. As Alexander (2000: 236) has said: 'Muslims… [have] become the new "black" with all the associations of cultural alienation, deprivation and danger that come with this position'. More recently in researching students in higher education (Burke et al., 2013), White students expressed similar views towards BME fellow students. BME students were again criticised for forming cliques, and sentiments about gangs, very similar to those of the teachers in the earlier study, were also expressed. Groupings of BME people seemed to denote a gang formation and with that its aggressive connotation. Black male students were demonised by fellow White students as 'gangsters', 'bad boys' and 'tearabouts', threatening and troublesome. As one White student explains:

> *… most of the people that go to [name of college] are boys and a lot of them are black boys, more a bit like gangsters…*

And another White student refers to this same College as 'the ghetto':

> *… College it's called the ghetto … and we have banter about it, I say you don't fit in at [name of college] unless you've got two Blackberries, because everyone's always typing on their Blackberries.*

There are undertones of anxiety and a construction and fear of the 'Other'. These 'Other' are alien and threatening, as another White middle class student said:

> *I'm kind of middle class, we're quite well off. It's just interesting to see people who aren't so well off and live in really crowded places. They are all gangs. It's like the kind of thing you see in East Enders [a soap opera] …..*

It would seem that the presence of Black and Minority Ethnic students (and White working class) at university is unsettling for some White middle class students, particularly in the highly competitive space that HE represents: the presence of Others is seen to devalue the experience (Crozier et al., forthcoming).

In both of these examples of school and university contexts, seemingly large (or not so large) numbers of Black and especially male students, draw attention to themselves. Nirmal Puwar (2004) refers to this as 'Black bodies out of place'. She discusses colonial power as an illustration of White domination in perhaps its starkest form. As part of the power relationship and efforts to maintain White control, assimilation was (and arguably remains) a key device. However, this is not without its problems for the ruling group, as Puwar puts it: 'White superiority is called into question by this colonial encounter' (Puwar, 2004: 15). She goes on to explain that too much assimilation can be threatening and disrupting or as she says: 'the right words coming out of the wrong mouths' (Puwar, 2004: 115). BME students are 'too visible'; they appear to 'stand together' rather than blend in and assimilate. bell hooks (1992) has suggested that spaces on the margin can constitute powerful spaces where the subaltern can organise and resist. Where Black and Minority Ethnic people are seen as 'not-mixing' they seem to be regarded as a threat to the White norm.

Concluding Comments

Exclusion and marginalisation, in terms of 'race' and ethnicity (intersected by class and gender), are enduring themes in educational research. Sewell (1997), Mac an Ghaill (1988), Gillborn (1995) and Gillborn and Youdell, (2000) for example, have depicted ways in which Black school students are stereotyped by teachers who hold low expectations (Strand, 2012) and the effect of this on them being diverted into low sets, missing out on high status educational experiences and thus the requisite examination qualifications for university and college progression. In this article I have focused on another aspect of exclusion: the reinforcement and perpetration of the 'them and us' discourse and construction of 'the Other'. Although I have not discussed in detail Whiteness and its effects, the 'them and us' dichotomy asserts the normalisation of Whiteness. Othering is based on negative connotations which reaffirm White norms as superior (Crozier and Davies, 2008).

The exclusion and stereotyping of BME students as described here amounts to racial harassment which has to stop. We have had to reveal its existence and have analysed its impact too often and for too long. Education is part of the society and context set out at the start of this article and whilst its institutions cannot be held responsible for the racial antagonisms I described, schools and universities have a responsibility for developing understanding and critical awareness and thinking. Teachers and their institutions need to take responsibility for the behaviours and attitudes outlined here. Schools and universities need to engage their teachers and all their students in challenging and addressing negative racial prejudices and discrimination.

Rather than the focus on divisive ethnocentric curricula such as the focus on 'British values', schools need to assert the importance of critically engaging with universal values and exploring knowledge that is more appropriate to an ethnically diverse and rich society of the 21st century. Developing a critical anti-racist pedagogy would be more appropriate and beneficial for all students in their preparation for citizenship in a global cosmopolitan society.

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9. ‘Dangerous’ Muslim Girls? Race, Gender and Islamophobia in British Schools

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Introduction: Invisible and Visible Muslim Girls

With the recent high profile coverage of the radicalisation of three British-born Muslim young women who secretly travelled to Syria to join ISIS, we are now being told Muslim girls are both ‘dangerous’ and ‘in danger’ in British schools. Powerful, unrestrained Islamophobic discourses of risk, surveillance and fear now freely circulate in our educational spaces. Young Muslim women are now seen in the professional, public and political imagination as a potentially threatening religious/racialised group. This marks a distinct departure from the benign cultural/ethnic categorisation of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls that has long been the dominant tradition in multicultural educational research. So what are the consequences of such heightened negative attention on Muslim girls, and how does racism, religion, sexuality and gender intersect to shape their cultural and social experiences in schools? My purpose in this paper is look at the ways in which Muslim girls in schools are being simultaneously constructed as both highly ‘visible’ raced subjects and yet also ‘invisible’ gendered subjects and to consider what impact this has on their well-being and life chances.

The research I discuss here was part of a larger five- country European Union funded study (MIGS, 2011).[1] Our British research was based on in-depth interviews with migrant girls, including 17 young Muslim women, their teachers, parents and policy makers (Mirza, Meetoo and Litster, 2011). The young women from two large state secondary schools in London were 16 to 19 years of age. They were recent as well as second generation migrants coming from many different countries, including Somalia, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Drawing on an intersectional framework that considered the cross-cutting modalities of religion, race, class, gender, sexuality and age the project identified forms of surveillance practised by the schools, parents and policy makers that legitimated the regulation of the young women. First was the ‘visibility and invisibility’ of Muslim girls in multicultural educational policy. Second was the school’s conscious production of the ‘model Muslim female student’. These two effects were ultimately framed by recourse to ideas/stereotypes of Islamic community and familial religious patriarchal surveillance and control.

Slipping Through the Cracks: Muslim Girls in Educational Policy

Two aspects of educational policy stand out in relation to young Muslim women in school. First, they are largely invisible in the multicultural and community cohesion discourses that frame approaches to minority ethnic pupils. Given the neo-liberal educational emphasis on schools performance and success, the official public discourse is one of concern with boy’s underachievement. This manifests through policies aimed at the crisis of masculinity and disaffection for Black boys, alienation and separatism for Muslim boys, and deficit Whiteness and low self-esteem for White working-class boys. Girls have been largely overlooked in the ‘post-feminist’ complacency that there has been an overall improvement in their educational performance – which of course is always seen at the expense of boys. However, such deeply gendered discourses mask the *real* educational difficulties faced by girls from White working class, Muslim, black and minority ethnic backgrounds. In our research we found the preoccupation with Muslim boys rather than girls was clearly articulated in the frank and open discussions we had with national policy makers. A ‘gender perspective’ was perceived as related only to ‘girls’, implying that targeted measures for boys are not gendered, but reflect a normative position.

Second, when Muslim girls are visible in education policy discourse they are overwhelmingly constructed as pathological victims of their familial cultural and religious practices. While ‘gender equality’ is integral to mainstream school policy and schools must comply with legislative monitoring of pupils attainment, where Muslim communities are concerned, the policies aimed at girls are almost always culturally orientated.

The only official government educational policy we found for Muslim girls was steeped in a narrow, racialised preoccupation with Muslim parental cultural restrictions (such as wearing the veil or sex segregation) and a sensationalised political focus on 'barbaric' ethno-religious transgressions, such as forced marriage and FGM (female genital mutilation). While educational policy must address the human rights violations of young women's bodily rights, it is also crucial that policy perspectives move beyond stereotypical views of gendered violence in some communities and not others. White pupils also suffer from violence and familial abuses, but unlike Muslim girls, these are not seen as a cultural matter but as a social issue. What we are witnessing here is the way in which Muslim young women are produced as abject, voiceless victims of their cultures and thus open to state surveillance in terms of cultural practice, but yet absent from the mainstream policy discourse which should protect them as equal citizens.

Where a school's policy concerns Muslim young women specifically, it is within the boundaries of cultural/social measures. British multiculturalism has failed to recognise gender difference, with consequences for ethnicised/racialised Muslim young women. In this regard they suffer from a form of 'counter surveillance', that is they become invisible, not fully protected or treated equally in policy and law.

Empowering Muslim Girls? Post-feminism and the 'Model' Female Student

Some of the mainly White teachers in the schools struggled to deal with the cultural, religious and social traumas faced by many of the young women without judging this against the dominant racist Islamophobic policy frame.[2] The production of the compliant 'model Muslim female student' appeared to be a response to the heroic Western need to 'save' the young women from their backward cultural and religious practices. Here young Muslim women seen to be at risk of heightened sexual regulation from their family and community would be actively encouraged to draw on Western ideals of post -feminist female 'empowerment' and neo-liberal values to inspire their journey into educational uplift, which would raise them out of their plight (Mirza and Meetoo, 2012). However it is now argued that the pervasive post-feminist ideology of freedom and equality underpinned by choice and success represents a new seductive sexual contract producing a new generation of 'docile' female subjects. Thus while the Muslim girls appeared to benefit positively from the school's 'gender equality' approach, it also ironically produced subtle forms of 'gender-friendly' self-regulation among the young women. Working-class young Muslim women were readily inculcated into the neo-liberal educational discourse of performativity and individuated success through acceptable and compliant female identity which was 'performed' through embodied practices and credentialist behaviours in school sites. The working-class young Muslim women were thus brought into the trajectory of middle-class neo-liberal individualism through their own newfound gendered and classed desires, aspirations, and values for success, which was not often personally sustainable beyond the 'safe haven' of the school gates.[3]

Our findings show how Muslim young women are subject to teachers' expectations about what it means to be a 'true' and 'good' Muslim girl, which is particularly manifested through bodily regulation and dress. At the heart of such assumptions lies a preoccupation with the symbolic meaning of the headscarf. Often teachers' perceptions of the young women wearing the veil were bounded by popular concerns about their agency and restricted scope for choice. Through their subjection to embodied surveillance prevalent in the cultural and social space of the school, young women's lives were structured by both openly expressed gendered religious racism, as well as the more subtle forms of covert regulation of their sexuality and social class. While wearing the headscarf was reluctantly accepted by many White teachers as a given in a multicultural school context, the young women recounted many negative experiences linked to wearing religious dress. In these cases the headscarf was not taken seriously – rather it was seen as merely an outward display of imposed necessary religiosity – a facade behind which the girls hide their 'true self'. For example one teacher told the girls they could secretly take it off on a hot day as their parents were not looking. It was as if given the opportunity they would relinquish the burden and 'take it off'.

The headscarf, as a signifier of Islam, has become an 'identity site' where some teachers not only feel free to openly contest the young Muslim women's religious identity, but also use it to regulate their emerging sexuality. This was no more evident than in the case where one White middle-class teacher, Jane, saw it as her duty to police the 'correct' wearing of the headscarf. In Jane's view, young Muslim women who wear the headscarf, whether out of choice or not, should perform a fixed 'utopian' version of Muslim femininity that she felt she 'knew'. Jane's authoritative gaze was grounded in her 'rightful' essentialist knowledge of Islamic religious identification. As she explained, a Muslim female's religious authenticity could be ascertained through the correct wearing of her headscarf:

> *My issue is Muslim girls, in particular, wearing a headscarf with big earrings, and actually the two are mutually exclusive, because the headscarf is about being modest isn't it? It's about not drawing attention to yourself, because you are there as a vehicle for God, not as a body yourself, right? I understand that these students are tremendously conflicted about their place within society. I think I'm the only teacher in the school who actually tells girls off for wearing a headscarf and earrings, and I say, 'It's either the headscarf or it's the earrings, it's not both'. And the reason I do that, it's partly because I want them to be proud of who they are.* (Jane, Head of Inclusion)

The teachers' narratives on the headscarf was immersed within the wider racialised religious public discourse in which the Muslim woman's vulnerable yet over-determined body has become symbolic in the battle against Islam and the Muslim enemy 'within'. The wearing of the veil was a key symbol for the young women, inviting both unrestrained public comment and open legitimate surveillance. Ethnic dress becomes interchangeable with tradition and essentialism when the female body enters the unstable arena of scrutiny and meaning. Thus the young women's private reasons for wearing the veil becomes public property, a 'weapon' used by many different competing interests from parents to schools to control and legitimate their own power, beliefs and status.

Conclusion: Dangerous or Overlooked Muslim Girls?

The Muslim teenage girls, Shamima Begum, Amira Abase and Kadiza Sultana have gone out to Syria to join ISIS, groomed through social media, drawn by the excitement, romance and promise of immortality as 'mothers' of new Islamic caliphate (Hoyle, Bradford and Frenett, 2015).[4] Now criminalised and demonised as the new female folk devils, far from being 'dangerous' these Muslim girls are actually 'in danger' of falling between the cracks of two virulent raced and gendered Islamophobic debates that play out in the everyday microcosms of our multicultural British schools.

On one hand Muslim girls remain largely absent from mainstream educational discourse, eclipsed by an ongoing media and policy obsession with the 'boys underachievement debate'. The official educational policy on Muslim girls is rooted in a narrow, racialised preoccupation with Muslim parental cultural restrictions.

On the other hand, teachers were not equipped to deal with the cultural, religious and social traumas without judging this against the dominant racist Islamophobic policy frame. Many considered themselves as 'saving' the girls through invoking the 'model' of the liberated (White) western female student. There was often little understanding and respect for the girls' faith and religious expression of humility and honour (izzat) in *their* choice of dress or their agency and self-determination in *their own negotiated* educational paths to empowerment.

For the Muslim girls in our study, accessing opportunities in education and thriving in a school in Britain was not a level playing field. Their ability to overcome parental and familial restrictions, peer bullying, and school surveillance depended on their resilience and ability to negotiate the Islamophobic macro-regulatory discourses that framed their experiences at the micro level of the school. Many young women in our study suffered surprisingly high rates of psychological stress and reported many disturbing cases of depression and attempted suicide. However our research also showed that schools do make a difference. In one school we found strong inclusive leadership and an accepting multicultural ethos that everyone bought into, and where, as one Muslim girl declared, 'everything is possible'.

Notes

1. The project *Young Migrant Women in Secondary Education—Promoting Integration and Mutual Understanding through Dialogue and Exchange* was funded by the European Commission European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals. For the full report see Mirza, Meetoo and Litster (2011). The participating European countries included Cyprus, Greece, Sain, Malta and England. For the full project report see MGS (2011). For the British report see Mirza and Meetoo (2014).
2. The Government's 'Prevent' counter terrorism strategy now includes a statutory school duty which requires teachers to officially monitor and report signs of radicalism and extremism among Muslim primary and secondary pupils who are identified as potentially hostile to ' British values'. See Rao-Middleton (2015).
3. Research shows many Muslim young women are doing well at school and going to university (see Bagguley and Hussain, 2014). However

they are more likely to face disproportionate disadvantages in the world of work whatever their qualifications: see 'British Muslim women 71% more likely to be unemployed due to workplace discrimination'. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-muslim-women-71-more-likely-to-be-unemployed-due-to-workplace-discrimination-10179033.html (accessed 5 May 2015).

4. The caliphate refers to a Muslim political-religious state that unites Muslim communities (the Ummah) within an Islamic society subject to Islamic law. In June 2014, after gaining territory in Syria and Iraq, ISIS (Islamic State or Daesha) declared a new 'ideologically pure' caliphate with a brutally strict interpretation of Shari'ah law. See Casey (2015).

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10. Social Mixing in Urban Schools: Racialising the ‘Good Mix’

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Introduction

Social and ethnic mix in communities is a policy goal, in both local and national government policy. Often, mix is assumed, not only to generate *mixing*, but also to bring about ‘cohesion’ and improved social ‘well-being’. Yet what constitutes the ‘good’ or the ‘right’ mix is never really defined. The subtle emphasis is on minority ethnic groups and their need to ‘integrate’: if only *they* would mix we would be happy (see Ahmed, 2007), and both Whiteness and middle classness are treated as the unproblematic norm (the thing that ‘others’ need to mix into). The presence of middle classes in communities is assumed to bring about social benefits that will ‘trickle down’ or ‘rub off on’ those working classes whose neighbourhoods they newly inhabit. Whiteness gets conflated with middle classness, as the presence of too many Black bodies and faces is implicitly coded as a ‘rough’ or ‘edgy’ area.

Urban schools provide an important case study to examine this relationship between social and racial mix, mixing and the consequences. The UK apparently has the greatest levels of segregation in schools compared to any other OECD country (OECD, 2012), and this is heightened in London where children are more segregated in school than in their neighbourhood (Burgess, Wilson and Lupton, 2005). In London various scholars have emphasised education as a sphere for White middle class cultural reproduction, who ‘skillfully, assiduously and strategically use the sphere of education to their advantage in processes of class formation and maintenance’ (Butler, 2003; and see Ball, 2003; Reay, Crozier and James, 2011). This activity has been heightened by ‘school choice’ policy, in which a quasi-market for school choice forced a government spend on standards. The London Challenge saw £80 million spent over eight years (2003–2011), in which attainment in London schools rose dramatically (Hutchings et al., 2012). It is believed that such a rise in standards has seen an increase in middle class families sending their children to London state schools.[1] Nevertheless, the education system is still highly differentiated, with some schools selecting by ability, inevitably achieving higher results, and non-selective and comprehensive schools inevitably affected by this ‘creaming’. At the same time, the raising of the compulsory education leaving age has seen higher numbers of students staying on in education past the age of 16, but many argue this has led to a new ‘tertiary tripartism’ (Ainley, 2003) where students are channeled into different institutions, and where vocational qualifications are still perceived as inferior. Furthermore, with the pressures on school standards we are witnessing an intensification of ‘ability grouping’ practices within schools, which further separate and channel different social groups, impacting drastically on life chances (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). This differentiation both between and within schools is widely known to map onto racial and class divisions, where minority ethnic and working class or poorer students are over-represented in lower ability groups; ‘failing’ schools; ’newer’ universities and so-derided ‘Micky Mouse’ courses. Differentiation in the system due to the introduction and expansion of academies and free schools, to increase ‘parent choice’, sees us potentially moving further in this direction of greater segregation (Academies Commission, 2013).

I undertook research that honed in on these processes. I was concerned with whether and how, even in schools which are mixed, ‘mix’ leads to *mixing*. This research explored how this discourse of the ‘good mix’ attaches to certain schools – and how certain local conditions and trajectories of schools-area demographics, external market forces, internal governance and institutional practice – produce the circumstances under which the mix can be seen as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. To the point, this notion of the ‘good mix’ is racially structured (and structured by class) where the Black body remains a persistent ‘folk devil’ (Kulz, forthcoming).

Does Mixing Happen in Mixed Schools?

The research involved detailed case study of two ‘mixed,’ non-selective secondary schools in inner London – one was a community comprehensive, and one an Academy. Both schools had opened as a result of parental campaigns for a new school due to dissatisfaction with standards in the boroughs they were in, and hence attracted a significant proportion of White middle classes. The schools both admitted similar demographics: around one third Black African and Caribbean students, one third White students, and one third other students, including mixed ethnicity. Both school had a socially diverse demographic, drawing upon large council estates, as well as areas of expensive owner-occupied housing. I interviewed in-depth a total of 30 students, and eight members of staff, as well as conducting observation and analysis of school documentation. However, in these two seemingly similar London schools quite different emotions were circulating in relation to the mix of the school.

Eden Hill School and the 'Good Mix'

At the community comprehensive, I have named 'Eden Hill', which enjoyed higher than average pupil attainment, typical celebratory narratives of the 'good mix' abounded, from staff and students alike. This teacher's comment was typical: 'It's very mixed. It's genuinely mixed. It's got kids from a wide range of social backgrounds, outlooks, values, religious beliefs … cultural backgrounds'. Specific attention was given to the 'racial' mix and the lack of 'segregation', as Jayne, a White British middle class girl asserted: 'I used to have so many friends of different races to me'. These kinds of comments were not confined to the White middle class students in the school but the 'good mix' permeated minority ethnic students' narratives also. The sixth form in particular, where I concentrated the study efforts, was constructed as 'nice,' 'friendly' and 'welcoming', in relation to this social and ethnic conviviality (see Hollingworth and Mansaray, 2012).

However, what I discovered was that this 'good mix' – that was particularly highlighted at sixth form – was in part, facilitated by a change in student demographics. The school practised 'ability' grouping from age 13, and several members of staff uncomfortably noted that Black (African and Caribbean) students tended to be concentrated in the lower 'ability groups' throughout their GCSEs. As a consequence, Black students were less likely to progress to the A level-only sixth form in the school. Analysis of the school data revealed that, indeed, the sixth form was a Whiter and more middle class space, as minority ethnic students, and those in receipt of Free School Meals were consequently filtered out through this process. At the same time, more 'high attaining' White and middle class students were attracted to the school for sixth form. This meant that while the sixth form was indeed a convivial, mixed space, this was a more jarring and isolating experience for the Black and working class students who 'stayed on', as most of their close friends had left.

Stellar Academy and 'Not Quite the Right Mix'

In the other case study school – 'Stellar Academy' – a policy to have an inclusive sixth form offering a range of course at different levels, saw nine out of ten students 'staying on' in the sixth form. This meant that the school retained a more mixed demographic throughout the school, but also a lower attainment profile. Stellar Academy was deemed by Ofsted to be 'culturally harmonious', making an 'outstanding contribution to the promotion of community cohesion'. Being diverse, was claimed as evidence of 'doing' diversity (Ahmed, 2006). Despite public display of conviviality, and a genuinely mixed demographic, Stellar Academy was characterised by discourses of there being 'not quite the right mix'. 'Not quite the right mix' referred to 'too many' lower 'ability' pupils, but this had racialised and classed implications, as minority ethnic and working class students tend to be disproportionately located in lower 'bands' and lower 'ability groups'.

Despite *retaining* a more mixed demographic, this was then accompanied by greater structural segregation within the sixth form. The sixth form was designed in four tiers, with those taking A levels placed in the 'top' tier, down to those taking BTEC Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) in the 'bottom' tier. The tiers operated like streams, where students in different tiers did not have a single lesson together: even tutor groups were separate. This was justified administratively, as the students who were capable of applying to Oxbridge 'weren't getting the tutor's time', because the tutor was distracted by having to 'manage' the BTEC students' 'issues'. The use of the limited school spaces in recreational times then echoed this separation, where the top tier students occupied the ICT study rooms and the BTEC students hung out in the BTEC labs. A Black/White divide was noticeable in school recreational spaces.

Mixing across race and class was limited, and mixed social relations, considered business-like. The head of sixth form, an English teacher, admitted that the students mixed across class and ethnicity in her more diverse lessons because she 'forces them to'. However, she pointed out that these tend to be contrived relations:

> *They are not friendships ... they are more learning partnerships or acquaintances [where] they are very professional in their manner with others, even if they don't like them.*

It was clear how this institutional structuring impacted friendships. Students admitted: 'the more intelligent people stayed in one group'; 'people from different backgrounds stayed with people similar to them'; and 'different races stayed together'. 'Intelligence' subtly and implicitly conflated with 'race' in staff and students' talk.

The academic segregation justified why friendships were not mixed, because 'It's difficult to be friends when you're not as clever or not studying at the same level […] what would you have to talk about?' This led to a situation where the 'more intelligent people' who occupied the top academic tier, who happened to be predominantly White and from middle class families, were considered a bit 'stuck up' – labelled 'neeks'.[2] Nicole (Black Caribbean, working class), who saw the sixth form as 'very divided', elaborated:

> *I think some people think the Black people might think if they talk to the middle class White people they're going to look down on us, so that's why we don't have a friendship. I don't know what the White people think, but that's what the Black people think. That's why I think there is a division.*

Explicit in Nicole's narrative is a raced, classed hierarchy, where Black (implicitly working class) students feel that White middle class students will 'look down on them,' as lower in the academic hierarchy.

Sara Ahmed argues that 'some bodies are presumed to be the origin of bad feeling insofar as they disturb the promise of happiness' (Ahmed, 2007: 127). In this instance, in the context of marketised urban schooling, we can see how Black (Caribbean and African) bodies are presumed to be the origin of 'bad feeling' as they disturb the possibilities for academic success. Eden Hill school – now an Academy – became saturated with good feeling, ironically, despite its growing *lack* of diversity, while Stellar Academy came to be characterised as not quite the right mix – containing within it the 'unhappy objects' of educational failure. The presence of too many Black bodies at Stellar Academy justified practices of institutional segregation, and further reinforced a naturalisation of racial segregation, along 'ability' lines.

So What are the Possibilities for Genuine Mixing in Schools?

In an increasingly differentiated school system, academies, which are claimed to act as 'engines of social mobility and social justice' (Adonis, 2008), are slaves to market forces: forced to adopt these pernicious strategies to maximize school results. What I have shown here is how the 'good mix' is tied to these processes and the consequences tend to be perpetuating or even exacerbating racial and class segregation. A focus on academic results, at the expense of other measures of education and learning, hinders the possibilities of social and ethnic mixing, even in mixed schools. This is because academic ability grouping, and subsequent FE course choice is (still) differentiated by social class and race. This channeling of different trajectories through the education system makes educational institutions less diverse. Even when a school is genuinely mixed, this can just lead to structuring and segregation within the school. Until we have an education system which foregrounds other outcomes beyond narrow exam results, or at the very least, addresses the institutional racism in ability grouping and course selection, educational institutions will not be able to foster genuine mixing.

Notes

1. This process is also deemed to be driven by rising private school fees, in a time of economic austerity.
2. 'Neek' is slang referring to a cross between a 'nerd' and 'geek'.

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11. Considering Mentoring among BME Learners and Issues Concerning Teacher Training: The Narratives of Students and Teachers

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> *I think it is really interesting how people perceive young black people… if someone was to look at me, they would definitely think I was some hood rat… selling drugs or something. You know some of the teachers are looking at you and thinking that as well! They would never look at me think he is potentially a student that is predicted 5 A*, and a potential Oxbridge undergraduate… It's f***** up man! If not for having mentoring programmes which specifically target the progression of black boys… I am not sure where I might be as I have had this provision since Year 8…. And I think teachers would be happy to make you think you're just another black boy that won't amount to s***… you'll work in McD's, Sainsbury's or something… it's sad….* (Student 3)

Research exploring inequalities in mainstream education has outlined the discrimination and exclusion that individuals, particularly those from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds, face with regards to marginalisation within the UK education system, and a curriculum that has consistently failed young BME learners (Pilkington, 2013). Varying discourses and commentaries surrounding race and education have highlighted the inadequacies of an education system that fails to engage and accommodate the specific situational needs of BME learners. This is in addition to presenting them with a curriculum that does not reflect their societal position and lived realities, as they encounter institutional and inherent racism as they attempt to take their place within society. Similarly, the training of teachers has received much attention, with teachers considered not 'culturally aware' of the varying dynamics that encompass the classroom and students within a rapidly changing and diversifying school environment.

The Research Project: Exploring the Problem

The above excerpt is from a Year 11 student who currently has ambitions to one day become a Barrister or Member of Parliament within the UK Government. This particular quote was provided during a series of interviews as part of a research project which explored the views of 14–18 year old secondary school and 6th form students with regards to the education system, and specifically, their lived experiences of being involved within a mentoring intervention which aimed to support and facilitate the specific needs of young BME learners.

This project also explored the narratives of teachers with regards to the teacher training process, and how this could better equip prospective and in-service teachers to have a better understanding of the varied backgrounds of their learners, in becoming more culturally aware of the issues that certain demographics of students may encounter during and after their compulsory schooling. The views and opinions of five female students; ten male students; three secondary school teachers; and one 6th form teacher were drawn upon.

Many of the responses provided indicated the need for BME learners to feel that they are more invested in their curriculum, with acknowledgement given towards their specific needs, in particular around institutional racism. The student narratives particularly highlighted the need for teachers to become more 'culturally aware' of the issues that young black people face in schools and wider society. Responses from teachers also highlighted the need for educational practitioners, in particular teacher educators and trainee teachers to be aware of some of the societal stigmas that young black males face in particular, within a society that places heavy surveillance on this particular demographic. The focus for this piece considers teacher training and its impact on BME learners in two ways: (i) examining the impact of teachers in racially diverse classrooms, and (ii) exploring the challenges for teacher training around equality and diversity.

Stereotyping and Perception: Teacher Expectations in the Classroom

It is generally agreed that the UK school system remains normatively White with regards to teaching staff and the values portrayed within the classroom, with aspects of this reinforcing prejudices and stereotypes. This raises important questions around teacher preparedness and the need to provide teachers with a 'toolbox' to deal with issues concerning racial and ethnic diversity and inequality. Within this research, there was some suggestion that teachers often do not feel comfortable treading the 'delicate waters' of race and diversity due to a fear of making assumptions which may lead towards perpetuating racial stereotypes and inequalities. In attempting to manage this, it is important to balance the need for equality, with some recognition of the racial and cultural differences and difficulties that BME learners face:

> *The problem for many teachers is that… to be honest they (teachers) do not feel equipped to be able to deal with some of the issues that BME learners face… I think a big part of that is yes… I am a middle-class White person from middle-class White suburbia so it is very hard to relate to some BME learners when they discuss some of the things that happen in their everyday existence. Admittedly, as a teacher I do not have the 'tools' to accommodate some of these issues that BME learners face, and my understanding of their specific needs could be improved. I think, many teachers could admit to that, whether they would or not is another matter altogether. For me this… needs to be a priority for teacher education generally and school leadership teams, and any other stakeholders involved in the process of training or professional development….* (Teacher 3)

Many of the students interviewed highlighted what they observed as naivety and ignorance, regarding the views that some teachers tacitly held concerning the specific needs of BME learners. Significantly, the students expressed views around teachers' perceptions of them, and how this influenced their thinking in relation to self-efficacy, future aspirations and stereotypes:

> *… I think a lot of teachers feel that as Black students we are from gang-banger council estates and that our dreams are unrealistic based on our backgrounds. A teacher once asked me what I wanted to do when I am older…. I said that it would be cool to be a teacher like you… the teacher replied… 'you're jumping the gun a bit'… think of something a bit more realistically based on your grades and motivation. That comment completely killed me, and made me think is that what all teachers think when they look at me…?! Where the mentoring helps is that at least they encourage me to pursue that because they understand what it is like to be a Black person, without being racist, I am not sure all White teachers sometimes understand that….* (Student, 10)

This excerpt, as in the opening quote, indicates some of the inherent prejudices that some BME students face within the classroom context, emphasising that aspects of the UK education system are reinforcing prejudices and stereotypes regarding certain marginalised groups within society (Shilliam, 2015). Importantly, this is perhaps where consideration needs to be given towards making teachers more aware of the social and cultural contexts of the learners that they are attempting to influence within the classroom environment.

Making Teachers More 'Culturally Aware' During Teacher Training

As with schools, teacher education training in England is set largely within a White majority context. This research examined the experiences and observations of BME teachers that have been through the initial teacher training (ITT) process. They highlighted that their training included no specific or bespoke training to examine or challenge the role of racial stereotyping or inequality within the education system. Solomon et al. (2005: 149) note that it is imperative that initial teacher education programmes (ITE) examine the personal attitudes of trainees in relation to their 'racial ascription and social positioning,' noting how this positively informs classroom practice. Further, Mirza (2015) states that teacher training needs to be much more diverse and equitable in facilitating multiculturalism, by embedding inclusive classroom pedagogy with culturally relevant curricula. The training of new teachers to prepare pupils to live in a culturally and ethnically diverse society cannot merely be dependent on the locality of the teacher training provider; the partner schools involved; or the teacher's professional integrity in wanting to understand such complex issues and dialogues involving BME learners:

> *… There has to be an organic interest from a trainee teacher to learn about these types of issues. I think… also, dependent on where you do your teacher training the agenda can sometimes be different, I think London-centric institutions may have a slightly better awareness of this because of the city's multi-cultural and ethnically diverse background… this has quite a big influence I think….* (Teacher 1)

Others highlighted the need for teachers to have a better understanding of the complex classroom dynamics, and for Government to address this particular issue as a matter of priority:

> *I think the modern day teacher should have several strings to their bow regarding the different types of learner that they teach…. One of them being that all trainees should undertake some sort of cultural self-awareness course, as part of their teacher training…. Too many teachers go into the classroom and have no understanding of what some kids encounter in their social dynamics outside of the school… particularly some of the prejudices that young Black boys face, with regards to stop and search… presuming that all Black boys are in gangs etc…. This should be a government agenda incorporated into teacher training instead of prioritising stupid things that do not matter… Having that situational understanding of these issues would empower and more importantly help teachers understand their students better….* (Teacher 2)

Recommendations and Conclusions

Stakeholders within teacher education, concerned with the remit for teacher preparedness, need to embed within their training protocols measures for supporting teachers to have a better understanding of the diverse student and learner populations that they will be exposed to. Additionally, this is also an issue for schools to consider, through the continuing professional development of their teaching staff, to ensure that they are equipped to understand the diverse and complex needs of BME learners within and outside of the classroom context.

The research suggests two important recommendations:

- All teacher training courses need to embed modular assessments which expose trainees to issues of ethnic and racial diversity, stereotyping and inequality;
- Within schools staff development opportunities and inset days should designate a selected amount of workshops around race and cultural awareness and diversity, preferably to be facilitated by accredited external providers, in attempting to make in-service teachers more 'culturally aware'.

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12. 'Hard Time Pressure inna Babylon': Why Black History in Schools is Failing to Meet the Needs of BME students at Key Stage 3

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The practice of multiculturalism in schools in Britain has been the subject of much contention since its introduction in the 1960s. As both the Rampton (DES, 1981) and Swann (DES, 1985) reports noted, multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s was incorporated into the National Curriculum for White students to learn a crude interpretation of minorities' cultures, to acknowledge the changing 'face' of British classrooms and to combat racist stereotyping. This became known as the 'saris, steelbands and samosas' version of multiculturalist education, which was challenged by anti-racist approaches through the 1980s (Troyna, 1982, 1987; Gillborn, 1990). It focused on structural racism in society continuing to have racialised outcomes for minorities, and for young people in particular. Meanwhile, academic understandings of multiculturalism challenged the focus on simplistic ideas of colour racism only, focusing on the multiple inequalities people face including cultural racism.

However, public understandings of multiculturalism and practices in education have not kept pace with academic debates nor the changing face of multi-ethnic Britain. There has, instead, been a disjuncture between the pace of anti-racism in the academy and pedagogy in the classroom (May, 1999). Nowhere has this disjuncture been more keenly felt, and more hotly debated, than in the history curriculum, which has suffered from persistent and increased political–ideological interference about what constitutes the study of 'Britishness'. The narrowness of the curriculum has been a point of concern for many years, despite a token commitment to 'inclusion' since the revisions to the National Curriculum in 1999, which insisted that schools should provide a broad and balanced curriculum that responds to the diverse needs of children from different backgrounds. However, this vision has been far from realised: indeed, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) stated in its monitoring report on history in schools that:

> *Too little attention is given to the black and multi-ethnic aspects of British history. The teaching of black history is often confined to topics about slavery and post-war immigration or to Black History Month. The effect, if inadvertent, is to undervalue the overall contribution of black and minority ethnic people to Britain's past and to ignore their cultural, scientific and many other achievements.* (QCA, 2005: 6).

'Inclusion' has increasingly come to mean a focus on differentiated learning in teaching methods, rather than how appropriately the content reflects the diverse societies being studied and the QCA point to several factors for this including 'lack of knowledge among teachers of Black British history, a lack of accessible resources and a lack of confidence on the part of many teachers' (QCA, 2005: 21).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) published reports *History in the Balance* (2007) and *History for All* (2011) respectively, supporting the QCA's statement about the exclusionary and Anglo-centric nature of history in schools. Ofsted found that weaknesses in history were 'concentrated' at KS3 and the teaching of multicultural Britain was low. The QCA in 2007 provided a commitment in its statutory revisions of history, for schools to explore black and minority histories on the curriculum with a view to this becoming statutory in September 2008. However, in the context of wider political fears about the harmful effects of multiculturalism – 'parallel lives', 'home-grown terrorists' and Islamist infiltration in schools in the aftermath of the 'Trojan Horse' affair – many of these progressive statements were reversed and replaced instead with a focus on 'Fundamental British Values'. Michael Gove's revised curriculum was at the forefront of this ideological shift, calling for a curriculum that brings all students together under a common 'British identity'. The history curriculum was crucial to this vision, promoting an exclusivist version of British history, culture and identity, which privileged a celebration of 'our island story' (see Alexander, Chatterji and Weekes-Bernard, 2012). The revised history curriculum has been strongly criticised as 'cultural restorationism' – a curriculum based on traditional subjects, canonical knowledge and a celebration of all things English; a curriculum of facts, lists and eternal certainties' (Ball, 2013:19).

This recentring of White British narratives excludes more diverse histories and voices and poses challenges for the promotion of social cohesion and equality. It marginalises the position of Black Histories within schools, either being erased completely or seen as irrelevant to the broader curriculum, the school or wider society. The reinforcing messages are that BME communities have nothing to contribute to 'Britishness', despite their presence in Britain for well over 1000 years (Fryer, 1984). Where Black History appears, it falls into two camps:

1. In opposition to Whiteness: Either to be compared to 'White' advancement (for example, studying Enlightenment in Europe and Britain with links to 'key thinkers and scientists') or in conflict with 'White' history (for example, decolonisation);
2. Celebratory and congratulatory: An addendum to the broader Whiteness-as-usual context and narrative (as with the role of Black and Asian soldiers in both World Wars), to celebrate the end of racism (for example, around slavery and abolition) and the success of multiculturalism (Civil Rights in America).

Although teaching Black History is not compulsory, schools engaging with teaching elements of it can face problems with implementation; namely due to the limited lens with which Black History is viewed and its marginal place within the wider History curriculum. In light of this, what is less understood is how these narrow conceptualisations of Black History and its marginal place within the History curriculum, is experienced by BME students, and the overall impact this has on social cohesion and equality.

Black History Month (BHM) and Black History (BH) in the North of England – School 1

My research sets out to understand Key Stage 3 students' experiences of BHM (Black History Month) and BH (Black History) in the North of England. I then explore BHM and BH with students of African and Caribbean descent, to understand their experiences. The overall aim is to explore whether there is still a case to include BHM/BH as a tool for promoting social cohesion and anti-racism in English classrooms. My fieldwork comprises of two schools in the North of England, observing lessons and interviewing students and their History teachers during the 'Black' History unit. Disengagement with history by students of African and Caribbean descent could be informed by the established discourse about 'their' history starting and stopping with slavery and Civil Rights. There are also problems about the way BH is taught which is observed to centre around feelings of 'empathy', commodifying the black experience through a series of performances for 'impact' and ending with celebrations. My experience of one school in the North of England relating to Black history at Key Stage 3, at School 1, has been thus:

1. Diversity as a performance

Multiculturalism in School 1 was about BME students having 'their' cultures performed and commodified. I sat through slave auctions where students took turns as auctioneers and slaves, reading cards about the slave's health and willingness to work, before the class erupts with bids: '50p…£1…£5…'.

I also sat through 'slave music' being played as a 'multi-sensory experience' for students, as they lay under tables, imagining that they were on the Middle Passage with rats running round their ankles, infected with diseases like ebola. Though these experiences were in itself shocking, it was important to understand these experiences in the classroom have been made possible because the horrors of Empire (including Britain's involvement) and slavery have been cleansed from our collective memory. Bunce and Field (2014) explain Britain's collective amnesia around Empire and enslavement has been the result of a reconfiguration of the established historical narrative to reflect an 'abolitionist myth' in which racism is someone else's problem and not attributable to the heroic and moral (White) abolitionists. The key reconfiguration of the historical narrative is to purport that Britain is civilised, advocates of fair play and 'a place in which the values of freedom and justice are upheld by all, for all' (Bunce and Field, 2014: 9).

In School 1, 'Other' histories are not afforded the same respect, tolerance or depth as White British history, and when I asked KS3 History teachers and their students if the school would perform the Holocaust in the same way as Black History, the response was unequivocally 'No'. I asked a group of BME students why they would not perform the Holocaust and the responses were:

> *Because they're White.* (British Asian boy, Year 8)
>
> *We've learned so much about the Holocaust in our History lessons and they portray it as so bad and so evil, but when they think of slavery, they just teach it as 'Oh it's just culture' but they shouldn't think differently of two events in history that are very similar because evil did happen and suffering did happen,*

> *but they treat one differently because they're too scared of seeing how the reaction would be.* (British Black Caribbean girl, Year 9)

These comments illustrate the hierarchy of histories felt by BME students because collective memory about the Holocaust is given sombre, muted, melancholic reflections, whereas 'Other' histories are left sanitised beyond recognition.

2. Interest convergence

I interviewed a White history teacher who took part in performing Black History, asking her rationale for teaching it in this way and her response was simple: to learn lessons from the past, to alleviate White guilt, and 'personal penance' for what happened. Interest convergence is the idea that small successes for minority students (in this case keeping Black History in this school) will only be allowed so long as the outcome is mutually beneficial for majority students. An interest convergent relationship was observed in School 1 by keeping Black History, but tailoring the unit to promote empathetic and guilty feelings, and ending it by promoting (White) Britain playing a leading role in securing equality during the abolition of the slave trade. When I interviewed a group of Black students about their reflections on Black History being taught in this way, I was told:

> *When it comes to Black History they go to slaves straight away, but I wonder why they say 'slaves' first out of everything?*
>
> Interviewer: *Why do you think that is?*
>
> *Sometimes I feel when they see Black people the first word that comes into their heads is slaves.* (British Black Caribbean girl, Year 9)
>
> *[When in year 7] We did slavery, and we did it like, twice in a row; the same video twice!* (British Black Caribbean girl, Year 9)

3. Racism as normal

Institutions such as schools may perform diversity by recognising religious and cultural festivals (Diwali, Eid, Hanukkah, Martin Luther King Jnr Day), but this is problematic for the recognition and eliminating of structural racism. Diversity is the surface change to whiteness, 'rather than changing the whiteness of organizations' (Ahmed, 2006: 118). Thus, while schools such as School 1 have a commitment to diversity statements and anti-racist policies, racism is falsely believed to be one-dimensional and the result of ignorance, rather than multi-faceted, multi-layered and deeply embedded within the school environment – including the curriculum. Although commitments to diversity and anti-racist policies are important, often schools regard them as the *only* measure for equality and then fail to 'see' how racism plays out in others ways *outside* given criteria. An example of this is School 1 failing to 'see' how homogenising and essentialising the black experience through slave performances, separating BME histories from the majoritarian British narrative and a confused understanding of the multifaceted nature of racism are symptoms of structural racism in school. Solòrzano (1997) has shown that racism encompasses many areas – visible and hidden – and this has a cumulative impact on the individual and group. As a result of this, what becomes a taken-for-granted assumption in schools is that

> *A large part of the Black History is portrayed as slavery and not being given the rights they deserve, but a large part of history that we study in school is Henry VIII and the World Wars and how white people were the heroes of the country.* (British Black Caribbean boy, Year 9)

4. Counter-storytelling/ narratives

Counter-narratives have the capacity to heal the 'racist injuries' experienced by Black British Caribbean boys (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002) through finding their own voice, explicitly identify how Black History and the wider history curriculum oppresses and marginalises them, while privileging Whiteness. It can also illuminate institutional and overt racism and work to 'build a case against discriminatory practices' (Parker and Lynn, 2002). In this context it is not that there are distinctive or homogenous Black voices, but in a world structured by racial oppression, experientially grounded knowledge provided by hidden voices can: make racism visible, illuminate how practices in schools contribute to their marginality and be useful in informing future anti-racist pedagogy benefitting all students. The overall aim is to teach BME histories in a more sensitive and inclusive way without accusing them of playing the 'race' card. Interviewing BME students about their school's attempts to teach Black History through slave performances I was told:

> *I feel annoyed and angry and upset at the same time….* (British Black Caribbean girl, Year 9)
>
> *I think everything should be taught rather than just sectioning off a bit for black people.* (British Black Caribbean boy, Year 9)

> *The school teach us normal things like Guy Fawkes and Henry VIII but really they don't really know how the Black people feel about that, because when I learn that, I don't feel it has any impact on me or my life, or what my history is but still we have to learn it, and when it comes to Black History that's our month – we only get a month – but then they get a whole year, we only get a month to show them, and teach them what we went through but sometimes school just doesn't allow it.* (Black British Caribbean girl, Year 9)

Conclusion

The history curriculum is laden with imagined constructs about what constitutes 'White' British as normal History and Black History is positioned as so far outside this norm, it requires a separate, distinct unit. In essence, the revised KS3 history curriculum has artificially divided 'White' and 'Black' histories and created a hierarchy of histories. This exposes 'White' students to a parochial, liberal (often male) History curriculum characterised by 'White' success while BME students face the reinforcing messages that 'their' histories belong on the periphery outside of British history. Ultimately all students are victims in this imagined construct of history and therefore, dismantling this version of Britishness will expose the inherently exclusionary and racist constructs applied to 'White' and 'Black' histories – simplistic labels applied as if they could characterise people in one easily defined way. One way this has already being done is through the Runnymede project *Making British Histories: Diversity and the National Curriculum* (Alexander, Chatterji and Weekes-Bernard, 2012), that provided a fundamental reappraisal of Britishness through opening up the central narrative of history in a more diverse and inclusive way. In this way, Gove's vision of an 'Island Story' accurately reflects the 'polysemous reality of British history' (Alexander, Chatterji and Weekes-Bernard, 2012: 4). Similar reappraisals of established knowledge can also be found at University College London (and now many other universities) under the heading 'Why is my curriculum White?' exposing 'Whiteness' at university level. At school-level, Stephanie Pitter's campaign (2014–2015) to get Black History back into primary schools is also an example of such activism. Relatedly, counter-narratives from students about Black History used in my research are another way we can 'Dismantle the Master's House' (University College London, 2015) and inform anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom for future children, 'Black' and 'White'.

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Runnymede Perspectives

Runnymede Perspectives aim, as a series, to engage with government – and other – initiatives through exploring the use and development of concepts in policy making, and analysing their potential contribution to a successful multi-ethnic Britain.

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