ETHNICITY AND EDUCATION IN ENGLAND: RECENT FINDINGS FROM FIELDWORK IN A NORTHERN CITY

ABSTRACT

This paper presents new findings from quantitative and qualitative fieldwork in urban locations in the North of England. This study forms part of a three-year EU FP7 research project entitled ‘Ethnic differences in education and diverging prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe’ (EDUMIGROM). The project aims to conduct a comparative investigation in ethnically diverse communities with second-generation migrants and Roma in nine countries of the European Union. This paper presents findings from the UK team and gives an analytical account of a quantitative survey of Year 10 (14–15 year old) pupils in three multicultural secondary schools in 2008–2009, and qualitative fieldwork focussed on African Caribbean, Pakistani and Gypsy and Traveller children, parents and families carried out in 2009–2010. The African Caribbean population tends to be economically disadvantaged and socially assimilated, in terms of cohabitation and marriage patterns, and with some significant degree of political incorporation; the Pakistani population tends to be in a position of greater economic marginality and poverty, with more social distinctiveness, due partly to social closure, and less political incorporation. But the group with the longest history of residence in the UK, the Gypsy and Traveller population, is in the most vulnerable position in terms of economic, political and social marginality. The extent to which wider patterns of socio-economic inequality play out in educational stratification and outcomes across these three groups is examined in this paper and emerging themes from current fieldwork are presented. This paper also addresses the policy implications of these research findings.
Key words:

ethnic differences, multicultural, educational stratification, urban youth

1. Introduction: the framing of public and political discourses

1.1. ETHNICITY AND PUBLIC AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The UK has always been ethnically diverse with a population developing from complex historical migration patterns and periods of conflict, conquest, state formation, empire and de-colonisation. Specific movements relevant here include sporadic in-migration of Gypsies and the importation of African slaves and servants from the sixteenth century onwards, mass migrations of Irish and Jewish people in the nineteenth century and post-war economic migration to Britain from the Caribbean, the South Asian subcontinent, China and Africa. In the postwar period there is both increasing mixing of ethnic groups and ‘super-diversity’ which have created an ethnically complex society. The differentiation in economic position, migration history, political participation and perceptions of social citizenship are significant across minority ethnic groups in the UK and they are becoming increasingly evident. Recent debate has highlighted the problem of hyper – or super – diversity where professionals and managers face substantial dilemmas in responding to the needs of culturally complex societies, for example in education provision The UK is also undergoing substantial social and cultural change due to globalisation, Europeanisation, devolution, the end of Empire, social pluralism and the acceleration of migration. There is a complex system of citizenship rights, forms of membership and restrictions and exclusions which cross-cut differing categories and groups of migrants to the UK. This produces an ad hoc and variable pattern of denial of service and responses to individual needs so that people in the same migrant category may receive different services and entitilements.

In the UK most migrant groups have been subject to racism, xenophobia, hostility, violence and practices of restriction and exclusion during the process of migration and settlement in the UK. Diverse and highly durable forms of racist hostility provide a constant source of tension and conflict including, anti-Gypsyism, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism and anti-Semitism. Despite significant developments in policy and procedures across many institutions there is a ‘racial crisis’ where increased understanding and evidence accompanies entrenched racism. Sources of inter-ethnic and intercultural conflict in the UK are cultural, political
and economic and include opposition to the recognition of difference and super-diversity, contested control of territory and land (particularly for Gypsies and Travellers) and disputes over access to social housing, schools and other resources. Newly articulated forms of hostility, hatred and grievance have been suffered by refugees, asylum seekers and other migrant groups to the UK. More widely everyday cultural ignorance, miscommunication and misrecognition of difference lead to offensive behaviour, affronts to dignity and lack of respect which have all led to various forms of conflict.

These groups have also been subject to and active in achieving varying levels of political and cultural recognition, acceptance of racial and ethnic difference, inter-ethnic marriage and cohabitation and incorporation into political, economic, cultural and social spheres of activity. A comparative overview of the three selected groups chosen for study in the UK shows that, the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population are in the most vulnerable position of economic, political and social marginality of any these groups, although data for this group is much more limited\(^1\). The African Caribbean population tends to be economically disadvantaged and socially assimilated, in terms of cohabitation and marriage patterns, and with some significant degree of political incorporation; the Pakistani population tends to be in a position of greater economic marginality and poverty, with more social distinctiveness, due partly to social closure, and less political incorporation. Both of these latter two groups had the right to settle in the UK, to acquire citizenship and participate in electoral politics due to previous British colonial relations and obligations. A continuing linkage between blackness, violence, masculinity and dangerousness and the ensuing high profile misrepresentation of young Black men in the news media has been exacerbated by both government and media response to a series of shooting, stabbings and related violent incidents in the UK. National controversy over Black male youth has focussed on the problems of gangs and gang-related violent crime, under-performance in education and the labour market, school exclusions, over-representation in the criminal justice system, absentee fathers and low aspirations. In response, it has been argued that there are a large number of young Black men who have high conformist aspirations, strong aspirational capital\(^2\) and who succeed, despite institutional racism in school environ-

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ments including receiving harsher punishments, being over-represented in the lowest ranked teaching groups and being taught by less experienced staff, with lower expectations and entered for the lowest ‘tiered’ examinations. National controversy over Muslim male youth has also been increasing. Muslim boys, once regarded as passive, hard working and law-abiding, have been recast in the public imagination in recent years with hostile images of volatile, aggressive hotheads who are in danger of being brainwashed into terrorism, or of would-be gangsters who are creating no-go areas in English towns and cities and preying on white girls. Gypsies, Travellers and the Roma are still seen, portrayed and stereotyped as thieving scum, scroungers, gangsters and child traffickers. The recent Equality and Human Rights Commission’s triennial review of fairness in Britain confirmed the extent of racial and ethnic inequalities, with Black Caribbean and Pakistani babies being twice as likely to die in their first year as Bangladeshi or White British infants, and by the age of 22–24, 44% of Black people are not in education, employment or training, compared to fewer than 25% of White people. The relative vulnerability of minority ethnic groups in a variety of market contexts means that the current economic recession and associated cuts in welfare are having and will have a greater negative impact on these groups. Almost half (48%) of young black people are unemployed compared to the rate of unemployment amongst white men (21%) with mixed ethnic groups having the greatest overall increase rising from 21% in March 2008 to 35% in November 2009. Lower employment means more poverty. Minority ethnic minority women experience higher rates of poverty than white women and a recent report has argued that the economic recession presents two major risks. Firstly, that minority ethnic women will be locked into their destitution for the foreseeable future and, secondly, that anti-poverty approaches marginalise the needs of minority ethnic women through failing to recognise and


address those needs, and that they are being pathologised and ignored. There is a deteriorating policy climate in the UK where it is increasingly difficult to prioritise fundamental race equality and ethnic diversity objectives and one which shows greater concern for white working class sentiments of exclusion and resentment. This accompanies deteriorating prospects for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and a wider context of increasing patterns of long-term poverty for minority ethnic groups.

1.2. ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC/ POLITICAL AGENDA

Education has often been the most high profile policy field where changing national and local government priorities are signalled and implemented. From 1945 to the late 1950s racial discrimination legislation was seen as unnecessary despite strong popular racism. These issues and ethnic diversity were largely ignored in government policy. From the late 1950s to the late 1960s a cross-party political consensus emerged advocating strong racialised immigration controls and weak protection against discrimination to manage the perceived de-stabilising effects of minority migration. In education, assimilation was a key goal with a focus on dispersal and English language teaching. Cultural pluralism and integration came to dominate policy rhetoric into the 1970s with an emphasis on minorities changing and adapting to ‘fit in’. Increasing community, ethnic and religious-based and antiracist protest led to the popularisation of multicultural and antiracist education across local education authorities through the 1980s, but schools had great freedom to ignore these developments if they wish, and many did. From 1986 onwards there was a weakening of these movements and a government drive to curb and push back these developments. The introduction of a National Curriculum which failed to acknowledge race and ethnic diversity is indicative of this position.

New Labour from 1997 onwards signalled a change of direction with a welcome explicit focus on the significance of these issues, but this more progressive stance lacked a fundamental understanding of racism and equity issues. Following 9/11, government policy moved from ‘naive’ to ‘cynical’ multiculturalism, (in other words a move from promoting the values and organisations concerned with different minority cultures with little commitment to equality to a view that this was misguided and primarily led to increasing divisions between communities which then required action to promote social cohesion) and signalled a return to integration-

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ist and assimilationist priorities with an increasing perception that multicultural policies had failed through encouraging greater ethnic division. In the wake of the urban disturbances of 2001 much policy discussion has focussed on the goal of community cohesion. To some extent this has replaced an earlier emphasis on social exclusion and inclusion, in part because some analyses of those events suggested that self-segregation of minority ethnic communities was a factor in undermining cohesion. Following the 7/7 attacks, the rights and perspectives of the white majority became increasingly asserted with calls for stronger intervention to improve integration, community cohesion, security and contemporary assimilation, summed up by Gillborn\textsuperscript{10} as ‘aggressive majoritarianism’. In education this is exemplified by attacks on wearing the veil by Muslims in school in new guidance on school uniform codes which emphasised security, integration and cohesion which was quickly interpreted by the media as ‘a school ban on veils’. Here, looking different is seen as a ‘common sense’ threat to national society and local community cohesion. This indicates a deteriorating policy climate and one in which it is increasingly difficult to prioritise fundamental race equality and ethnic diversity objectives and which shows greater concern for white racist sentiments. The attacks in the UK provided justification for increasingly punitive and disciplinary policies in a range of fields.

At the heart of recent policies concerning the education of children with regard to issues of race is the notion of citizenship. Citizenship education as advocated by The Crick Report\textsuperscript{11} covers social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy; citizenship studies were made compulsory to all children in 2002. Some interpret the introduction of citizenship studies in schools as the government’s (deeply inadequate) response to the Macpherson Report\textsuperscript{12}, which, following the failure of the police to charge anyone for the death of a Black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, said all public institutions must deal with their ‘institutional racism’\textsuperscript{13}. The report’s inadequacy is seen to be an attempt to promote universal values but without an understanding of difference; it is also seen to contribute to a trend in educational policy of ‘deracialisation’ – that is, of reducing racism to individual ignorance and prejudice. Other problems with this approach include an absence from The Crick Report of any direct mention of racism, either personal, institutional or structural. The targets set for citizenship education do not include

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\textsuperscript{10} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{13} D. Gillborn, Racism and Education..., op.cit.
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When *The Crick Report* does talk about ethnicity and diversity it makes no mention of inequality or power imbalances, nor of anti-racism; it also regards ethnic minorities as a homogenous mass. The report states that minorities must 'learn and respect the codes and conventions as much as the majority', implying that minority communities are outside current conventions in a way that white people are not; this also reflects the move by the former Home Secretary to create a 'citizenship test' for all those acquiring British nationality. Finally, when racism is mentioned in citizenship educational literature, it reduces it to a matter of personal prejudice.

The Education Act 2005 obligated local authorities to set targets for schools to meet with regard to promoting 'community cohesion'. This resulted in additional pressure on schools, which were regarded as accountable and blameworthy if their application of these measures failed. Community cohesion is also promoted by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, a government strategy for facilitating conflict resolution, though owing to New Labour's focus on education as the principle way of addressing multi-cultural tensions, schools still bear a great responsibility for this. Additionally, schools were given more powers to exclude pupils and make their parents responsible for them; this latter measure impacted particularly on Black parents.

Government focus on parental choice with regard to the schools that children attend served only to exacerbate these difficulties. Headmasters became reluctant to promote race issues in case the school became branded as 'radical' and puts off potential pupils. White parents attempted to segregate their children from schools in which there were a large number of minority ethnic children. Faith Schools were not obligated either to accept a considerable group of children not raised in that faith or to teach human rights common to all groups as opposed to faith-based values; this remained a problem despite Ofsted inspection. A study carried out by the University of Lancaster revealed that segregated white pupils held more stereotypical attitudes about minority ethnic groups than those who attend mixed schools\(^\text{14}\). The relationship between ethnic segregation and racism is not clear, closer contact may bring increased conflict not necessarily understanding and lower hostility. Lack of contact may bring less conflict and not necessarily greater hostility.

Overall, there is official government recognition that raising attainment and minority ethnic groups is a key component of national strategy. However, initia-

tives and policy implementation are highly uneven and ethnic inequalities remain highly durable with deteriorating outcomes for Gypsy and Traveller young people. A recent critical review of this field argues that such inequalities are locked into the UK education system and that policy is not designed to eliminate this but to ‘sustain it at manageable levels’\(^\text{15}\). Initiatives to improve minority ethnic achievement at school include the ‘Aiming High’ programme, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), the Black Pupils’ Achievement Programme and a cross national programme to raise attainment among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils which was launched in September 2006, with 11 local authorities and 48 educational settings are offer targeted support. The Aiming High scheme has a component dedicated directly to the schooling of minority ethnic groups which advocates strong leadership, high expectations, effective teaching and learning, and parental involvement in education. There has also been a drive towards recruiting teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds, as well as programmes designed to assist White teachers to effectively teach minority ethnic pupils, particularly with regard to difficulties born of different languages. Despite policies and initiatives designed to improve the educational achievement of minority ethnic groups, it is admitted by the government that much work needs to be done to achieve parity and progress among all groups. Amongst minority ethnic groups the children of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils from poorer backgrounds, and Black Caribbean children (particularly boys) are among those most in need of additional support and empowerment.

\section*{1.3. SITES AND METHODS}

General patterns of ethnic inequality in education determined the selection of minority ethnic groups for this study, as identified above, these were Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, African-Caribbeans and Pakistanis. Two cities in the North of England were chosen as sites for the research. Northcity was the main site and here a quantitative survey of 434 Year 10 pupils in three multicultural secondary schools was firstly carried out in 2008–2009. This city has over half a million inhabitants and a fairly typical pattern of ethnic diversity with an 11% black and minority ethnic population of which the Pakistani and African-Caribbean groups were the largest. All the three schools had about one third minority ethnic pupils but varied widely in their intake from inner city areas (from 93%, 68% and 23% respectively) and hence there socio-economic profile. The quantitative survey both provided

\footnote{D. Gillborn, \textit{Racism and Education}..., op.cit.}
background data and information on key aspects of inter-ethnic relations as perceived by the pupils. This was followed up by qualitative research which included, focus-group discussions and in-depth personal interviews with students, schoolpersonnel and parents, further interviews with community and educational informants, classroom observations, case studies of schools and minority ethnic groups and ethnographic fieldwork into youth and community cultures. The purpose of this stage of the research was to investigate the factors and motivations behind varying school performances and diverging educational careers, the impact of ethnicity on everyday life in school, experiences of being ‘othered’ and perceptions of identity. Very few of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Year 10 pupils on school rolls were in school and hence included in the quantitative survey, also the local population was fairly small and access hard to achieve, for these reasons a different city location was chosen for a qualitative community study of these groups. This second city location also has a fairly typical pattern of ethnic diversity, it is also contains over half a million people and over 500 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children have been identified here.

1.4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The UK team’s findings confirm general trends in the literature on education and ethnicity and contribute new evidence on the importance of ethnic differentials in school experiences, patterns of informal ethnic segregation and the significance of inter-ethnic and peer hostilities in school life. The study identifies the negative impact of gang and ‘gangsta’ culture, racial stereotyping and streaming on educational experiences. This research also challenges any connection between ethnicity and low educational aspirations, apart from the case of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers where high dropout and high levels of disaffection with school are particularly marked. The UK experience shows that despite significant achievements in developing integrated, non-discriminatory educational systems persistent patterns of hostility, segregation and inequality remain.

FORMAL SECONDARY EDUCATION IS NOT WORKING FOR MANY GYPSIES, ROMA AND TRAVELLER YOUNG PEOPLE

Non-participation, particularly in secondary education by pupils from these groups, is the most serious problem of ethnic segregation in this field. This is compounded by increasing levels of poverty and immiseration, high levels of racial hostility and the limited scope of constructive interventions. This study has high-
lighted the complex and multidimensional causes of this educational outcome including school inaction, difficulties in attending school because of poverty and poor health, perceptions of school as being unsupportive of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers’ lifestyles, parents being fearful of what their children will experience at school, despite otherwise valuing education, and a less than positive school experience including bullying and discrimination which leads to a cycle of non-attendance further exacerbated by peer pressure. Norms and values within these communities are also tending to reinforce traditional roles and occupations for young people and depress educational aspirations. But, there is evidence that targeted inclusion work with recently arrived Roma has been successful in substantially increasing school attendance, particularly at primary level but it is unclear yet whether this will impact at secondary level\textsuperscript{16}.

**NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES FOR PAKISTANI AND AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN PUPILS CONFIRMS ETHNIC DIFFERENTIALS IN LIFE AT SCHOOL**

There are significant ethnic differences in pupils’ perceptions of their school. Pakistani pupils were least likely to view school positively, as just 34% of this group took this view compared to 48% of White pupils and 44% of African-Caribbean pupils. Most pupils did feel positive about their school work, particularly Pakistanis (85%) with African-Caribbean pupils feeling least positive (74%). But, a significant group of pupils felt that they were unjustly treated in terms of their individual academic performance, particularly Pakistani pupils (31% compared to 28% of Whites and just 20% of African-Caribbean pupils). School responses to pupil behaviour were cited as another site for unjust treatment and this did differ according to ethnicity. White and Pakistani pupils had the same perceptions on this measure at 55%. Despite this, punishment, or the way sanctions were distributed among pupils was not seen as a significant reason for unjust treatment. Just 10% of Pakistani pupils, and 12% of White pupils identified this as an issue.

73% of African-Caribbean pupils felt that they had experienced unfair treatment because of behaviour. This factor would therefore seem to strongly shape African-Caribbean pupils’ feelings about the school and is significant in light of the fact that they are most likely to be excluded from school at national level. At 30%, African-Caribbean pupils were twice more likely to feel the way sanctions were distributed among pupils was an issue compared to White and Pakistani pupils. This factor would seem to strongly shape African-Caribbean pupils’ feelings

\textsuperscript{16} C. Leeming, *We Are not Ashamed…*, op.cit.
about the school and this impacts on academic achievement. Combined with contextual factors such as the likelihood that pupils in this group were more likely to have suffered a dramatic life event this has adverse social implications. School should be a safe non-confrontational space for pupils which is achieved through school climate and ethos. Most teachers would say that they do not treat pupils in a discriminatory manner (i.e. treating some pupils differently than others) and it is perhaps too simplistic to lay the blame on teachers.

Atmosphere in the classroom provoked different responses along ethnic lines. 45% of White respondents viewed the atmosphere in their classrooms as ‘friendly and cohesive’ compared with 35% of African-Caribbean and just 26% Pakistani pupils. This is a significant finding and may reflect the fact that Pakistani pupils are more likely to feel less social support in school from both teachers and peers which is significant when these social relations are often seen as an important protective factor. Overall, most pupils indicated that several teachers liked them which show that despite the different power positions of teachers and pupils, there are good interpersonal relationships. In the eyes of students, teachers are likely to be supportive and are likely to motivate and enhance self-esteem.

EVERYDAY INFORMAL ETHNIC SEGREGATION WAS COMMON IN SCHOOL

Although much research has focused on teacher-pupil relationships, what emerged strongly in this study is the need to consider pupil-pupil dynamics. While the relationships pupils have with teachers seem to be generally positive, apart from criticism of unfair treatment, social relations between pupils seemed to be more fraught with tensions and conflicts. Working class pupils living in the inner city were more likely to report a negative social experience than middle class pupils living on the outskirts (90% compared with 60%). Hostile groups were identified in classrooms among White, Pakistani and African-Caribbean pupils (21%, 26% and 26% respectively). Between a fifth and a quarter of all respondents reported hostility and this warrants further investigation of how pupils define their identities by drawing boundaries between themselves, and others. Pupils perceived bullying to occur between pupils living in different neighbourhoods and between pupils of different ethnicities.

Pupils self-segregated themselves according to ethnicity to varying degrees in all three schools. At School 1 there was also the added dimension of a predominantly white middle class catchment. Like so many other studies of teenagers in school, social groupings and peer networks were easily identified and made visible through discussion of cliques. Particular groups hung around in particular areas
of the school. Summed up by one pupil, “Everyone is trying to fit in to different groups so they are not left out. (...) It is all to do with looks and stuff like”. These cliques were widely referred to by the names used among teenagers at national level, “We have goths and stuff and then you have got chavs and then you have got people that think they are hard and people that we actually know are hard really…”. Another pupil said much of the same, “we all just hang about with each other. Everyone goes in to different groups to be honest though”. Pupils openly discussed social groupings in each school. Dress styles and music tastes were sites of ‘coolness’ which characterised pupils’ discussions of social groupings. Pupils reported socialising with pupils from a range of different ethnic backgrounds and for many the role of ethnicity was not recognised or acknowledged but in practice it operated to differentiate pupils’ everyday social experience.

Emos and chavs were universally disliked. Discussion of these groups featured across all three schools and often provoked strong reaction, ‘We have like Goths, Emos and Chavs and stuff like that. (...) I am just going to be truthful, I hate them’. (African-Caribbean boy, School 2). This was a pattern which emerged through all schools but to varying effect. Emos and Goths invoked a particular type of white ethnicity which sat uncomfortably with all Pakistani and African-Caribbean pupils interviewed. The terms emo and goth were used interchangeably to distinguish a group which were situated on the periphery of the everyday world of school, “Goths stick together, they just get to the point where they just don’t… they just do their own thing”. In understanding why emos were a peripheral group four main dimensions of this identity emerged. First was the salience of ethnicity, ‘it’s mostly White people’. Identities were marked by particular clothing choices, “They just wear dark clothes, grow their hair right long and everything they wear is black”. Some pupils displayed blurred identities, ‘there are some people where they are kind of goths because they like listening to the rock music and that, but they don’t dress themselves like goths, I don’t know they just like listening to rock music and all that’. The boundaries which demarcated social identity could be fluid and could be experimented with. However it was pupils which fell fully into emo identity that provoked discussion. Emo tastes were marked differently with preference to listening to heavy rock metal rather than the mainstream’s preference for R’n’B music. It was the specific ideology underlying emo/goth identity which caused offence: “There is this guy, I am not too sure what his name is but he always talks about how his life is crap and that he wants to die. It is really depressing being around him. You say ‘shut up there is nothing wrong with your life, you should be happy’.

Emos were at the polar opposite of chavs, which was another branch of ‘white’ identity embodied by pupils at Schools 2 and 3 in particular. Chavs were con-
structed as a version of working class white identity. Pupils’ descriptions fit Tyler’s interpretation of ‘disgust reactions’ received by ‘the grotesque and comic figure of the chav’. ‘Hardness’ was a term widely used to delineate prestige to physical strength, ‘he’s reet hard’ and on corridors at Schools 2 and 3, chavs would talk of ‘banging people out’. However, African – Caribbean pupils in particular associated White Chav identity with physical weakness and empty threats. In lessons chavs were viewed as being the group most likely in school to get into trouble. White identities were also seen as under attack, apart from perceptions of emos and chavs, white boys in School 3 complained of being called ‘white bastards’. White middle class boys at School 1 felt they had tried to forge friendships with African-Caribbean boys but these were often rebuffed.

Many of the schemes aimed specifically at minority ethnic youth have been received positively and have had real effects on improving academic performance, this was the case for pupils attending the Fellowship and Pakistani Study Support programmes evidenced by attendance and achievement records. However, despite pupils’ enjoyment, in the Fellowship programme they tended to organise themselves in seating arrangements according to ethnicity. A mentoring programme aimed at African-Caribbean pupils had an antagonistic effect on some through its specified ethnic focus. African-Caribbean boys in particular showed strong opposition to the creation of ethnic boundaries, one boy stated, ‘I feel abused’ by such projects. Another said, ‘…we don’t need no help, we are capable ourselves, but it puts us down anyway. It makes us think that we are dumb’, whereas for others the experience was positive.

**INTER-ETHNIC HOSTILITY WAS PARTICULARLY FOCUSED ON PAKISTANIS**

The main area of inter-ethnic antagonism was not between White and Black pupils, but between African-Caribbeans and Pakistanis, this has not been identified adequately in existing research. This finding was based on analysis of a range of evidence and observations of a number of interactions within the schools. Sometimes these divisions came out seemingly playfully but they were always instigated by African-Caribbeans against Pakistanis. In a focus group discussion about connections to other countries, one African-Caribbean boy commented, ‘Yes Pakistan. They used to run round playing football in bare feet’ [laughs] to which the Pakistani boy responded with, ‘Ha ha no they didn’t’. Later on when asking a Pakistani

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boy why having more Pakistani teachers would be a good thing, the same African-Caribbean boy responded with, ‘They have more fear of terrorists. [Laughs]’ to which the Pakistani boy responded with, ‘I’ll slap you you Black shit’ [laughs] (Focus group, School 2) Although both boys were laughing which suggests harmless fun, there was a deeper layer of significance behind these exchanges. These were not examples of injecting humour into social interaction. Neither did it seem to be a marker social intimacy. Rather these were micro insults given by the African-Caribbean boy to the Pakistani boy and the laughter from both boys served to reduce the potential tension. When the meaning of these remarks was challenged the African-Caribbean boy stated, ‘No it is just a joke; we are only messing about with each other’. However, this was a feeling in all three schools which suggests a wider social division between the two groups than school based issues. What was significant was that Pakistanis tended to ‘accept’ these exchanges. Although there was evidence of active challenging this was not a case of resistance within accommodation but seemed to signal subservience.

AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN AND PAKISTANI GROUPS WERE STRONGLY AWARE OF NEGATIVE AND HOSTILE STEREOTYPES AND ATTITUDES ABOUT THEMSELVES

Pupils had very definite ideas in identifying stereotypes for Pakistanis and Caribbeans. This is a point which featured in equal measure across all three schools. Since stereotypes have social implications and can provide a picture of how different groups are perceived, it is useful to consider how pupils believe they are seen. These young people had learnt and were exposed to the fact that people occupy different structural positions in society. For Pakistanis, their choices were limited to working in the service industry, “working in a take-away or being something like a taxi driver. Or owning a shop on a corner” (Focus group interview, School 2). For some pupils limited ethnic stereotyping of their identity provided the motivation (and internal resistance) to ‘prove them wrong’.

Pakistanis were also commonly linked with terrorism, one Pakistani girl reported comments like “He’s a suicide bomber, he is from Taliban” from both boys and girls. Being viewed as having an identity that is at odds with British cultural norms meant that Pakistani pupils felt more prone to stigmatisation. Pakistani ethnic identity could thus constrain future life projections. Being Pakistani with its linked associations of terrorism meant being labelled and set apart.

The stereotyping of African-Caribbeans was viewed completely differently. Unjust stereotyping of the African-Caribbean community arose frequently in discussions with pupils from this group and with it a sense of outrage. Stereotypes for
Caribbean boys in particular were highly negative such as ‘either being drug dealers, criminals, being in jail’ or ‘not getting any GCSEs’ and ‘mess up their lives’. Blackness and African-ness is seen as symbolically threatening with its associations of drug culture, crime, violence and therefore danger. Although there is a sense of empowerment which comes from being conceived of as a dangerous entity, this also functions a form of disempowerment. African-Caribbean girls considered the masculine stereotype in terms of actors in potential romantic relationships. This too presents a negative image, “he is a woman beater, he is a man slag, he cheats on his girlfriends. That is the typical Black guy” (African-Caribbean girl, School 3). African-Caribbean girls shared some of the same stereotypes, “She’s a bitch, she’s right hard, she’ll bang you, don’t mess with her” (African-Caribbean girl, School 3).

Despite being aware of ethnic groupings within school, pupils displayed ambivalence and lack of understanding about why they occurred. Probing into why these groupings occurred always received a uniform, “I don’t know”.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD LOCATION WAS A SIGNIFICANT MARKER OF IDENTITY**

Pupils saw their neighbourhoods as an important context and unpacking respondents’ perceptions and experiences of where the boundaries around particular places lay emerged as an important identity activity. Neighbourhoods are made up of people and communities in places and there is great stability and cohesion in familiar settings. At School 3, Pakistani respondents felt uncomfortable being in a particular street location after school hours because this meant waiting at a bus stop with the threat of physical and verbal abuse from the immediate White community. This shaped their decisions about whether to stay for after school clubs.

Another analytical strand of identity and place lay with belonging and memory through public sites. This gave an interesting angle on how ethnic identities mesh and intersect with spatial location. The material culture of Northcity’s industrial past seemed to resonate with Pakistani respondents as interviews and conversations often highlighted both their family’s role and the collective contribution that the Pakistani community had in Northcity’s past. For one high achieving Pakistani girl her connection to Northcity was deeply rooted in narratives of her grandfather’s working life in heavy industry. When shopping in the centre in the east of the city, her presence in Northcity today was represented in statues of industrial workers which for her re-animated her grandfather’s past life and created for her a sense of spatial meaning. This illustrates the ways in which minority ethnic pupils made deeper connections to neighbourhoods, to cities and to Eng-
land with the family often playing an important role in preserving a sense of root-
ed connection and ‘cultural imagination’.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD LOCATION, POSTCODE GANGS AND MASCULINE ‘GANGLSTA’ CULTURE ARE IMPORTED INTO EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE FUELLING VIOLENCE/BULLYING WHICH UNDERMINES ATTAINMENT (REPORTED BY 43% PUPILS IN SCHOOL 1 AND 28% SCHOOL 3)**

The physical divide between neighbourhoods was entrenched further through the existence of postcode gangs in the wider community. An important part of identity for both African-Caribbean and Pakistani pupils and particularly for boys was bound up with allegiance to area, “It’s basically if you live in Northcity4 you are with Northcity4, if you live in Northcity3 you are with Northcity3”. It was physically evident in graffiti around the schools which as an act prompted competition, “there is ‘Northcity4’ and ‘Northcity5’ written all over, then someone writes across ‘Northcity3’, then some people put threats up, then someone crosses that off and puts ‘Northcity4’.” Trying to ascertain whether post code gangs were linked to ethnicity received mixed responses. For some these were associated with minority ethnic groups only. But some White pupils at School 3 did however align themselves to the Northcity3 gang. Overall much of this was bound up with ideas of ‘hard’ masculinity and involvement in gangs marked the transition to adulthood. It was a way to assert identity but the seriousness of the implications of this can however not be underestimated since there had been shootings in Brunsmere linked to gang wars. Visual reminders of this were very much evident, ‘If you walk past the barbers now when the shutters are down you can see the bullet holes’. It served as a stark reminder of what a Pakistani mother said “If you have not got your mind over matter you can get pulled in to things but it is your choice (…) you go the right way or the wrong way”. Pupil involvement in postcode gangs cut across disaffected and conformist identities in school.

Other key findings include the following:

- Institutional processes of streaming fuelled dynamics of inclusion/exclusion but there is evidence that some pupils could negotiate differing roles, eg. across ‘boffin’ (achievement orientated) and ‘gangsta’ (street orientated) positions which challenges the binary of academic achiever/disaffected.

- Pupils from black and minority ethnic groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds did not appear to benefit educationally from attendance at a ‘better, middle class’ school, despite parents’ perceptions of the significance of behaviour problems in ‘working class’ schools reducing educational outcomes.
– Over 70% pupils from all ethnic groups strongly recognised that education was a key means of improving life-chances and despite widely varying home backgrounds and school experiences aspirations were high. However over a quarter of pupils did not take this view and this educational disaffection across all groups needs addressing.

– Highly complex and differentiated positions, strategies and perceptions were articulated by young people in relation to their experiences of school and community life. Young people’s yearning to escape being ‘othered’ was strongly voiced with some able to articulate narratives of emancipation and liberation from differential and discriminatory treatment. But many felt locked into and unable to escape a tangled web of constraining circumstances and social worlds with serious consequences in terms of declining educational aspirations and dropout from the educational system altogether.

1.5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The policy implications of these findings confirm that there is a pressing need to:

– Prioritize the objectives of racial and ethnic equality and multiculturalism in educational experiences, institutional arrangements and achievement and actively develop and support programmes, initiatives and interventions to achieve these objectives in mainstream schooling. There are many ways in which individual schools and local education authorities and agencies can and have been responding to these challenges. Diversity was emphasised in these schools through the surface manifestations of ethnicity, which served to socially articulate and maintain differences through ‘boundary maintenance’ rather than offering cohesive provision. Firstly, it is necessary for schools and local educational authorities and agencies, and central government to acknowledge and recognise the nature and extent of these processes identified here and to re-affirm and prioritise racial and ethnic equality and multiculturalism in educational contexts. The likelihood that these concerns and objectives will be downgraded in the current economic context is of serious concern given the real prospects of increasing racial and ethnic inequalities amongst children, for example in poverty and material conditions. Secondly, it is necessary to actively develop and support programmes, initiatives and interventions to achieve these objectives in mainstream schooling. There is still a great need for stronger leadership, creative innovation and transformative change on these matters. At national level the strengthening
of multiculturalism\textsuperscript{18} and a renewed commitment to racism reduction and anti-discrimination\textsuperscript{19} and urgently needed. Diversity was emphasised in schools through the surface manifestations of ethnicity, which served to socially articulate and maintain differences through ‘boundary maintenance’ rather than offering cohesive provision.

- Increase the participation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children in secondary education. The continued failure to arrest declining educational attainment requires a new creative national campaign to address literacy and generate aspirational capital amongst these communities, led by these communities with government, LEA and school support. Some local initiatives have shown that entrenched patterns of school non-attendance can be substantially transformed with effective outreach programmes but they remain marginal and insecure and it is vital to build on the success of targeted initiatives like the Achievement Service programmes and Early Years Outreach teams and also that schools show positive leadership and do not turn away these children due to concerns over absence figures. Empowerment of (GRT) community organizations, adult mentors and securing involvement of families and parents is also vital in achieving this objective.

- Reduce ethnic differentials in school experiences, particularly for Pakistani pupils in their perceptions of the unfair treatment of their school work, in the classroom and in their general perceptions of schooling, and particularly for African-Caribbeans in their perceptions of unfair treatment of their behavior. Ofsted have a key role to play here in adequately addressing this issue in inspection regimes. Head teachers and governors have a statutory duty here to eliminate racial and ethnic equality and racial discrimination, and promote good relations and cohesion between all groups.

- Reduce informal ethnic segregation and peer to peer hostilities in all areas of schooling, and particularly inter-ethnic hostility between African-Caribbean and Pakistani pupils, and also reduce societal racial stereotyping of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, African-Caribbeans and Pakistanis and support pupils in consciousness raising, understanding and dealing with these issues. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) in to the Education Act 2002 introducing a duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion which came into effect

\textsuperscript{18} T. Modood, \textit{Still Not Easy Being British, Struggles for a Multicultural Citizenship}, Stoke-on-Trent 2010.

on 1 September 2007. The wealth of UK good practice in ‘racism reduction’\textsuperscript{20} outside school contexts, and in school\textsuperscript{21} provide a valuable evidence base of successful interventions. It would also be valuable to allow pupils the space to understand about the African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Gypsy Roma presence in Britain, specifically in relation to the local context. Although all the schools promoted Black History Month, there were not any learning activities developed around this. White ethnic identities are currently often left out of these sorts of ‘ethnic’ provisions and should be included.

- There must be an ongoing commitment to the professional development and training of both teaching and non-teaching staff working in multicultural schools. Too little assistance is provided to teachers to help them observe and construct the meanings and knowledge that guide their actions in the classroom. Teachers appear scared about the issues of race and ethnicity which seems to stem from hyper-awareness and insecurity. Measures to address this could include training days and workshops with parents and community members where they break from the everyday insular routine and are able to learn about the ethnically diverse groups they teach in a very practical way. Greater attention needs to be paid to how teachers working in inner city schools are trained, hired, and manage with the distinct challenges of inner city teaching in ethnically diverse classrooms. There are two achievable options here. Option A is a PGCE specifically aimed at teachers wanting to teach in inner city settings. This differs from the ‘mainstream’ PGCE as greater emphasis is placed on understanding pupil behaviour and the specific challenge of classroom management. Option B is to ensure that a statutory requirement of gaining Qualified Teacher Status is that all trainee teachers must successfully undertake a placement in an inner city school. Following this there must be an ongoing commitment to the professional development and training of both teaching and non-teaching staff working in inner city schools. Too little assistance is provided to teachers to help them observe and construct the meanings and knowledge that guide their actions in the classroom. Measures to address this could include offering a mentoring scheme or offering opportunities for team teaching where they break from insularity and can learn from others’ professional practice through action and reflec-

\textsuperscript{20} I. Law, \textit{Racism and Ethnicity...}, op.cit.

tion in a very practical way. It would also be of benefit for all teachers to be offered the opportunity to ‘see outside the box’ and observe practice in a range of other types of schools. For instance, teachers working in inner city schools may observe teaching practice in the differing contexts of independent schools, pupil referral units, academies, faith schools and special schools to gain a broader level of social insight in order to be equipped to trial new methods and make change in their own milieu. Such experience would equip teachers with an understanding of how different groups of pupils of the same age perform in different settings with different organisational and social contexts. This could generate higher expectations of the pupils in their classes and could generate ideas for innovating lessons. To ensure a better understanding of teaching ethnically diverse groups of pupils the content of the PGCE should also develop skills, knowledge and understanding in managing ethnically diverse groups and in addressing racial hostility and ethnic and religious identities in school.

- Reduce the influence of postcode gangs and masculine ‘gangsta’ culture on young people and everyday school life. Schools in this study were generally sensitive to the issues surrounding postcode gangs and some had taken a clear stance of zero tolerance, but much more work needs to be done to develop effective interventions to achieve this goal. The Department for Children, Schools and Families has issued guidance and a toolkit for action for schools in dealing with gangs and group offending\textsuperscript{22}, and there are useful lessons set out in the experiences of the Tackling Gangs Action Programme which was carried out in 2007\textsuperscript{23}. There are also a variety of other toolkits and guides for example \textit{Gangs at the Grassroots}\textsuperscript{24}. Work must continue around boys’ damaging and limited models of being masculine in the context of postcode gangs and also in addressing attitudes and patterns of behaviour that demean girls and women. Schools are well placed to address gender issues through specific units of work which explicitly discuss conceptions of gendered identity. Programs may be either gender-specific or gender-relevant but should address social justice issues which allow pupils to build and explore individual identities and also girls’ assertiveness and issues of sexual exploitation.


- Reduce institutional processes of streaming and setting which fuels pupil and teacher dynamics of inclusion and exclusion as they have little impact on attainment, can reduce educational aspirations and attainment and can also be detrimental to children.  

- A key challenge for policy makers at national level is to find ways to promote the motivational disposition which encourage aspirations through education and learning. There is a fundamental mismatch between school and disaffected pupils. Some of the pupils within this study were caught up in a culture that sees learning and intellectual activity as anti-identity or school for whatever reasons, was simply not a priority. While interventions in disaffection usually focus on ‘fixing’ the pupil, focus must also be drawn to the role of the curriculum and pedagogy, which currently remains standardised and uniform. This exists as a consequence of school evaluation and pupil assessment which emphasises a narrowed range of outcomes. It is logical that a flexible, permeable and responsive continuum of support and provision is needed to target the most challenging young people based on their particular continuum of need. What is needed is a flexible and creative response which offers an alternative to traditional education to meet the demands of challenging pupils. This requires more innovative measures than just tweaking the timetable. There is a need for a pedagogy that captures and sustains pupils’ interest in learning. The goal of educational work with disaffected pupils should be one of social justice and schools should provide the space and resources for pupils to broaden their horizons and improve relationships. What this encompasses is self-actualisation. Schools are unable to affect the social circumstances in which pupils are living; but policy could do more to offer a curriculum which permits young people to make choices, to build self-confidence, and to see the connections between learning and a better life.

Maintaining and raising the aspirations of all students, and particularly minority ethnic students through a series of interventions and programmes is vital here. There is much evidence to show the positive impact of maintaining high education and career aspirations, particularly amongst those with the lowest attainment through initiatives, such as ‘Aim High’ and ‘Aim Higher’ and effective career development work. These two programmes come to an end in 2011 and the benefits of these programmes and others, such as the Educational Maintenance Allowance which disproportionately benefits minority ethnic students, will be lost due to

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government deficit reduction planning. In this context developing this work within schools and incorporating aspiration raising events, for example into recreational breaks, for all students may counteract the apathy and despondency that some pupils feel in their treatment by the school, and indeed by other peer members.

Overall, increasing racial and ethnic inequalities in child poverty and declining support for interventions to address racial and ethnic inequalities in education, despite greater understanding and research evidence on these issues, mark out the key features of the crisis the UK faces in this field.

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