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Ethnic inequalities: another 10 years of the same?

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ETHNIC INEQUALITIES: ANOTHER TEN YEARS OF THE SAME?

Introduction

New Labour signalled its commitment to responding to racism in society early in its first term. By setting up and accepting the controversial findings of the public inquiry into the Metropolitan Police Service's investigation of Stephen Lawrence's racist murder (Macpherson 1999), it appeared to send a powerful message after the 'racism-blind' years of the Conservative government. At the end of the twentieth century, New Labour had recognised that 'institutional racism' was endemic to public institutions, such as the police, schools, and government departments.

The government's policy response, outlined in the Home Secretary's Action Plan (1999) proposed a rigorous reform programme expressed through the language of racial equality *of opportunity*. At the centrepiece was the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which places a statutory duty on all public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between different racial groups. Public authorities must audit, consult, and monitor existing policies and services to assess whether these adversely impact different ethnic groups and publish a race equality scheme.

Aside from New Labour's legislative framework to produce racial equality, the prevention of social exclusion has been pivotal, with a focus on reducing multiple disadvantage for *all groups* (SEU 2000). This chapter will assess the effects of such policies – and those specifically targeted at *minority ethnic groups* – on long-standing ethnic inequalities in education, employment and income, and policing. It will conclude with an overall appraisal of New Labour strategies and consider where further policy developments are required. First, however, it is necessary to outline some relevant conceptual and methodological issues.

Conceptual and Methodological Issues

In reviewing various statistical and empirical material, this chapter relies wholly on the ethnic categorisations used by government, policy researchers and academics. Yet the ways in which *ethnic group/origin* is operationalised varies considerably across different datasets, and may often be remote from the self-identifications of those categorised or conceptualisations of *ethnicity* as understood by sociologists and anthropologists (see for example Fenton 2003).

This has important ramifications when considering that the study of ethnic inequalities essentially involves examining *between group* differences at an aggregate level, which largely assumes that there is little variation *within groups*. However, there has long been evidence that the *Asian* categorisation, for example, masks significant demographic, socio-economic, religious and cultural differences among the main ethnic groups of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi origin. Such diversity is also inherently present in the Mixed Race category, as well as other ethnic categorisations. Immigration by new migrant groups, particularly from Eastern European states, has additionally created an internally varied white ethnic group. At the time of writing this diversity has yet to fully filter through to published statistics and research data, but where possible white ethnic experience is disaggregated.

The chapter is also dependent on positivist analyses which attempt to predict which factors are statistically related to particular outcomes in an effort to quantitatively assess the role of ethnic origin in producing say, relatively high or low levels of unemployment. Such analyses must be viewed cautiously as it is rarely possible to fully isolate any one factor when individuals occupy intersecting social positions (Rattansi 2005). Disaggregating the effects of class, ethnicity, and racial discrimination may be misleading as the social processes which situate individuals within or outside of a class position are themselves racialised. Young men of Pakistani origin may experience unemployment because of their low educational attainment, but this may be linked to their attendance at a poorly performing school or

experiences of racial discrimination. It is rarely possible to meaningfully disentangle these interacting processes.

Bearing these caveats in mind, it is still possible to come to some general conclusions about the differential experiences of the main ethnic groups in British society, and to trace changes in outcomes during the ten years that New Labour have been in government, beginning first with education.

EDUCATION

With New Labour's pre-election mantra of *Education, Education, Education* it is axiomatic that raising educational attainment has been central to the reform agenda. Traditionally, education has been viewed as a mechanism for assisting the integration of minority ethnic groups into the social fabric of society, and for reducing prejudice and discrimination.

Educational Attainment

New Labour inherited a legacy of unequal educational attainment among ethnic groups in British society. Using the standard measure of five or more passes at GCSE, Gillborn and Mirza's (2000) secondary analysis of Youth Cohort Study data found that by the mid-1990s, the highest attaining pupil group were of Indian origin, followed by the white majority ethnic group, then Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black pupils.

Government policies

Broadly speaking, during New Labour's first term in office their strategy to improve educational attainment was to target disadvantaged areas. The *Excellence in Cities* (EiC) initiative, for example, covered 60% of minority ethnic children of secondary school age, because of their residential concentration in areas experiencing multiple disadvantage¹. It involved providing additional resources and guidance with gifted and talented programmes, learning mentors, units working with those at risk of exclusion, enhanced ICT facilities, and the sharing of good practice through partnership efforts. At the end of Key Stage 4 evaluative evidence indicated that minority ethnic educational attainment in EiC schools was higher than in non-EiC schools, although this varied somewhat dependent on the measure of attainment used (Kendall *et al.* 2005).

Additionally, since September 2002 the National Curriculum has incorporated a statutory citizenship element in secondary schools. Whilst research has indicated implementation difficulties, there are signs that citizenship education is slowly becoming more embedded in educational practice, although a review of diversity and citizenship in the curriculum has suggested it may not be prioritised highly enough in schools or be undertaken by enough trained and engaged teachers (Ajegbo *et al.* 2007).

New Labour also introduced initiatives specifically targeted at minority ethnic pupils. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), introduced in 1998-9 has funded language development training, peer mentoring and mediation schemes, targeted literacy and numeracy sessions, behaviour management programmes, and summer schools for areas with high concentrations of minority ethnic pupils. Evaluated alongside EiC, findings indicated a positive return with an appreciation of project work by pupils, particularly in learning African and Asian history, raising self-esteem and motivation, and increased parental support (Cunningham *et al.* 2004). Improved initial teacher training has occurred alongside the setting of incremental targets for increased minority ethnic teacher employment. These have been met and by 2006 12% of entrants were from minority ethnic groups, mainly in London and the South East (Training and Development Agency For Schools 2006).

In March 2003, the Government consulted on raising minority ethnic, particularly African Caribbean pupils' educational achievement, in *Aiming High* (DfES 2003). This resulted in the piloting of the African Caribbean Achievement Project in 30 schools from November 2003. Each school received consultant expertise and a funded senior manager to lead on engaging more fully with the needs of

African Caribbean pupils. The Black Pupils Achievement Programme was launched in October 2005 to further target interventions in 100 schools across 25 local authorities. Activities including lesson observations, focus groups with parents and children, mentoring and curriculum review were used.

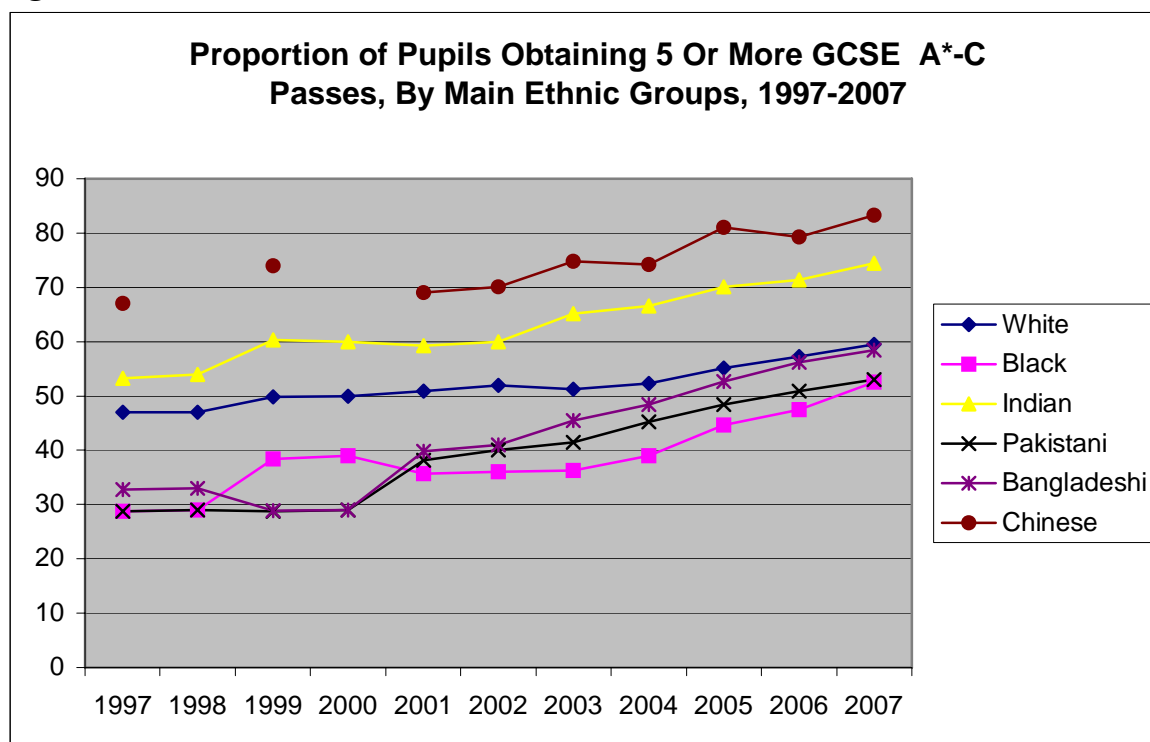
An evaluation of the African Caribbean Achievement project by Tikly *et al.* (2006) found that between 2003 and 2005, the proportion of Black Caribbean boys achieving Level 5+ in English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 3 increased by 12-13 percentage points. There was also an increase in attainment of five or more A*-C GCSE grades for Black Caribbean boys (5%) and girls (7%), but this was lower than the national average, suggesting a limited project effect. Moreover, Black Caribbean boys remained the lowest achieving group in *Aiming High* schools at Key Stages 3 and 4 with little change in their value-added score between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

Various other developments have targeted other minority ethnic groups – including the Gypsy/Traveller Achievement Project which ran from November 2003-August 2004 for schools to increase attainment and attendance levels, the publication of a management guide on improving attainment among secondary school pupils of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali, and Turkish origin, and the establishment of a New Arrivals Excellence Programme in July 2007.

Outcomes

Figure 9.1 sets out the attainment levels for the main ethnic groups² during New Labour’s two and a half terms. Immediately evident is the overall improvement in achievement with the proportion of those achieving five or more A*-C passes in 2007 higher than in 1997, with the largest increases from 2002 onwards, and this pattern holds for all ethnic groups. The increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the standard measure of educational attainment was most marked for those of minority ethnic origin (16 – 24 percentage points) compared with the white school population (13 percentage points). It is also noteworthy that the highest achieving groups in 2007 were of minority ethnic origin: 83% of Chinese pupils achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-C in England, followed by 74% of Indian pupils (DfES 2007). This is a significant accomplishment that shows New Labour’s efforts to tackle educational disadvantage are having a definite impact (see Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of this improvement).

Figure 9.1



Notes

1. Sources: Data for 1997, 1999 and 2001 taken from Connolly (2006). Data for pupils of Chinese origin was only periodically available from 1997-2001.
2. Data for 1998, 2000 and 2002 taken from DfES (2003). Both used sweeps of the Youth Cohort Study. Data for 2003-7 taken from DfES (2007) and earlier equivalents drawing on the Pupil Level Annual School Census.

However, it remains the case that ethnic inequalities in educational attainment are still observable, although the gap appears to be closing. In 1997, the gap in attainment levels between the highest-achieving ethnic group (Chinese) and the lowest-achieving groups (Black and Pakistani) was 38 percentage points which had reduced to 30 by 2007³. Using the comparator of the white majority ethnic group indicates a more dramatic narrowing of the gap. As Table 9.1 shows, this was one percentage point in 2007 for Bangladeshi and White pupils, compared with 14 percentage points in 1998, a remarkable achievement, which appears to indicate the positive impact of interventions. Likewise, pupils of black and Pakistani origin had more similar attainment levels to the white majority ethnic group in 2007 than in earlier years.

Table 9.1
Attainment Level Gaps for the Lowest Achieving
Groups Compared with the White Majority Ethnic
Group, Selected Years

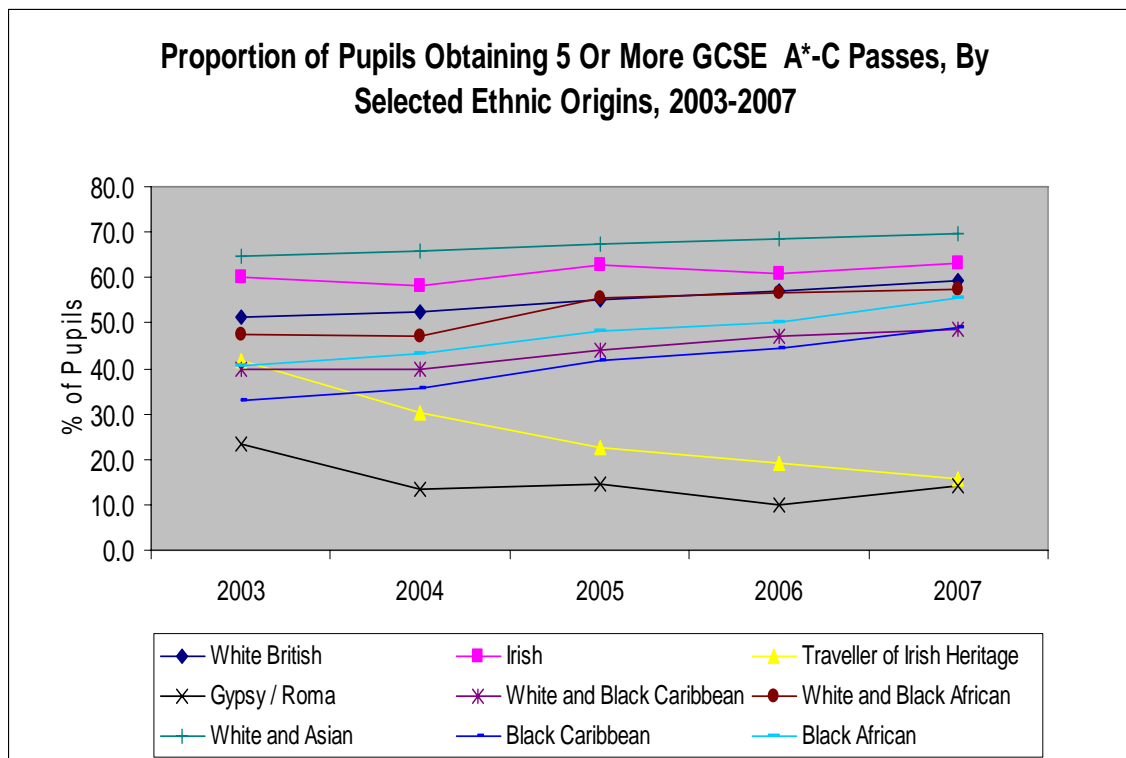
Minority Ethnic Group	Size of the Gap (Percentage Points)			
	1998	2001	2004	2007
Black	18	15	13	7
Pakistani	18	13	7	7
Bangladeshi	14	11	4	1

Note

1. Source: see Figure 9.1.

A more comprehensive categorisation of pupils by ethnic origin since 2003 reveals a high-attaining cluster with 70% or more achieving five A*-C GCSE passes comprised those of Chinese, Indian and Mixed-White and Asian origin in 2007. The mid-range cluster with 55-65% was the largest including those of Irish, White British, Bangladeshi, Mixed-White and Black African, and Black African origin. The performance of the lowest attaining cluster (Pakistani, Black Caribbean, Mixed-White and Black Caribbean, Irish Travellers and Gypsy/Roma) was 14-54% (DfES 2007). The latter two groups had only 14 and 16% respectively receiving five or more A*-C passes in 2007. For this group attainment levels were lower in 2007 than in 2003 whereas all other ethnic groups performed better in 2007 (see Figure 9.2). This gap increase is the subject of current DCSF research.

Figure 9.2



Note

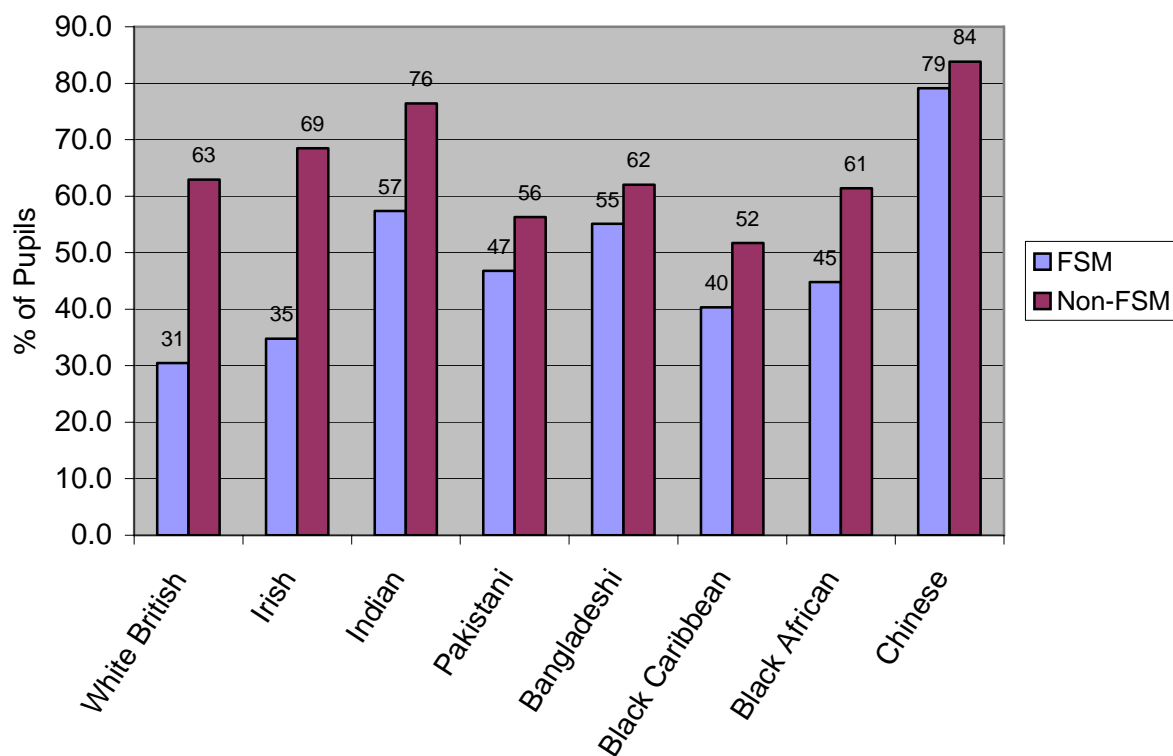
1. Source: DfES (2007) and earlier equivalents drawing on the Pupil Level Annual School Census.

The explanatory frameworks proposed to explicate these differential outcomes have included socio-economic/class disadvantage and teacher/school racism. Variants on these two themes highlight the role of poor family-school links and parental support, large concentrations of minority ethnic pupils in unpopular and poorly resourced schools as a result of the corrupting effects of parental choice policies, positive and negative teacher stereotyping of minority ethnic pupils, and ethnocentric bias in the curriculum (Gillborn 1998; Abbas 2002; Tomlinson 1998; Archer and Francis 2005). Sewell's (1997) work has also pointed to anti-school black masculinities leading to educational disaffection and low attainment.

In exploring the role of socio-economic/class disadvantage further, Figure 9.3 uses the proxy of free school meals (FSM) to examine the performance of selected ethnic groups⁴ and it reveals a complex picture. Looking first at those eligible for FSM, it is evident that the poorest performers are those of White British and Irish origin, followed by those of Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani origin. It is also striking that those of Chinese origin have very high levels of attainment (79%). Among those not eligible for FSM, it is still those of Black Caribbean and Pakistani origin who fare worst. Taken together these findings suggest multi-causal explanations for educational disadvantage which may vary for different ethnic groups.

Figure 9.3

Proportion Achieving Five Or More A*-C GCSEs, By Eligibility For Free School Meals (FSM), 2007



Notes

1. Source: DfES (2007).
2. Selected ethnic groups only (see Note 5 at the end of the chapter).

Acknowledging the limitations of the FSM measure which undoubtedly obscures significant advantage and disadvantage within the broader categories (see Hobbs and Vignoles 2007), Strand's (2008) study provides a more sensitive measure of socio-economic status using head of household occupation, mother's highest education qualification, FSM, housing tenure, family structure, and neighbourhood disadvantage. Using data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England for 2006, Strand suggests that the social class gap in education attainment is larger - and therefore a more significant cause of concern - compared with the ethnicity gap⁵. In particular, Strand found that low socio-economic status impacted hardest on the White British ethnic group leading to very low levels of attainment for boys and girls. This was mediated through lower parental and pupil aspirations for educational success and a low academic self-concept (see also Evans 2007). In contrast, Black Caribbean and Black African pupils from high socio-economic status homes had high aspirations and academic self-concepts, but they underachieved in relation to White British pupils. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African pupils from low socio-economic status homes had relatively elevated attainment levels seemingly because of their higher aspirations and academic self-concepts. Strand (2008: 46) concluded there is 'a need to move from a monolithic conception of White British as an homogeneous group to explicitly recognise this high degree of polarisation around SES for White British pupils', whereby they are represented in both the highest and lowest attaining groups.

This leaves the question of Black Caribbean pupils' experiences, particularly those from higher socio-economic status homes. In Tikly et al.'s (2006) evaluation of the African Caribbean Achievement programme, the research highlighted the perception among African Caribbean pupils and parents of unfair and inconsistent behaviour management within schools which contributed to low teacher

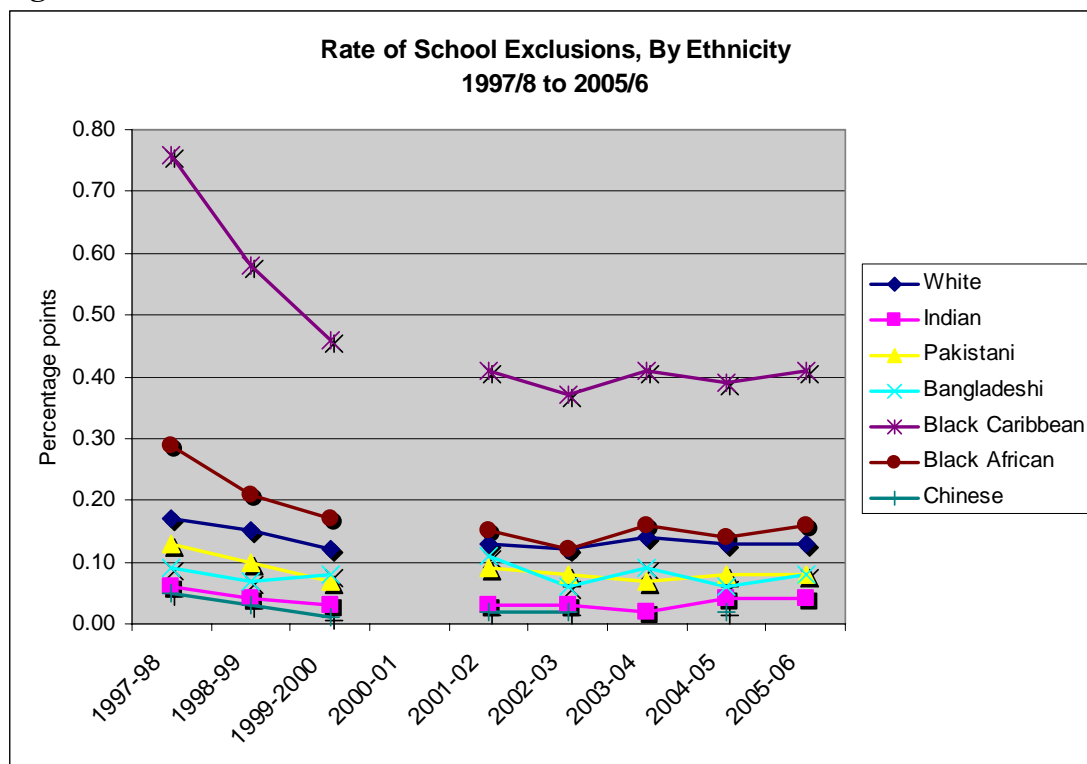
expectations with some indication that pupils were sometimes moved to lower ability sets because of their behaviour rather than academic ability. Central to low educational attainment among Black Caribbean pupils then, is behaviour management, which is considered next in relation to school exclusions.

School Exclusions

Figure 9.4 shows an impressive reduction in permanent school exclusions between 1997/8 and 1999/2000 which was most marked for black Caribbean and African pupils, although it predated the introduction of the Government target of reducing school exclusions by one-third by 2002 (SEU 2000).

Sustained attention to the problem of disproportionate *black exclusions* is evident in various government strategy documents in the education field, particularly since 2002. Funding to reduce black exclusions has been made available under various national programmes including EiC, EMAG, the Standards Fund and the Street Crime Initiative. Local education authorities have mounted projects using social skills and anger management training, mentoring, counselling, assertive discipline, and minority-ethnic run support groups drawing on community expertise (see Parsons *et al.* 2005).

Figure 9.4



Notes

1. Source: DCSF (2007).
2. Data for Irish Travellers, Gypsy/Roma, and Mixed Race pupils has only been available since 2002-3 so these have been excluded from the graph but are discussed in the text.

Whilst there was a reduction in the number of school exclusions throughout the late 1990s for all ethnic groups, the most recent data (2005/6) on permanent exclusions is rather discouraging, showing that Black Caribbean, Irish Travellers, Gypsy/Roma, and Mixed White/Black Caribbean pupils are still over three times as likely as White pupils to be permanently excluded, with only slightly lower exclusion rates for those of Black Other origin (DCSF 2007). Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese pupils are either proportionately or under-represented among those excluded.

A DfES Priority Review (2006) re-emphasised the importance of a school-wide commitment to race equality, effective monitoring, restorative approaches, involving parents, and exclusion as a last resort. Targeting 100 schools, teachers and senior managers would receive training on the impact of judgement and discretion on pupil outcomes, and the need to be 'race aware' in behaviour management strategies. It is too early to measure the effect of these proposals.

Summarising New Labour's interventions in education, it cannot be denied that their policies have had a considerable positive effect on attainment levels. However, ethnic inequalities are stubbornly enduring, particularly when considering the gap between the highest and lowest achieving groups. Renewed efforts must concentrate on low pupil and parental aspirations among the white working class and improving the extremely low levels of attainment among Traveller and Gypsy/Roma children. As the section on exclusions suggests, there is also a need to fundamentally change teacher perceptions about poor behaviour among black pupils as this is implicitly linked to educational attainment.

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Like education, employment influences social status, quality of housing, health, and leisure. As New Labour entered government, the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (FNSEM) (1997) demonstrated that at each qualification level unemployment rates for Black Caribbean and Pakistani/Bangladeshi men and women were higher than for white men and women (Modood *et al.* 1997). This differential was reduced but did not wholly disappear for those of Indian and African Asian origin. A similar pattern was observed for male and female occupational attainment and men's average earnings⁶ (see also EOC 2007).

Analytical research commissioned by the Cabinet Office (2001) highlighted the complex explanations for labour market underachievement, relating to, on the demand side, fewer business opportunities in areas with high minority ethnic concentrations, with cultural and religious factors seeming to play a part (see also Clark and Drinkwater 2007). On the supply side, lower skills and qualifications among some minority ethnic groups, poorer language fluency, poorer health, and the quality and location of childcare and transport facilities may all contribute to less advantageous outcomes. Racial discrimination also undoubtedly affects labour market experiences. Heath and Cheung's (2006: 63) analysis of managers and employers' self-reported prejudice led them to conclude that 'there is a fairly clear parallel between the patterns of racial prejudice across broad industrial groupings and the patterns of sectoral choice and ethnic penalties in these groupings'.

Government policies

Increased minority ethnic participation in the labour market has been regarded by New Labour as a central plank in the strategy to reduce social exclusion and is outlined in Public Service Agreements for 2001-4 and 2005-8. The cost of the employment gap has been estimated at £8.6bn for the cost of benefit payments, lost tax revenue, and lost output (NAO and DWP 2008).

Mainstream strategies to improve employment are critically assessed in Chapter 5. The early evidence on the impact of the New Deal for Young People from minority ethnic groups in Oldham found higher dropout rates at the Gateway stage compared with young white people. Moreover, disappointingly, fewer individuals from minority ethnic groups entered subsidised or unsubsidised employment, with more going into education and training or the voluntary sector options. It was unclear whether this reflected a greater degree of commitment to training, lack of choice, or lower expectations by clients or advisers (Fieldhouse *et al.* 2002). Nationally, however, since 1998, 144,000 minority ethnic individuals have found work through the New Deals (EMETF 2006).

In 2003, a ten year vision for eliminating disproportionate barriers to minority ethnic employment was outlined by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, recognising that minority ethnic disadvantage had continued unabated for two decades (Cabinet Office 2003). The agenda has been carried forward by

the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force (EMETF) with a three-pronged strategy embedded across Whitehall to enhance human capital through education, connect people to work by removing barriers, and promoting equal opportunities in the workplace by reducing employer discrimination.

In the Taskforce's second annual report (EMETF 2006), it reviewed progress up to 2006. Looking first to measures specifically targeted at minority ethnic groups, it found that the Ethnic Minority Outreach programme, which ran from 2002-6, using local minority ethnic providers of employment training and support, exceeded its original target of getting 32% of 'starters' into work with over 13,000 job entries. The programme appeared less effective in working with adult immigrants who often had some ESOL needs, and some UK-born participants without work experience (Barnes *et al.* 2005). A further 2500 people found jobs through projects funded under the Ethnic Minority Flexible Fund. The Fair Cities programme which ran in 2005-8 attempted to increase employer engagement and create 'pipelines' to jobs with major employers, and had 80% minority ethnic programme entrants. However, interim evaluations of pilot projects revealed that 47% of jobseekers had not secured a job offer, in large part because of implementation failures. The number placed in jobs was 248, around 10 per cent of the target for the first year. Specialist Employment Advisers also operated in seven pilot areas (with higher minority ethnic unemployment) in 2004-6 in an attempt to build strategic relationships between Jobcentre Plus and employers, but an evaluation indicated that these were beleaguered by a lack of focus and trust (Pettigrew *et al.* 2005). Partners Outreach for Ethnic Minorities ran from January 2007 to March 2008 to engage non-working partners from low-income families who were not in contact with Jobcentre Plus, providing jobsearch support, assistance finding culturally sensitive childcare, ESOL, soft skills and mentoring services. It has not yet been formally evaluated.

In New Labour's third term, a range of projects centred on disadvantaged areas have been initiated, moving away from minority ethnic targeted provision. These have yet to bed down or be evaluated⁷.

Table 9.2
Unemployment Rates (1997 and 2007) and Percentage Change

Ethnic Origin	Unemployment Rate 1997	Unemployment Rate 2007	% Point Change 1997 - 2007	% change 1997 - 2007
<i>Men</i>				
White	4.7	3.3	1.4	-29.8
Indian	5.2	3.8	1.4	-26.9
Black Caribbean	14.4	10.6	3.8	-26.4
Black African	18.2	11.2	7.0	-38.5
Pakistani	10.2	6.5	3.7	-36.3
Bangladeshi	-	10.1 ³	-	-
Mixed	11.9	10.2 ³	1.7	-14.3
<i>Women</i>				
White	2.7	2.4	0.3	-11
Indian	5.8	4.6	1.2	-20.7
Black Caribbean	7.4	4.8	2.6	-35.1
Black African	11.4	7.0	4.4	-38.6
Pakistani	5.7	7.2	+1.5	+26.3
Mixed	-	7.3 ³	-	-

Notes

1. Source: ONS (2008) using Labour Force Surveys.
2. Labour Force Surveys do not include a Chinese sub-sample. Because of small sample sizes for Bangladeshi women they have been excluded from the table.
3. Data for 2006.

Outcomes

The data presented in Table 9.2 show that all minority ethnic groups, with the exception of men of Indian origin, had unemployment rates two to three times higher than the white majority. For both men and women this pattern of employment inequality has persisted to the same degree in 2007 as in 1997. Notwithstanding, minority ethnic groups, particularly Black African and Pakistani men, and all minority ethnic women, have benefited from the significant drop in unemployment seen throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Indeed, the absolute improvement was greatest for minority ethnic groups compared with the white majority ethnic group. The exceptions to this general trend appear to be men of Indian and Mixed Race origin and Pakistani women, the latter of who experienced *increased* unemployment during New Labour's terms in office.

Whilst men of Indian (and Chinese origin) perform better than other minority ethnic groups in terms of unemployment, earnings and occupational attainment, multivariate analyses reveal an ethnic penalty for *all* minority ethnic groups (Heath and Cheung 2006). Controlling for educational qualifications, age, generation, marital status, year of survey, and region⁸, for example, still leaves minority ethnic men and women disadvantaged compared with their white counterparts.

This goes some way to explaining why minority ethnic groups' position in the income distribution is generally lower than the white group and this too is a long-standing pattern. As Table 9.3 illustrates, even those of Chinese, and to a lesser degree Indian origin experience poorer incomes, particularly after housing costs. Over one-half of those of Pakistani/Bangladeshi origin were in the bottom income quintile before or after housing costs, according to the most recent figures available (DWP 2008). New Labour policies have had only a limited impact in reducing income disparities or reducing the proportion in the bottom income quintile overall.

The EMETF's focus on policy measures to increase employability, connect people with work, and promoting equal opportunities among employers are clearly important elements of increasing labour market participation among minority ethnic groups. The National Audit Office (2008), however, has been critical of the lack of continuity in funding and resources for increasing minority ethnic employment. Still missing, moreover, is concerted action to reduce employer prejudice as illustrated in the study by Heath and Cheung (2006) which linked such prejudice to ethnic penalties.

Table 9.3
Share of Each Ethnic Group in the Bottom Income Quintile

Ethnic Group	1996/7 – 1998/9	2006/7
<i>Before Housing Costs</i>		
White	19	19
Indian	28	23
Black	31	31
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	63	54
Mixed	-	27
Chinese/Other	32	27
<i>After Housing Costs</i>		
White	19	18
Indian	26	25
Black	40	39
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	60	55
Mixed	-	34
Chinese/Other	41	33

Notes

1. Source: DWP (2008) using Family Resources Survey data.
2. Includes those in full-time self-employment.

The West Midlands model of contract compliance demonstrates the possibilities of reducing ethnic inequalities with contractors establishing and monitoring their equal opportunities policies and formalising recruitment practices to be eligible for public contracts (Orton and Ratcliffe 2005). In Clark and Drinkwater's (2007) review they point to the need for a more nuanced strategy which targets Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black men only. It is also worth considering that there may be a time lag on improved labour market performance among minority ethnic groups as higher educational attainment levels filter through a new cohort of employees in the coming years. However, given the considerable ethnic penalties in the labour market which remain despite educational performance this may be overly optimistic.

POLICING

Whilst the Lawrence Inquiry (Macpherson 1999) began with a specific focus on the police investigation of Stephen Lawrence's racist murder, its brief was widened to look at other problematic dimensions of police-minority ethnic community relations. Perhaps inevitably, given the historical significance of claims of oppressive policing by minority ethnic communities, stop and search practices also came under considerable scrutiny during the Inquiry. The Home Secretary's Action Plan (1999) established a Ministerial Priority 'to increase trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities', and this led to an extensive reform programme within the police service. In the following section, consideration is given to, firstly, the policing of racist incidents, and secondly, stop and search policing practices, given their centrality to the reform agenda.

Racist Incidents and Offences

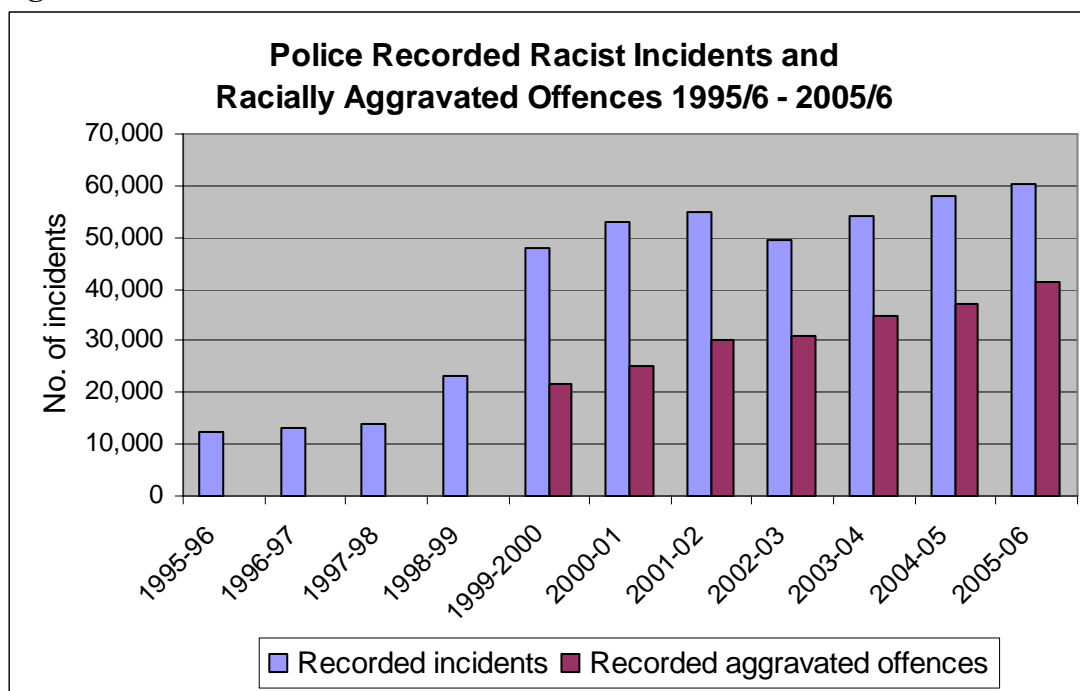
Even before the Lawrence Inquiry reported its findings, New Labour's first flagship criminal justice legislation, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, introduced 'penalty enhancements' for *racially aggravated offences* of assault, harassment, public disorder, and criminal damage. In so doing, New Labour recognised the fear and vulnerability generated by such crimes which can spread to whole communities. This undoubtedly has had some effect in communicating that such victimisation is considered abhorrent by the government.

The Macpherson Report (1999: 312-314) also acknowledged the devastating impact of non-criminal *racist incidents*, defined as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'. Following the Inquiry the Home Office produced a *Code of Practice on Reporting and Recording Racist Incidents* in April 2000 which applied to all statutory, voluntary and community organisations, and the Association of Chief Police Officers drafted its own guidance *Identifying and Combating Hate Crimes* (2000) which is now used by all police forces. Additionally, many police forces have created specialist units with officers specially trained to investigate racist and other hate crimes.

Such initiatives appear to have increased victims' willingness to report racist incidents to the police and have contributed to improved police recording practices, as can be seen in Figure 9.5, with more than a doubling (243%) of *recorded incidents* between 1997/8 and 1999/2000 (Home Office 2003; see also Docking and Tuffin 2005). Looking to the most recent figures for 2005/6 reveals an increase of 333% since 1997/8. British Crime Survey (BCS) estimates of racially motivated *offences*, which are unaffected by the vagaries of victim reporting and police recording practices, appear to indicate that the rise in police recorded *incidents* is the result of an increase in reporting and recording, and not an overall increase in victimisation. The BCS estimated 179,000 racist offences in 2004/5 which represented a marked fall on estimates of 206,000 recorded in 2002/4 (Jansson 2006).

Evaluations of criminal justice practice post-Lawrence have been broadly encouraging. Docking and Tuffin's (2005) examination of police practice found well-developed systems for supervising police investigations of racist incidents, with somewhat higher levels of victim satisfaction, although this varied by police force, and was more common among victims dealt with by specialist rather than

Figure 9.5



Note

1. Source: Home Office (various) *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System*.

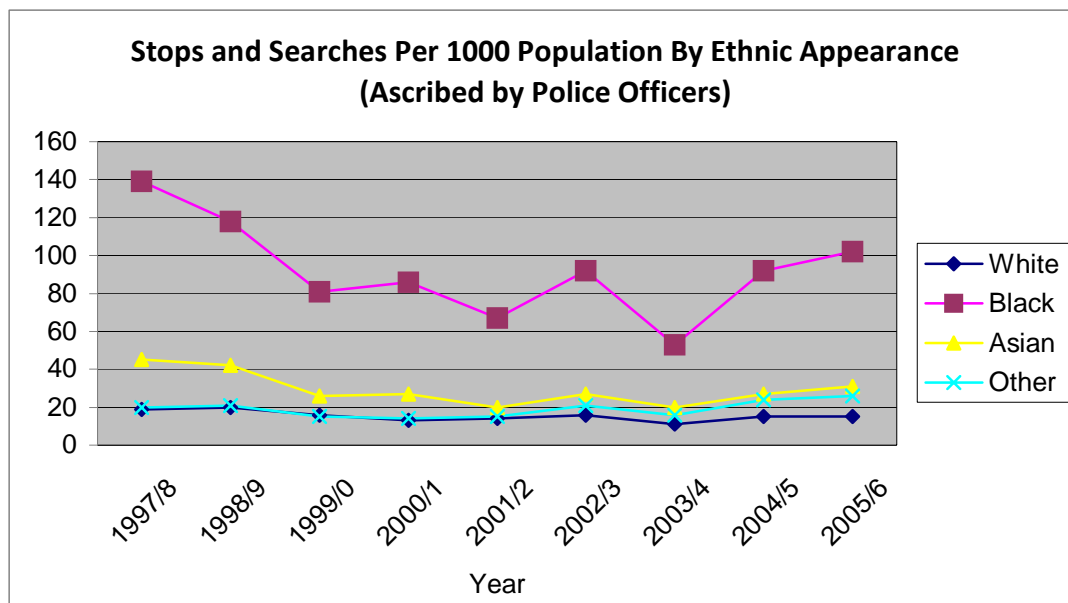
operational officers. Disappointingly however, this has not been matched by a higher clear-up rate for these offences, perhaps because of the difficulties involved in proving racial aggravation in court (Burney and Rose 2002). In 2004/5, clear-up rates were lower for racially aggravated offences compared with non-racially aggravated equivalent offences (Home Office 2006). The Crown Prosecution Service proceeded to prosecute 84% of defendants charged with racially aggravated offences in 2006/7 (CPS 2007), indicative of the seriousness with which racist victimisation has come to be viewed under New Labour. Following a pilot in West Yorkshire, there are also plans to establish Hate Crime Scrutiny Panels across CPS areas to increase prosecutions and reduce attrition.

Stop and Search

More than fifteen years before New Labour were elected, police use of stop and search powers had been investigated by the Scarman Inquiry (1981) into the Brixton disorders. Regarded then as a flashpoint in police-minority ethnic community relations, now too it remains a dominant theme because of the persistent ethnic disparities in the use of these powers and the attendant claims of racial discrimination.

As can be seen in Figure 9.6, in 1997/8, the rates of stop and search⁹ were 19 per 1000 for the white population, but seven times higher at 139 per 1000 for black people and two times higher for Asians at 45 per 1000 (Home Office 1998). Criminologists have proposed a range of explanations for ethnic disproportionality in stop and search rates. These have included the legitimate possibilities that, it is the younger age structure of the minority ethnic population, their greater 'availability' on the streets because of higher levels of school exclusions and unemployment, their residential concentration in higher crime areas where more stops and searches take place, and their elevated rates of offending particularly for 'street crime' (according to victim reports) that account for these higher rates (Bowling and Phillips 2007).

Figure 9.6



Notes

1. Source: Home Office (various) Section 95 CJA 1991 publications.
2. Excludes stops only, and those conducted under road traffic legislation.

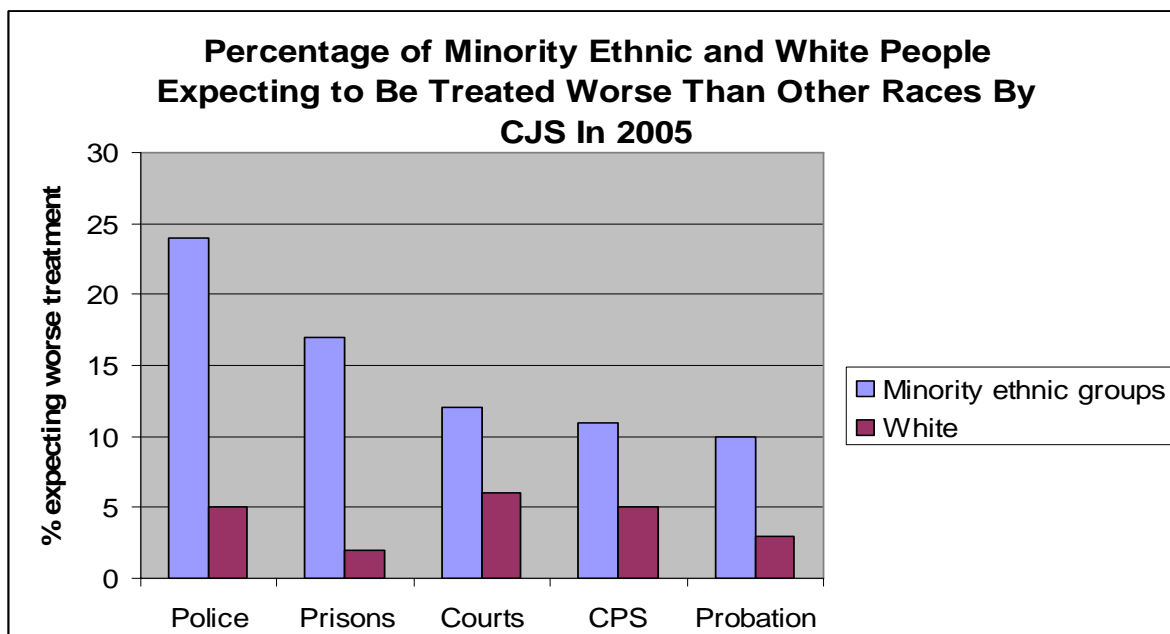
However, even the Macpherson Report (1999: para. 45.10) acknowledged that “the majority of police officers who testified before us accepted that an element of the disparity was the result of discrimination.” Such discrimination has been informed by perceptions of black people as criminally disposed, drug-abusing, and violent, with Asian men increasingly being perceived as disorderly, militant, culturally separatist, and inclined towards Islamic terrorism (see Phillips and Bowling 2007). Whilst ‘racial profiling’ is not officially practised, some sources, such as minority ethnic police officers interviewed by Cashmore (2001: 652), suggest it occurs. They reported being advised to stop “black kids with baseball caps, wearing all the jewellery”, in order to enhance their performance levels: “if you see four black youths in a car, it’s worth giving them a pull, as at least one of them is going to be guilty of something or other”.

Stop and search has an extremely limited impact on crime disruption and detection (see Miller et al. 2000), and only 11% resulted in an arrest in 2004/5, but the government has continued to support full use of these powers (Home Office 2006). However, it has recognised the danger of reduced police legitimacy in minority ethnic communities and has tightened the regulation of police powers and attempted to increase accountability at the force and individual officer level. In August 2004 a revised PACE (1984) *Code of Practice A* was adopted, implementing Recommendation 61 of the Lawrence Inquiry that those stopped and searched should receive a written record containing legally credible reasons for their encounter with the police¹⁰. Force monitoring, it was envisaged, would ‘flush out’ individual officers, stations, or forces that had unjustifiably high levels of ethnic disproportionality (Home Office 2004). The revised Code¹¹ also more clearly specified the grounds for ‘reasonable suspicion’ which must exist before the power is used, requiring objective and specific intelligence rather than stereotypical generalisations about particular groups in society. Alongside the Home Office’s Stop and Search Manual launched in 2005, in many police forces, independent scrutiny panels comprising community representatives have been established to critically assess local data on ethnic disproportionality.

Despite these developments in policy and practice, Figure 9.6 shows that the pattern of ethnic disproportionality in stop and search continues. In 2005/6, the rates of stop and search were 15 per 1000 for the white population, but still seven times higher at 102 per 1000 for black people and two times higher for Asians at 31 per 1000 (Ministry of Justice 2007)¹². There was a decline in stop and

search around the time of the Lawrence Inquiry as police officers became less confident in using stop and search legitimately. Foster *et al.*'s (2005) evaluation of the Lawrence Inquiry reforms reported that fears of being accused of racism had generated much anxiety and anger among operational police officers. It similarly underlined some officers' uncertainty about the legality of their stop and search practices. However, by 2005/6 the total numbers of stops and searches had returned to their 1996/7 levels (Ministry of Justice 2007). Central government-assisted efforts¹³ to reduce violent crime (including robbery and those involving weapons) and terrorism may explain the continued reliance on stop and search as a crime control tactic despite its low yield in terms of resultant arrests. The black/white ratio for stop and search has fluctuated somewhat (from 5:1 to 8:1) during the ten years that New Labour has been in government; but not enough to dispel concerns about the unfair targeting of black people by the police service.

Figure 9.7



Note

1. Source: Home Office (2006).

The publicity regularly given to ethnic disparities in stop and search most likely fuel broader concerns about discriminatory treatment by the agencies of the criminal justice system, illustrated in Figure 9.7. In 2005, minority ethnic groups still have more negative perceptions and lower confidence in, particularly the police and prison service, than the majority white population. Ultimately a minimal impact on the target to increase trust and confidence among minority ethnic groups appears to have been achieved.

COMMUNITY COHESION

In the Spring/Summer of 2001, violent racialised confrontations between young Pakistani/Bangladeshi and white men and the police occurred in several Northern English towns. The official reports into the disturbances focused on communities experiencing 'parallel lives', inhabiting segregated residential, educational, occupational and leisure spaces, with much negative stereotyping of the Other. Fuelled by socio-economic deprivation, problematic political leadership, disengagement, weak policing, and the presence of extremist groups, the disturbances were also linked to an absence of 'community cohesion' (Cantle 2001; Denham 2001).

Drawing on the original conceptualisation by Forest and Kearns (cited in Cantle 2001: 13), New Labour adopted the concept as a means for addressing broader concerns about ethnic identification,

diversity, multiculturalism and integration. Definitions of community cohesion have emphasised a common vision and sense of belonging for all groups in a community, the positive valuation of diversity, similar life opportunities, and strong relationships between individuals from different backgrounds (see LGA 2002). Initially academic commentators were highly critical of what was regarded as an undue emphasis on self-segregation among Asian communities in the government's discourse on community cohesion (Amin 2002; Alexander 2004; McGhee 2003). It was argued that this minimised the impact of socio-economic disadvantage, racial discrimination, and segregation resulting from external constraints on settlement rather than choice decisions.

In April 2003, the government's Community Cohesion Unit established 14 Community Cohesion Pathfinder projects to assist in the development and dissemination of best practice. Local programmes included initiatives such as funding a voluntary sector worker to establish an inter-faith council, including a political champion in strategy groups, and producing a video and feedback event to illustrate the perspectives of young people, parents, and professionals. The progress report for the first six months emphasised the need for community cohesion to be well understood locally and for all government initiatives to be joined up at a local level (Home Office and Vantage Point 2003). Further work, initially spearheaded by the independent Community Cohesion Panel, has included the provision of guidance on defining community cohesion, implementing local projects, particularly aimed at cross-cultural interaction, a practitioner toolkit, and developing a performance management framework in local authorities and schools (see <http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/icoco/a/2471#2001>).

Academic criticism of the government's community cohesion discourse has been more muted since the government's strategies on race equality and community cohesion were brought together in *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* published in 2005. In this there is a greater balance between the expressed need for a common British identity and sense of belonging *and* the eradication of social and economic inequality between ethnic groups. The strategy document also makes explicit the need for white social participation and cultural appreciation to prevent alienation and resentment, as well as legislative protection against discrimination on the grounds of religious belief, which was introduced in 2003. Funding has also been made available to help faith-based groups develop better working strategies with government agencies.

In 2006 the advisory Commission on Integration and Cohesion's first report described internally complex communities, arguing for greater shared experiences expressed through the common language of English amidst concerns about 'home-grown' Muslim terrorism (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007a). Its final report recognised changing migration patterns and population dynamics (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007b). Research in six case study sites highlighted that stakeholders often prioritised the need for social and economic wellbeing in proximate communities and were less persuaded that residential mixing automatically led to community cohesion. More important was meaningful interaction, participation and engagement, and recognising the need to include disparate groups in targeted and mainstream initiatives (Ipsos-MORI 2007). Promoting community cohesion is a developing area of social policy and as such it cannot yet be formally evaluated. Current thinking appears to be moving in the right direction, in that New Labour have somewhat belatedly acknowledged the need to address inequality as a necessary prerequisite for enabling cohesive communities.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF NEW LABOUR POLICIES ON ETHNIC INEQUALITIES

During its ten years in government New Labour have introduced policies to ameliorate the material and social disadvantage experienced by marginalised groups in society. Mainstream initiatives have produced impressive gains that have improved opportunities for both minority ethnic and white groups. With few exceptions, educational attainment levels have risen and unemployment rates have declined during New Labour's tenure.

However, this has not eradicated *ethnic inequalities* which appear more resistant to changes in policy and

practice, and this is particularly the case in the labour market. Despite targeted and tailored initiatives in New Labour's second and third terms, unemployment rates remain much higher for the minority ethnic population than their white counterparts. The education gap has been more receptive to policy change and has narrowed considerably (but not closed) over the period 1997-2007. The exceptions to this general pattern include children of Traveller and Gypsy/Roma heritage, white children from lower status homes and black children from higher status homes. Such entrenched disadvantage clearly requires more concerted policy action sustained through longer-term funding.

A similar mixed picture can be observed in the policing arena. Improved reporting and recording practices have been well-documented alongside a welcome decline in racist victimisation. Such success is not evidenced in stop and search where black over-representation has barely altered during New Labour's time in office. This has undoubtedly affected perceptions of trust and confidence in criminal justice agencies which shows little sign of improvement since monitoring began. Promoting community cohesion has been a key aim of the New Labour government in its second and third terms, but there is little development work on the ground that has yet been critically evaluated.

In reflecting on this assortment of findings, it is not possible to definitively highlight successes and failures of government policy – either mainstream or targeted. Where initiatives appear to have had an impact (for example, Excellence in Cities and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant) a range of measures have been introduced to tackle the problem and their individual effects cannot usually be discerned. That said, four key issues emerge which have implications for future attempts to reduce ethnic inequalities.

First, the elimination of individual (direct and indirect) and institutional forms of racism and discrimination have tended not to be explicit elements of New Labour policy, with the exception of policing. Whilst efforts have been made to improve service provision through the employment of minority ethnic officers and providers (for example, teachers, police officers, and in employment outreach work), less attention has been paid to discriminatory behaviour by teachers, employers, managers, and police officers from the white majority ethnic group. The former efforts will not escape accusations of 'window dressing' (Cashmore 2002) until the latter is more comprehensively addressed.

Second, there remain significant tensions in New Labour intentions and policies. 'Racially informed' choosing of schools by white parents is a mechanism through which quasi-market reforms in education militate against community cohesion and limit progress in disadvantaged and under-resourced schools with large Pakistani and black populations (Tomlinson 1998). Likewise, disproportionality in the use of stop and search powers is unlikely to diminish when proactive policing initiatives to reduce street crime and terrorism target minority ethnic groups. Given the limited disruptive impact of stop and search on crime, this contradiction is hard to sustain in policy terms, despite pressures to reduce these very high-profile crimes. There may also be a clash between neo-liberal approaches which privilege devolved decision-making and budgets and the promotion of racial equality. Thus, school-based admissions policies which covertly select pupils on aptitude or ability can adversely affect disadvantaged groups, including those of minority ethnic origin (Pennell *et al.* 2006). Similarly, local recruitment of health staff can lead to biased employment practices which disadvantage minority ethnic employees (Carter 2000). Such policy tensions are likely to play out to the detriment of minority ethnic groups, particularly those that experience social and economic disadvantage.

Third, managerialist tendencies which promote the auditing of race equality can obscure more deep-seated inequalities through bureaucratic obfuscation. Ahmed's (2007) study of the production of race equality documents in higher education described them as having fetish-like qualities concerned only with managing images of diverse organisations. Moreover, Ahmed (2007: 597) described how 'having a 'good' race equality policy was quickly translated into being good at race equality' without real engagement with the presence of racism in institutional practices. The empirical evidence reviewed in this chapter highlights the need for such documents to be action-orientated and not simply ends in

themselves.

Fourth, and this is a general point, whilst pilot projects are likely to remain a pecuniary imperative, reversing long-term inequalities is likely to require funding commitments which last five years or more in order to allow for them to be fully implemented and embedded in practice. The difficulty lies in balancing the need for tailored programmes which aim to meet the specific needs of minority ethnic groups and avoiding claims of preferential treatment which are likely to exacerbate community tensions. Such challenges are likely to become even more diffuse in the coming years as politicians, policy makers, and service providers respond to the increasingly diverse composition of British society, particularly with regard to ethnicity and faith, an issue more fully explored in Chapter 10 of this volume on *Migrants and Migration*.

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Notes

¹ In EiC Phase 1 areas (September 1999), almost 40% of pupils were from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with 15% in Phase 2 (September 2000) and 25% in Phase 3 (September 2001). This compares with non-EiC areas where over 90% of pupils were from White British backgrounds (Kendall et al. 2005).

² Includes those for whom attainment data has been available since 1997.

³ Uses Youth Cohort Study data for Chinese pupils in 1997 (Connolly 2006) rather than national level data.

⁴ Based on those groups for whom comparative attainment data has been available since 2003 and where additional empirical research has been undertaken to explain attainment patterns.

⁵ The social class gap is estimated at 1.34 SD (higher managerial and professional vs. long term unemployed) and the ethnic gap is estimated at 0.65 SD (Indian vs. Black Caribbean).

⁶ Analysis of the Family Resources Survey by Berthoud (1998) also found lower average earnings for Chinese and African households.

⁷ These include Deprived Areas Fund and the City Strategy.

⁸ The models for access to the salariat and hourly earnings additionally controlled for sector, part-time work, and size of establishment.

⁹ The police have extensive powers to stop and search individuals under a variety of legislation (see Bowling and Phillips 2007: 937-938).

¹⁰ This was a phased implementation beginning in seven police areas in April/May 2003 and completed in April 2005.

¹¹ Excludes later revisions which are not relevant to the current discussion.

¹² Ethnic disproportionality can also be seen in S.60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 stop/searches in

anticipation of violence, where reasonable suspicion is not required by police officers, and under S.44 Terrorism Act 2000 (see Phillips and Bowling 2007).

¹³ For example, funding was made available to the five metropolitan police forces with significant robbery problems in 2000, followed by the Street Crime Initiative in 2002, and local CDRPs have included targets to reduce robbery since 1999.