

PART I CONTEXT AND METHODS

1 Introduction

It is well established that racial minorities in Britain face greater difficulties and disadvantages than white people and that the circumstances of their lives tend to be poorer. For example, the rate of unemployment is about twice as high among people of Afro-Caribbean and south Asian origin as among white people¹; it is nearly 50 per cent among Afro-Caribbeans aged 16-19.² For men especially, job levels and earnings are lower among racial minorities than among white people, and these lower earnings have to support larger families.³ Among those in work, the gap in job levels between black and white has narrowed in recent years, but this is more than offset by a widening of the gap in the rate of unemployment.⁴ An important reason for these differences is historic and continuing racial discrimination. The most recent research shows that Afro-Caribbean and south Asian job applicants face direct discrimination in at least one-third of cases, and that there has been, if anything, an increase in the level of discrimination against black job applicants since 1974.⁵ Also, racial minorities tend to occupy poorer housing than white people, though the contrast is less marked than in the field of employment, and there is more evidence that the gap is narrowing.⁶

Racial discrimination is, of course, one method of rejection and one expression of a more general hostility. A more acute manifestation of antagonism is racial attacks and harassment. A Home Office study carried out in 1981 concluded on the basis of records kept by the police that black people were far more likely than white people to be the victims of violent inter-racial incidents.⁷ These findings were confirmed by a national survey of racial minorities carried out in 1982.⁸ Although the chances of being the victim of a serious attack are not high for black people at large, they are probably substantial for young people in certain areas. In any case, the overall incidence of serious attacks is high enough to make all black people feel under threat. The frequency of minor incidents, which is almost impossible to measure, is probably much higher; although they do not pose an immediate physical threat, these incidents are often found deeply disturbing.

In some areas there is evidence of racial attacks and harassment in the school setting, or on the way to and from school.⁹

From 1965 onwards there has been a continuing attempt to oppose racial discrimination through the law, through law enforcement by the regulatory agency (currently the Commission for Racial Equality) and by encouraging organisations to adopt positive action programmes that aim to promote equality of opportunity. In recent years some police forces have begun to recognise the need for specific policies and programmes to counter racial harassment and attacks.¹⁰ These are attempts to deal with crude expressions of

hostility and with unfair treatment of people with equal qualifications, experience or entitlement.

However, it has always been clear that the disadvantages and difficulties faced by black people are not entirely the consequence of open hostility and the unfair treatment of equals. Although there have been a few black people in Britain for centuries, settlement on a more substantial scale began only about 40 years ago. The migration from the Caribbean began in 1948 and reached a peak in 1961-62; the migration from India and Pakistan was at its highest in the mid 1960s, while the migration of Indians from Africa took place mostly in the late 1960s; the most recent migrants are from Bangladesh, and among women of Bangladeshi origin in Britain, two-thirds settled here from 1972 onwards. Thus, even today, people who were born and spent their formative years in the country of origin account for a substantial proportion of the *adult* members of racial minority groups in Britain.¹¹

Adult migrants face a number of problems of adaptation; the most obvious one in the case of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent is that a majority of them initially spoke little or no English.¹² Adult migrants also face the difficulty (among many others) that they have not received education, training or certification in the adopted country. Where migrants move from a less developed to a more developed country, the difficulty is increased, because the usual level of education and training will be higher in the adopted country than in the country of origin. In 1974, the average educational level of people of Afro-Caribbean origin was considerably lower than that of white people in the same, comparatively young, age groups. Among people of south Asian origin, there was a substantial group (but smaller than among whites) having post-school qualifications, but also a substantial group (much larger than among whites or Afro-Caribbeans) who had very little education at all and in many cases did not go to school.¹³ Eight years later, in 1982, there were still substantial differences in educational background between adults belonging to racial minority groups and white people.¹⁴

It has conclusively been shown that the poorer circumstances of black as compared with white people, for example in rate of unemployment, job levels and earnings, can be explained only partly by lack of English and lower educational or job qualifications. If comparisons are made between black and white men having the same level of qualifications, and if those not having fluent English are excluded, substantial differences in rate of unemployment and job levels remain.¹⁵ At the same time, the rate of unemployment, job level and earnings are all related both to educational qualifications and to fluency in English. Thus a part of the disadvantage faced by racial minorities in Britain is related to education and language.

For those who want to avoid taking a hard line against racial discrimination, it has always been convenient to emphasise these educational and cultural factors. Within that perspective, the difficulties and disadvantages faced by black people are seen as essentially problems of adaptation.¹⁶ Even if that view takes in the need for adaptation by the white majority as well as by the black minority, it now seems a distortion of the truth, since discrimination continues, and such injustice cannot be resolved by a process of accommodation.

Nevertheless, one important requirement, if black people are to progress to a position of equality, is that they should benefit equally from the education system. Yet by the early 1970s, there was increasing evidence that Afro-Caribbeans, south Asians and some other ethnic minorities were achieving substantially poorer results at school than white children. It seemed that the unequal position of the racial minorities might be indefinitely perpetu-

ated; racial hostility, social and material disadvantages and location in areas of deprivation might together lead to poor educational performance, and these poor results would in turn make it still more difficult for black people to overcome external difficulties.

This was one part of the context in which we began to form plans for the present study in 1980. The other part was the publication in 1979 of *Fifteen Thousand Hours*,¹⁷ which gave a new direction to discussion and analysis of school effectiveness. In the 1960s, American research (such as the large longitudinal study by Coleman and the reanalysis of the same data by Jencks¹⁸) had concentrated on the question how far schooling might bring about greater equality between individuals and between social classes. Both Coleman and Jencks came to the conclusion that the effects of schooling were small and educational programmes could do little to counter inequality. The results of Rutter and his colleagues were not necessarily in sharp conflict with those of earlier research, but they showed that the differences between the results achieved by different schools were important for the children's life chances, even if they were quite small compared with the large differences between individuals. Rutter also claimed that his research began to explain why some schools were more successful than others.

This opened the possibility for research on school effectiveness that would concentrate particularly on the progress of black children. This was not with the idea that the education system might correct inequalities caused by discrimination and disadvantage in the wider society. A more realistic aim of policy would be to ensure that the education system is not the cause of inequality between black and white children, and that education does not become part of a process that tends to perpetuate existing inequalities. If some schools are more successful than others, it therefore seemed important to establish whether some are more successful than others *with black children*; whether black children tend to do worse than white children generally, or only in a proportion of schools, and if so, what are the characteristics of the schools in which black children do relatively well.

The study of multi-racial comprehensive schools

The study follows the careers of children who transferred to 20 multi-racial comprehensive schools¹⁹ at the age of 11 in the autumn of 1981. These schools, all of them urban, are in four local education authorities in different parts of England. All have significant numbers of children belonging to racial minority groups, ranging from 12 per cent to 89 per cent.

The central objective was to measure differences between schools in the outcomes they achieve, in academic and other terms, after taking full account of differences in the attainment and background of children at the point of entry. As a part of this objective, the study aimed to focus on the results the schools achieve with children belonging to racial minority groups. A second objective was to understand the reasons for school differences and if possible to describe processes underlying school success. A third objective was to describe the educational experience of children belonging to racial minority groups.

In the event, the results confirm the finding of *Fifteen Thousand Hours* that different secondary schools achieve substantially different results with children who are comparable in terms of background and attainment at an earlier time. They also show that these school effects are far more important than any differences in attainment between black and white children, and they provide a more detailed and reliable account than has yet been available of the progress from the age of 11 of children belonging to racial minority groups. The study was much less successful in explaining why the differences between schools occur, for reasons that will be discussed in Chapter 4, although the results do provide some important indications.

At an early stage of the study, one of the authors (Sally Tomlinson) made a review of relevant research and writings published between 1960 and 1982, and in 1983 this review was published as *Ethnic Minorities in British Schools*. A more detailed review was undertaken by Monica Taylor on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry Into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups, and the results were published in 1981 and 1985.²⁰ There will be no attempt to review this material again in the present report, but in Chapter 2 we state the main conclusions from previous work as a framework for our own results. Chapter 3 discusses the problems and concepts involved in analysing and re-researching school effectiveness. Chapter 4 gives a brief description of the methods used in the present study and the difficulties encountered.

Notes

1. See Brown (1984), Table 83, p189.
2. See Brown (1984), Table 84, p190.
3. See Brown (1984). For job levels, Table 91, p197; for earnings, Table 109, p212; for household size, Table 13, p45.
4. The pattern of change is complex in detail. There is a summary of the main points at p179 of Brown (1984).
5. See Brown and Gay (1986). The findings quoted are the results of controlled experiments which provide minimum estimates of the extent of direct discrimination, since further discrimination may occur at later stages of the process of job selection, which are not covered by the experiments.
6. See Brown (1984), Chapter V. The evidence on change in housing conditions is summarised on p93-94.
7. See Home Office (1981). This study found that the victimisation rate for Asians was 50 times that for white people and that the rate for West Indian and African people was 36 times that for white people.
8. See Brown (1984), Chapter IX.
9. See, for example, the Burnage High School Inquiry, summarised in the Manchester Evening News of 25 April 1988; the CRE report *Learning in Terror* (1988); and the research in Manchester by Kelly and Cohn (1988).
10. For example, the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis made an explicit commitment to countering racial attacks in his report for 1985.
11. See Brown (1984), Tables 3-5, p25-27. In 1982, the proportion of adults born in the UK was 26 per cent among those originating from the West Indies, and 4 per cent among those originating from the Indian sub-continent. The great majority of the south Asians had come to Britain from 1965 onwards, and the great majority of the West Indians had come from 1960 onwards.
12. A national survey carried out in 1974 found that the proportion speaking English only slightly or not at all was 19 per cent among African Asian men, 26 per cent among Indian men, 43 per cent among Pakistani men, 41 per cent among African Asian women, 60 per cent among Indian women and 77 per cent among Pakistani women (see Smith 1977, p55).
13. For a detailed treatment of the 1974 data on educational qualifications, see Smith (1976).
14. See Brown (1984). The more recent data on educational qualifications are discussed more fully in Chapter 2.
15. The fullest discussion of this point is in Smith (1976), p56-73.

16. The fullest early statement of this view was in Sheila Patterson's book *Dark Strangers* (see Patterson 1965).
17. See Rutter et al. (1979).
18. The original study referred to was Coleman et al. (1966); the reanalysis was Jencks et al. (1972).
19. As explained in Chapter 2, by the fifth year 18 of the original 20 schools remained in the study.
20. See Taylor (1981) and Taylor and Hegarty (1985).