

BLACK AND ASIAN POLICE OFFICERS AND SUPPORT STAFF: PREJUDICE, IDENTITY, AGENCY AND SOCIAL COHESION

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ABSTRACT

This primary research paper presents a review of research that finds that the British Government's new social cohesion agenda does hold promise for racial and ethnic prejudice reduction – but that social cohesion policies and practice must include at their core policies to reduce institutional racism in British police services. Analysis of the literature reveals that considerably more research is required to examine the precise nature and dynamics of institutional racism within the police services. There is a need to understand how racism against Black and minority ethnic (BME) police employees, and police racism against BME communities, influences social cohesion. That this is important, given the British government's current social cohesion policy agenda, is patently clear. Considerably more research is about to be undertaken in this area by the authors of this paper and the results will be published in the academic press, disseminated at conferences and presented in training programmes.

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One of the main motivations for the British government's movement away from the multiculturalists agenda is that it is now seen as too simplistic and to have contributed to too many inward looking and, therefore, economically disadvantaged communities. These communities are said in popular and political discourse, particularly post New York's 9/11 and London's 7/7 terrorist attacks, to have inadvertently contributed towards a an enabling environment for violent extremism and social unrest. Whatever the merits of the past policies to promote multiculturalism policies in multicultural Britain, and there are many, the government's understanding of multicultural Britain has been described as flimsy and simplistic and the social cohesion agenda has been criticised for its capacity to lead to a return to discredited assimilationist policies (Institute of Race relations 2005). The argument made by the Institute of Race Relations, here, is that in failing to distinguish between the multicultural Britain as fact and multiculturalism as policy, the government is sidestepping the complex and more important realities of institutional racism (Macpherson 1999) where the real problems of racist intolerance and inequality exist. This paper presents a review of research that finds that the new social cohesion agenda does hold promise for racial and ethnic prejudice reduction – but that social cohesion policies and practice must include at their core policies to reduce institutional racism in British police services.

Despite the criticisms, at the time of writing, the British government's current 'race relations' agenda is focused upon closing the equality gap by promoting social cohesion.

The aim is to develop economic cohesion through facilitating better *bonding* and *bridging* capital for minority ethnic communities in multi-ethnic British society.

The British government Cabinet Office's concepts of bonding and bridging capital are taken from the work of Putnam (2000) and an earlier Cabinet Office Strategy Unit paper (2002). Putnam, a political scientist, exploits the concept of social capital, that was first developed by Bourdieu, and also by Coleman (1988), to show how people secure benefits as members of social networks, as a feature of communities and nations (Walters 2002). Putnam's bonding capital is essentially those aspects of a community's life such as family, religion, language and culture that links its members together. Bridging social capital refers to the networks that link members of a particular social group with wider society. The UK Government's aim to develop community cohesion is based upon seeking to achieve the primary objective of developing more bridging capital within minority ethnic communities – against the straining benefits and the purported drawbacks of bonding capital in those communities.

Explaining that a lack of bridging capital might account for the relatively large economic disadvantages of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Britain, the Cabinet Office Report (2003) goes on to say that it is not so clear why Black Caribbeans experience such large disadvantages – since they appear to be the most socially integrated minority ethnic group. Here, it is important to emphasise that the crucial, indeed the only, measure used here (Cabinet Office 2003. p37) by the British Government to determine the extent of social isolation between White and minority ethnic communities is the percentage of men and women from different minority ethnic groups, living in the Greater London area with a White partner. Therefore, one of the Government's key measures of social cohesion

between ethnic groups and the majority White population appears to be the proportion of those in intimate interracial relationships; that is, however is an area that we explore elsewhere (Perry and Sutton 2006) and is beyond the scope of this paper.

While the central tenet of the new social cohesion agenda builds upon the successes of multiculturalism, namely the appreciation, tolerance and celebration of difference, it also aims to go further by seeking to encourage and, more importantly, to facilitate successful engagement between minority ethnic communities and other communities, including White communities, and White dominated mainstream institutions and employers (Home Office 2001). Picking up on this theme, the Cabinet Office report Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market (2003, p.104) highlights the need to tackle prejudiced ethnic stereotyping by individuals in all aspects of life, and to encourage political leadership to combat 'racial' and ethnic discrimination and harassment. The Cabinet Office report focuses upon one main objective that needs to be achieved here - namely equality of employment opportunities. One particular section of that report is worth quoting at length here, in order to appreciate the reasoning behind it (p.45):

'The task of promoting the *economic integration* of ethnic minority groups through labour market inclusion is intimately linked with the long term aim of promoting social, cultural, civil and political integration. The limited economic integration of some ethnic minority groups can be linked with, and lead to, greater signs of isolation and alienation from the norms of society as a whole. This lack of "bridging capital", between ethnic minority communities and Whites, has

stimulated the creation of “bonding capital” amongst certain ethnic minority communities, who have then developed even stronger relationships between themselves, rather than Whites. The vast majority of employment opportunities in Britain are in the hands of White employers and in workplaces that are dominated by White employees.

Some of the feelings of alienation expressed by Blacks and Asians in disturbances¹ are a mark of the difficulties of building social inclusion and community cohesion. These objectives are all the more difficult to achieve in the face of persistent economic marginalisation and labour market disadvantage.’

Minority ethnic police employment

The Scarman Report (Scarman 1981) into the disturbances in Brixton concluded that there were so called racist *rotten apples* in the police service, although Lord Scarman did not conclude that institutional racism existed. That was overturned following the inquiry into the investigation of the murder of the Black teenager Steven Lawrence, and its findings, published in the McPherson Report (Macpherson 1999) - otherwise known as the Lawrence Inquiry - that institutional racism exists in the Metropolitan police service. As a consequence of the Lawrence Inquiry, the British government responded with amendments to the Race relations Act 1976. These changes include a duty to promote race equality and apply to a wide range of public authorities. Having also accepted Macpherson’s findings of the existence of institutional racism within the Metropolitan

¹ Referring to violent disorder in several northern English towns in 2001

Police, and its 70 recommendations, the Home Office published a ground breaking report entitled *Dismantling Barriers* (Home Office 1999). As well as creating a duty for chief constables to support and promote support networks such as Black Police Associations (Holdaway and O'Neill 2004), the Home Office *Dismantling Barriers* report also sets targets for recruitment, retention and progression of both minority ethnic police officers and police support staff.

The number of police officers in England and Wales is currently in the region of 138,000 and while some seven percent of the general population is comprised of BME citizens only three percent of the total in all the 43 police forces are minority ethnic officers. Recruitment of representative numbers of officers and support staff from economically disadvantaged minority ethnic communities into the police services is a key area identified for action in a forthcoming Home Office report by Sutton, Perry, Parke and John-Baptiste (Sutton et al 2006).

This issue of minority ethnic police recruitment, employment and progression is clearly important, and also complex, and should, arguably, be at the heart of any social cohesion based prejudice reduction policy making. Focusing upon the needs of minority ethnic police employees, and the needs of the police to recruit and retain more of them, also keeps the important issue of institutional racism on the policy agenda.

Police officers arrest and prosecute those from disadvantaged communities at a disproportionate level, even more so if they are Black or Asian. So clearly, equality in policing the people is central to 'race relations' issues in any ethnically diverse society. Recruiting, retaining

and promoting representative numbers of minority ethnic officers into what is currently a police service dominated by a White male macho culture (Waddington 1999) is a necessary part of achieving this. Through the support and platform provided by Black Police Associations more minority ethnic officers and support staff are able to challenge, educate against and change institutional racism within police services and within police work life.

Part of the explanation for why people offend, and reasons for potential future unrest, in certain minority ethnic communities is peoples experiences of racial and ethnic prejudice in the labour market - resulting in economic and social inequalities. The police service is one such area where not only the policing but also the predominantly White male working environment is characterised by institutional racism in the employment setting ((Macpherson 1999). So, despite the recent provisions and setting of targets outlined above, problems still remain. Mason (2003) summarises a great deal of research that, while charting the recent work place successes of certain minority ethnic groups in the UK, reveals the continuation of discriminatory practices against many minority ethnic groups: ‘...it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, despite 35 years of ‘race relations’ legislation, discrimination continues to play a significant part in the labour market placement of minority ethnic groups.’

The effect of racial discrimination on recruitment, retention and progression within the police service is a strangely under researched area. Yet it is an area literally crying out for more research to inform policy and practice. As just one high profile example of this

need, the recent 2004 BBC television documentary *The Secret Policeman* revealed appalling instances of anti-Asian racism within Manchester Police Service's training college. Manchester is unlikely to be the only force with such problems. Therefore the experiences of all recruits, past and present, as victims and perpetrators and the motivations and dynamics of the trainers prejudice need to be examined and understood in order to identify effective prejudice reduction mechanisms in police services.

The emerging literature on the presence and impact of racism against Black police officers in the UK is consistent and convincing. Recent studies of both former and serving officers show the extent to which officers perceived racist behaviour and policies as a normative part of their careers. Holdaway's (2004: 856) succinct summary of the collective findings of research spanning the 1980s and 1990s indicates that such experiences spanned the spectrum from individual acts of racism, to the systemic patterns associated with institutional racism:

Ethnic-minority officers' experience was of frequent prejudice and discrimination, expressed through joking, banter, exclusion from full membership of their work team, little confidence in the willingness or ability of immediate and more senior supervisors to deal with the difficulties they faced, and an acceptance of the virtual inevitability of racism in the police workforce.

Consistently, Holdaway's respondents, and those queried in other similar studies found that officers from BME communities felt that they were seen first as Black,

or Asian, and then as police officers – their racial status could never quite allow them to fully integrate into their professional status; they were prohibited by virtue of their race from joining the “brotherhood.” Daily reminders in the form of racial “jokes” and epithets combined with the more subtle forms of exclusion to render them perpetual outsiders (Holdaway, 1996; Holdaway and Barron, 1997;

Modern racisms

The term racism has its origins in the 1920’s and came into common usage in the 1930’s to describe theories used by the Nazis to justify their persecution of Jews (Fredrickson 2002). While the word race is commonly used to refer to different ethnic origins, there is no scientific basis for this since there is quite obviously only one race – the human race. The use of race to classify certain people and the process of racism is invariably institutional and political (Gilroy 1992). For example, at different times in our recent history the term Black has been used, for example, to describe people of African or Indian decent. More recently, however, the term is used most to describe only people of African decent.

Allport (1958) defines racism as an : “...antipathy based on faulty generalization.”

Seeking a more precise distinction between racism and ethnic prejudice, to ensure its particular nature is not lost among academic arguments over definitions², Fredrickson (2002) concludes that racism is a belief that there are differences between particular ethnic groups that cannot be changed. If, on the other hand, assimilation is seen as

² As has happened in other areas such as the study of *organized* crime.

acceptable then what exists is not strictly racism but ethnic prejudice - which is religious and cultural intolerance, but not '*biological*'³ prejudice:

To attempt a short formulation, we might say that racism exists when one ethnic group or historical collectivity dominates, excludes or seeks to eliminate another on the basis of differences that it believes are hereditary and unalterable.

However, tight definitions such as this are unlikely to be acceptable to many writers and observers, because they do not allow for the everyday complexities of dominant group prejudice. To provide just one example: some White perpetrators of institutional stealth racism will undoubtedly believe that there are certain Black and White differences that are hereditary and unalterable while some of their colleagues do not, but are nonetheless culturally intolerant. Another explanation (Gilroy 1992) is geared to such complexities: "...racial meanings can change, can be struggled over. Rather than talking about racism in the singular, analysts should therefore be talking about racisms in the plural."

From all of this we can conclude that it is important to avoid perceptions of the inevitability of racism as stemming from some kind of weakness in human nature, because, as the background to the current situations reveals, the idea of racism and its dynamic characteristics has evolved and is still evolving (Bowling 1993; Santas, 2000; Mann et. al. 2004).

³ By '*biological*' we mean from the perception of those who hold racist views that certain ethnic groups inherit distinct physical and intellectual characteristics.

Today in Britain, racial and ethnic takes several forms. At one extreme are what are probably most likely to be judged by the majority of people to be morally outrageous and unacceptable *atavistic racisms*⁴ such as violent hate crimes and harassment. Stephen Lawrence was the victim of such atavistic racism and a recent example of just how serious atavistic racism can be is the racially motivated murder of the Black teenager Anthony Walker in Merseyside in 2005. Anthony Walker was murdered with an axe to the head by a gang of White youths who started harassing him while he was with his White girlfriend in a pub and subsequently fatally attacked him as he waited with her for her bus to arrive.

Additionally, there are some much subtler and complex forms of what might be termed *banal racisms* (Back et al 1996), and what have variously been described as deliberately *covert, stealth, neo-racisms, subtle* or *modern racisms* (Lentin 2000; TUC 2003; Holdaway 2005). *Banal racisms* have evolved to perpetuate REP, while seeking to avoid legal or moral censure, yet they provide an enabling environment for injustice in areas as diverse as employment, policing and the investigation of racially motivated offending (Macpherson 1999). Public *banal racism* frequently employs humour to make quite complex ethnic jokes that can be passed off by those who do it or witness it as everyday taunting-banter, or simply stereotyping. Such acts seek to undermine the dignity of those that are taunted in this way and so fall under the definition of racial harassment in the EC

⁴ By this we mean blatant and crude racisms rather than the more recently identified subtle, stealth racisms that have been identified as particular problems in areas such as employment.

Race Directive⁵ (Cabinet Office 2003). The problem with banal racism is that it is more likely to be normalized rather than tackled.

Covert racisms frequently occur where there are underlying power relationships, such as those in workplace hierarchies or public services, that are characterised by practices perpetuating disadvantage for certain minority ethnic groups. Institutional racism is a form of covert racism and has been defined in the Macpherson report (1999) as:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes, behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

What is more disturbing is the literature subsequent to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, which shows the persistence of a discriminatory culture even in light of concerted efforts to confront and reduce racism in response to the Report's recommendations. A very recent Home Office report compiled by Janet Foster, Newburn, and Souhami (2005) provide insights into changes (or lack thereof) in policing in response to the inquiry and its recommendations. While the terms of reference were relatively broad, the report does devote attention to the changing

⁵ Council directive 2003/43/EC.

experiences of Black police officers. A very interesting paradox emerged from the findings of Foster, Newman and Souhami's 2005 report with respect to the use of racist language and bantering. Earlier studies (Holdaway, 1996; HMIC 1997) had found this element of racism to be widespread, and generally not addressed by superiors. In 2004, 5 years after the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, Foster et al. (2005) found that such practices had declined appreciably. The paradox arises in that White officers, in particular, attributed this not to a change in attitudes so much as a "stifling" atmosphere of what they saw as enforced political correctness. Thus, Foster et al. (2005: 38) note the dilemma:

Although the general excision of racist language from the police service is an important and marked change, it raises the question of the extent to which this is indicative of changes in the culture and practices in the police service more broadly.

Not surprisingly, BME officers were quite skeptical of the depth of the change in police culture. While acknowledging the reduced use of offensive language, BME officers nonetheless reported that they continued to experience myriad other forms of exclusionary, isolating, and discomfiting forms of discriminatory behaviour. In short, while the talk had changed, the walk had not. The changes appear to have been merely cosmetic, and not to have taken root in the structural or cultural framework within which officers work.

In light of the above, and in light of the persistently contentious relationship between police and BME communities, it should come as no surprise that Black men and women are dramatically under-represented in policing in most western nations. The lack of representation can be attributed in part to the fear of marginalization from one's racial or ethnic community. Interviews conducted by Stone and Tuffin (2000), and by Michael Rowe (2004) reveal that members of BME groups who choose a career in law enforcement are indeed perceived to have betrayed their community.

On the other side of the equation of double marginality is, of course, the anticipation of the reaction of White officers to Black or Asian officers. Stone and Tuffin's (2000) study of attitudes of those from BME communities toward police careers found the fear of racism within the profession to be a major prohibiting factor. While the respondents in that study pointed to the likelihood of individualized racism coming from colleagues, they also noted the potential for broader systemic challenges such as lack of or slow promotion through the ranks for BME police officers.

Another contributing factor to the difficulties in recruiting Black officers is the paucity of role models due to the elevated attrition rates of Black officers.

Holdaway's (1996; Holdaway and Barron, 1997) work on resigners is seminal in this context. And a more recent study on retention (Cooper and Ingram, 2004) indicates that racism within the police service continues to drive officers out.

Among the BME officers surveyed, half agreed that discrimination – whether against them or against other BME officers or BME communities – conditioned their decision to leave, either by resignation or transfer.

One of the discriminatory practices that undoubtedly influences officers' perceptions of their workplace is limited potential for advancement. It was not until 2003 that the first Black Chief Constable was appointed in Britain (in Kent). This late occurrence is indicative of the broader patterns of slow progression for BME officers in the police service.

Additionally, it is apparent that promotion is very slow in coming to those who apply. Bland, Mundy, Russell and Tuffin (1999) found that it took 5 months and 18 months longer for Asian and Black officers, respectively, to be promoted than for their White counterparts. And again Foster et al.'s (2005) post-Lawrence assessment suggests that little has changed in this regard. BME officers in that study still believed that progression was stifled for Black and Asian candidates, and that even where they were promoted, they were subject to greater scrutiny and oversight.

Employment, 'race' and gender

An area even more neglected by researchers is the complex issue of both racism and gender within the police. Waddington (1999) notes that: 'There has been relatively little comparative research on black and white police, or male and female officers, with regard

to their beliefs and values.’ Pointing out that few have stopped to consider that the Steven Lawrence Inquiry was conducted by an all male committee – and may therefore have had a male-centered view of racism – Mirza (2003) contends that:

‘Gender is still seen as a white woman’s issue, while it is taken for granted that ‘race’ is a black male issue. Black and minority ethnic women appear to fall into the cracks between the two. They are often invisible, occupying a ‘blind spot’ in mainstream policy and research studies that talk about women on one hand and ethnic minorities on the other.’ So that: ‘In effect, a gap remains between policy and legislation on one hand, and experience and practice on the other. At the heart of this gap is the lived reality of black and minority ethnic women.’

Mirza (2003) argues that recent official policy such as that espoused by the Cabinet Office and the Department of Trade and Industry, the 2000 Race Relations (Amendment Act), 1998 Human Rights Act, and the 2000 EU 2000 Employment and race Directives - while appearing to cover direct and indirect discrimination: ‘...based on sex, race, colour, language religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation’ (Mirza 2003) – in fact categorises Black women in unmeaningful disaggregated and dichotomized ways in terms of explanation, dissemination of facts and the application of law and policy practice. Moreover, there is also a growing recognition that Black and minority ethnic (BME) women may be “doubly damned” by virtue of the combined impact of their race and gender status. This

intersection of identities means that many women experience multiple layers of prejudice and discrimination, in areas such as employment, education, and political representation.

Policing and ‘Race’

That racism is endemic in White police culture is self-evident, as is the fact that this infects the ways in which members of BME groups are treated by police officers, both within and outside the police services. The manifestations of this racism are many and varied, ranging from the use of derogatory language and epithets at one extreme, to brutal assaults on individuals at the other. Underlying the array of activities, of course, are racist and stereotypical mindsets that legitimate the hostility and discrimination directed toward particular groups. Addressing the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, the President of the Association of Chief Police Officers clearly acknowledged that the sort of institutional racism identified by the report derived from:

. . . the racism which is inherent in society which shapes our attitudes and behaviour. Those attitudes and behaviours are then reinforced and shaped by the culture of the organization that the person works for. In the police services there is a distinct tendency for officers to stereotype people. That creates problems in a number of areas, but particularly in the way officers deal with Black people (MacPherson, 1999: para.6.50).

Similarly, a review by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of the Constabulary (HMIC) (1997) of police and race relations makes the claim that there is: “a... direct and vital link between

internal culture and the way people are treated and external performance.” Such observations are supported by the scholarly evidence linking racist attitudes among police officers to their (mis)treatment of BME community members (Rowe, 2004; Bowling and Phillips, 2002; Holdaway, 1996).

Interestingly, BME community members are especially critical of the ways in which perceived police hostility toward them manifests in under-policing. Black (1980) reminds us that, while discrimination is generally taken to refer to the tendency toward harsher treatment of BME people by White people, this oversimplifies police behavior. In fact, Black argues, police are as likely to disregard the complaints of BME people. So for example (Black, 1980: 13):

‘Wealthier whites who offend blacks are expected to be treated leniently, while poor blacks who offend other poor blacks are expected to be handled with less severity than whites.’

Here, the Canadian and Australian literature are especially informative. Cunneen (2001) and Neugebauer (1999) speak to the tendency of law enforcement officers to take less seriously the victimisation of Aboriginal people – less seriously than their offending, and less seriously than the victimisation of white people. Cunneen (2001) draws particular attention to “selective policing” as it affects Aboriginal women who are victims of domestic violence. There is some evidence of such perceptions in the UK as well. The HMIC (1997) review of police-community race relations found that the people whom

they consulted “inevitably saw racial bias in late attendance at scenes, indifferent service on arrival, and lack of cultural awareness” (para. 2.31). The message received is that they are not worth the time or energy devoted to other “worthier” constituents.

At the other end of the spectrum is the opposite tendency to over-police BME communities. This is especially evident in racial profiling and other related forms of “stop and search.” This, too, can be traced back in part to stereotyped views wherein “the crimes of the individual came to be seen as the crimes of the community” (Whitfield, 2004: 158). Whitfield’s observation reflects the apparent reality of law enforcement assumptions about the connection between race and criminality, assumptions that are ultimately used to justify selective intervention. The first faulty assumption is that it is members of BME communities that commit the majority of crimes, and thus warrant greater scrutiny. The second and related assumption is that most members of BME groups engage in criminal activity, and thus racial profiling is likely to result in a “hit,” i.e., the discovery of wrongdoing (Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, 2005).

Bowling and Phillips (2002) cite both official British Government Home Office data and academic studies that underscore the broad disparities in the use of stop and search. One Home Office (2000) report found that Black people were stopped and searched five times more often than White people, while Asians were stopped relatively less, but remained more likely to be stopped than Whites. A cumulative report four years later shows that the trend is holding:

Black people and those of Mixed origin were more likely to be stopped than White people, whether on foot or in cars. Asian people were more likely to be stopped in vehicles than White people in vehicles, but no more likely to be stopped on foot. A detailed study of policing in London found not only that Black people were more likely than others to be stopped, but they faced a higher risk of multiple stops over the course of a year (Home Office, 2004: 14).

Disparate stop and search practices have significant consequences for police-community relations. They further alienate the affected communities, exacerbating historical trends. Ultimately, this has consequences for the ability of police to do their job, as it fosters unwillingness to cooperate. Another reason for concern about the abuse of police stop and search authority has to do with the interaction itself. Research suggests that disproportionate stops and searches of members of BME groups contribute to their subsequent over-representation as arrestees, and as victims of police violence.

Statistics in England and Wales reveal that an arrest is more likely to be forthcoming for Black and Asian people who are stopped and searched than is the case for their white counterparts (Lowe, 2004). Bowling and Phillips (2002) report that Black people are typically four times as likely as White people to be arrested, and that Asian people are also disproportionately affected. However, it is not necessarily the case that the arrests confirm the police officers' 'suspicions' as far too often the subsequent charge is unrelated to any predicate offence. Rather, it reflects the 'fraught nature of

the interface', that is, the arrest emerges out of the dynamics of the interaction between officer and 'offender', as when the suspect fails to convey the proper attitude of compliance (Bowling and Phillips, 2002).

The alternative potential outcome of police stop and search – police use of violence – has long been a focus of popular and scholarly attention in the U.S., but oddly less so in the UK. The former is not surprising given the persistence of the problem in the US: "Like clockwork, every few years, our first brush with police brutality is linked with a contemporary case of police abuse" (Russell-Brown, 2004: 55). Russell-Brown goes on to cite a Department of Justice survey that documents the disproportionate impact of police brutality against Black people. The Mollen Commission Report in 1994 profiling police violence in New York City, and the more recent investigation of widespread brutality and harassment in the Rampart division of the Los Angeles both demonstrate that such abuses of police authority are not the isolated outcomes of "bad apples," but that they are systemic problems that permeate policing.

In contrast to the extensive US literature on police use of violence, the relevant scholarship from the UK is virtually non-existent. Bowling and Phillips (2002) attribute this to the success of police in deflecting attention, and where this fails, blame. As in the US, racial and ethnic minority group members are over-represented in the data on deaths in custody, for example. Yet such deaths are typically constructed as "accidents," or somehow the fault of the victim – due to alcohol, drugs, mental illness, or inappropriately challenging authority (Bowling and Phillips, 2002).

Conclusions

Clearly, racial and ethnic prejudice reduction is a complex area that is still evolving and needs further development and refinement in order to address the different needs of both men and women, and indeed young people, from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The main aim of this primary research paper is to examine what the literature reveals about racial and ethnic prejudice to explore issues affecting recruitment, retention and progression of BME police employees. This primary research reveals that considerably more research is required to examine the precise nature and dynamics of institutional racism within the police services and to understand how racism against BME police employees and police racism against BME communities, outside the police services, actually impact upon social cohesion in Britain. That this is important, given the British government's current social cohesion policy agenda, is patently clear. Three of the authors of this paper, Barbara Perry, Catherine John-Baptiste and Glen Williams are presently involved in analyzing research data from interviews with 30 BME police employees from Nottinghamshire. More research is about to be undertaken in this area by Perry, John Baptiste and Williams and the results will be published in the academic press, disseminated at conferences and presented in training programmes.

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