



Fact Sheet Briefing – Afrophobia in the United Kingdom

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This fact sheet is based on ENAR's Shadow Report questionnaire 2014/2015, answered by Alexandra Wanjiku Kelbert, a freelance researcher, including qualitative and quantitative data.

Defining 'People of African Descent (PAD)/Black Europeans (BE) population' is no easy task and indeed various definitions and descriptions exist for the group. The UN Working Group on people of African descent proposed that: "People of African descent may be defined as descendants of the African victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (...) Africans and their descendants who, after their countries' independence, emigrated to or went to work in Europe, Canada and the Middle East."¹ The term 'Black Europeans' is used here to refer to Black people born or raised in Europe or with an EU citizenship. In some places the term 'Black people' is used to refer more broadly to all those individuals, groups and communities that define themselves as 'Black'. Accordingly, 'Black' does not necessarily refer to a skin colour so much as a sociologically constructed identity.

The latest population estimates by ethnic groups for the UK are based on the 2011 Census. According to the Census the PAD/BE population represented roughly 2.1 million or 3.3% of the total population of England and Wales. This figure accounts for Black/African/Caribbean/Black British²; over half of the Black community lives in London.

Key findings and examples

Political participation

- Voter registration and voter turnout remain significantly lower for PAD/BE populations, with Black Africans four times more likely to be unregistered than White British people.³ However, Black Caribbean and Black African populations are the most likely to be 'very interested in politics', which potentially points to the shortcomings of party politics when it comes to capturing the minds and energy of people and particularly of PAD/BE.⁴
- Over 8% of the electorate is an ethnic minority in contrast to only 4.2% of Westminster MPs. With regards to PAD/BE, there are 12 MPs of African or Caribbean origin, out of 650 MPs in total. Research shows the greater the political representation the more likely a community is to be heard and considered in policies.⁵

¹UN Working Group on People of African Descent, Identification and Definition of People of African Descent and How Racial Discrimination Against them is Manifested in Various Regions, E/CN.4/2003/WG.20/WP.3

²ONS (2012). Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales 2011. Office for National Statistics. Online. Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_290558.pdf Accessed 01.09.15

³Ethnic Politics (2013) 'Ethnic minority voters: engaged and optimistic'. Online. Available from: <http://www.ethnicpolitics.org/2013/01/22/politicalparticipation-of-ethnic-minorities/> Accessed 04.09.2015

⁴Sunak, R. and Rajeswaran, S. (2014). A Portrait of Modern Britain. Policy Exchange. Online. Available from: <http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/publications/a%20portrait%20of%20modern%20britain.pdf> Accessed 29.09.2015

⁵Birch, S., Gottfried, G. and Lodge, G. (2013). Divided Democracy: Political Inequality in the UK and Why it Matters. IPPR. Online. Available from: http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/11/divideddemocracy_Nov2013_11420.pdf?noredirect=1 Accessed 16.09.2015

Policing and the criminal justice system

- Despite the White population being more likely to use drugs than their Black counterparts, the Black community is still 6.3 times more likely to be stopped and searched. Furthermore, reports continue to show the ineffectiveness of stop and searches with more than 90% of searches not resulting in an arrest.⁶
- 13.1% of prisoners self-identify as Black, compared with approximately 2.9% of the over 18 population, which shows a greater disproportionality in the number of Black people in prisons.⁷

Movement for Justice by Any Means Necessary (MFJ), an independent integrated and immigrant rights organisation, focuses on empowering people in detention by providing them with tools for their own liberation.

- Over 3,000 police officers from the Metropolitan and West Midlands Police are under investigation for police brutality. 55% of complainants in London were from Black, Asian or another racialised group. This is staggering when compared to the proportion of the African, Indian and Caribbean groups at 17.8% in London.
- There has not been a single conviction for a death in police custody in the UK since 1969. Notably there have been 509 people from Black, refugee and migrant communities who have died between 1991 and 2014 in suspicious circumstances in which the police, prison authorities or immigration detention officers have been implicated, averaging to 22 per year.⁸

-The London Campaign Against Police and State Violence (LCAPSV), provides support to victims of police brutality; the voluntary campaigners work to make the Metropolitan Police accountable to local communities for abuses of power.

-Police vans that transport detainees to cells in London are to be fitted with CCTVs in light of a net increase in the numbers of people dying in police custody. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner said the decision was influenced by concerns raised by a number of bereaved families, including relatives of Sean Rigg who died in custody in Brixton.

Employment

- One notable impact of the UK government's austerity programme, initiated in 2010 and extended to 2018, were the public sector spending cuts. They resulted in one million job cuts in this sector which has hit Black women the hardest, as they tend to rely more on public sector employment.

⁶ Eastwood, N., Shiner, M. and Bear D. (2014). The Number in Black and White; Ethnic disparities in the policing and prosecution of drug offences in England and Wales. Release and the London School of Economics. Online. Available from: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/businessAndConsultancy/LSEConsulting/pdf/ReleaseReport.pdf> Accessed 18.09.2015

⁷ The Young Review (2014). Improving outcomes for young black and/or Muslim men in the Criminal Justice System. Online. Available from: http://www.youngreview.org/sites/default/files/clinks_young-review_report_dec2014.pdf Accessed 18.09.2015

⁸ Athwal, H. and Bourne, J. (2015). Dying for Justice. Institute of Race Relations. Online. Available from: http://www.irr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/DfJ_coverfinal.jpg Accessed 10.09.2015

- A House of Commons briefing (September 2015) shows the unemployment rate of Black people in Britain stood at 13%, the highest rate - markedly higher than the 5% unemployment rate for White people. The youth unemployment rates (16-24) are even higher at 29% for Black youths compared to 15% for their White peers.⁹
- Studies show that individuals from minority ethnic groups were less likely to be awarded high quality apprenticeships and experience lower levels employment compared to their White peers even if they have attended Russell Group Universities.¹⁰
- Since several changes to legal aid and the introduction of fees for employment tribunals, a survey has shown a 70% fall in tribunals for racial discrimination in employment, with no change in success rate. This suggests that many simply cannot afford to access to racial justice in this area.¹¹

Health

- Black men in Britain are 17 times more likely than their White counterparts to be diagnosed with a psychotic illness¹² and there is a body of evidence that shows that out of all ethnic groups, Black and African Caribbean people are disproportionately represented in mental health services across the country, and experience poorer outcomes. Black people are 44% more likely than average to be detained within psychiatric settings under the Mental Health Act, and Black Caribbean men are 29% more likely to be physically restrained.¹³
- There is limited research and evidence to show how racism can impact on the health of minority groups. However, communities and campaigners continue to draw a link between racism and mental health. Some point to young Black men's experiences with the police, which is often accompanied by feelings of rage, despair, helplessness, distrust and alienation; feelings strongly associated with psychological distress.

Media

- According to an attitudinal survey (2014), 78% of those interviewed felt that the way in which the media portrays ethnic minorities promotes racism.¹⁴
- 94% of journalists in UK are of a White ethnic background, thus making journalists less ethnically diverse than the general workforce.

⁹ House of Commons 2015. Commons Briefing papers SN06385. Online. Available from: <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06385#fullreport> Accessed 18.09.2015

¹⁰ Runnymede Trust (2014) When Education Isn't Enough. Online. Available from: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/WhenEducationIsntEnough.pdf> Accessed 09.09.2015

¹¹ Harding, C., Ghezelayagh, S., Busby, A. and Coleman, N. (2014) *Findings from the Survey of Employment Tribunal Application 2013*.

¹² Lambeth Black Health and Wellbeing Commission (2014). From surviving to thriving. Report. Online. Available from: <http://lambethcollaborative.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ENC-4.4-BHWB-Commission-Final-Report2-PDF-June-2014.pdf> Accessed 17.09.2015

¹³ Sunak, R. and Rajeswaran, S. (2014). A Portrait of Modern Britain. Policy Exchange. Online. Available from: <http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/publications/a%20portrait%20of%20modern%20britain.pdf> Accessed 29.09.2015

¹⁴ Daily Mail (2014). Mark Duggan, the man who lived by the gun: Arms draped around two violent gangsters, the thug whose death sparked riots - but who his family insist was a peacemaker. Online. Available from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2536197/Mark-Duggan-Arms-draped-two-violent-gangsters-thug-death-sparked-riots.html> Accessed 25.09.2015

Education

- Although over the past decade there have been efforts to close the educational gap between different ethnic groups, in recent years these gaps have grown once more.
- It is striking that not one single non-white author is featured at GCSE Level in the new national curriculum for English. The 'whitewashing' of the curriculum misrepresents Black people's contribution to the world and throughout history. This works to marginalise and alienate Black students.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published findings that show that being Black and male has a greater impact on numeracy levels than having a learning disability.¹⁵
- The most recent report from the Department for Education looking at exclusions from school over the 2013-2014 period found that pupils of Black Caribbean and White and Black Caribbean ethnic groups are around three times more likely to be permanently excluded than the school population as a whole.

The 'Why is My Curriculum White' campaign founded at UCL is a response to the lack of diversity found on reading lists and course content. The campaign aims to challenge and highlight the lack of diversity in education. The Facebook group (of the same name) is a space for people (students, parents and teachers) to discuss 'why' the curriculum is white and to reach out to the wider community to combat the 'whitewashing' of the curriculum.

Recommendations

- Develop a national anti-racism strategy with specific actions and objectives allocated to responsible institutions. The strategy should involve communities in all stages of development, implementation and assessment. Implementing bodies should have sufficient leverage, human and financial resources for the entire implementation period.
- Anti-racism plans and policies must take into account the intersectionality of discrimination to ensure effective policies and strategies target groups at risk of multiple discrimination, such as Black women, Black Muslims and Black LGBTI people.
- Change official and unofficial policing policies and strategies that currently encourage police to profile certain groups based on their ethnicity and/or their race and religion.
- Establish clear and truly independent oversight mechanisms of law enforcement officials and monitor all action that impacts on rights and freedoms such as counter-terrorism measures, raids, surveillance and arrests.
- Reconsider austerity policies that have seen, for example, cuts to public services that are vital to people's wellbeing and changes to legal aid.
- Carry out impact assessments on government budget cuts before policies are introduced to ensure that public sector job cuts do not disproportionately impact on Black people.

¹⁵ Equality and Human Rights Commission. 2010. How Fair is Britain? Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations in 2010. The First Triennial Review. Available at: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/triennial_review/how_fair_is_britain_-_complete_report.pdf Accessed 03.09.2015 (as cited in the UK Shadow Report questionnaire response).

- Increase and protect funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes as they are a key to access to employment for recent migrants and in particular women of African descent.
- The Ministry of Education must consult with pupils, parents, civil society organisations and experts to review the school curriculum and exclusion processes.
- National research institutions, independent research bodies and universities need to develop research projects that provide a greater understanding of the relationship between racism, racial discrimination, racial inequalities and health.