



# Proving Legacy

**The Evidence for the ongoing Legacy of  
Colonial Slavery and Industrial Exploitation**

An investigation of the effects of legacy issues on  
educational achievement and health in British society today.

Presented at the Open University

Camden Town, London

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## Acknowledgements

The Movement for Justice and Reconciliation (MJR) is a Christian charity which aims to increase our understanding of how modern society has been affected by the legacy of oppression through colonial slavery and industrial exploitation.

Its Trustees and Directors are Rev Les Isaac (chair), Rev Alton Bell (Deputy Chair), Jenny Cooper (Secretary), Dr Clifford Hill (Research Director), Nigel Pocock (Treasurer), Paul Keeble (Web Designer), Khareen Jamal, Clive Ireson and Monica Hill, all of whom have been involved in this research in some way or another.

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# **Introduction**

## **Proving Legacy**

**The evidence for the ongoing legacy of colonial slavery and industrial exploitation**

**A report by the Movement for Justice and Reconciliation**

### **Making the Case for Legacy:**

Deprived inner-city areas of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain are increasingly becoming a diverse melting-pot of unhappiness and despair. The riots of August 2011 brought to the surface an underlying spirit of turmoil and hopelessness felt by many in our inner-cities, uniting people of many different cultural backgrounds in an expression of outrage against the injustices of modern society.

Recent research has shown links down the generations to colonial slavery, when millions were displaced from their African homeland and forced to work in British colonies, and the mass exploitation of working people in Britain in the Industrial Revolution. The events of 200 years ago would seem to have little bearing on our modern culture, but the links should not be so quickly dismissed. Generational transmission of cultural traits are powerful forces in societal formation and MJR is committed to exploring the evidence.

We believe this legacy of oppression has left a hidden footprint on the character and personality of many people living in deprived areas through generational transmission, resulting in a common experience across ethnicities of social anomie, alienation, powerlessness and disenfranchisement.

### **Aims of this Research Paper:**

This exploratory research report seeks to identify ways in which the legacy of historical slavery is impacting modern society; and to investigate whether there is a direct link between the legacy of slavery and the modern social situation.

Initially we will consider two aspects of modern society which have been the subject of much debate in recent years; that of educational achievement and health. This report will consider the following questions:

#### **Educational Achievement:**

What factors have contributed to educational underachievement of those in the African Caribbean diaspora? Are there any shared factors between underachievement of the White Working Classes and those in the African Caribbean diaspora?

#### **Health:**

To what extent are the experiences of colonial slavery still impacting the psychological and mental health of those in the African Caribbean diaspora? To what extent is there a direct link between chattel enslavement and debilitating illnesses such as diabetes, alcohol addiction and sickle cell anaemia which are prevalent among those from the Caribbean?

## Part One

# Does the Legacy of Slavery Affect Educational Achievement?

### Introduction

Levels of achievement among pupils, particularly of those in the African Caribbean diaspora and from White Working Class communities, have come under increasing scrutiny in recent years. For some time now, there has been a general acceptance that black pupils are the lowest achievers in British schools, but more recent studies have also highlighted the low levels of achievement of white pupils from poor socio-economic backgrounds as compared with those from other ethnic groups.

This study seeks to consider two key questions:

- a) What factors could have contributed to the educational underachievement of those in the African Caribbean diaspora?
- b) Are there any shared factors between underachievement of the White Working Classes and those in the African Caribbean diaspora?

### 1. Method

To provide greater insight into the achievement levels attained by the various ethnic groups, this study will begin by analysing some of the data readily available. For this initial piece of research, we have limited our study to analysing the GCSE levels of achievement (5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Mathematics) of various ethnic groups, using the published DfE data for 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14.<sup>1</sup>

For each year, bar graphs have been produced to show the level of achievement of the eight largest ethnic groups:

1. White British
2. White Other
3. Indian
4. Pakistani
5. Bangladeshi
6. Black Caribbean
7. White and Black Caribbean<sup>2</sup>
8. Black African

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<sup>1</sup> ref [Statistics: GCSEs \(key stage 4\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>2</sup> The last fifty years have seen the emergence of some new, predominantly British-born, ethnic minorities. These are the children of inter-ethnic partnerships, primarily partnerships between people from the White British group and people from ethnic minority groups. They include the children of White and Black Caribbean parents, White and Asian parents and White and Black African parents, as well as a multitude of other identities. **Ben Bradford**, *"Who are the 'Mixed' ethnic group?"* London: Office of National Statistics, 2006.

## Proving Legacy – MJR research 2016

The data for each ethnic group has been further analysed to show the impact upon academic achievement caused by gender and social deprivation. This has been done by plotting the 5EM (5 A\*-C GCSEs, including English and Maths) achievement figures for each ethnic group and then sub-dividing the analysis to show achievements by:

1. Gender (boys / girls)
2. Social deprivation as defined by free school meals (FSM)<sup>3 4</sup>

## 2. Research Findings

Although this study only includes the GCSE achievement figures for the latest four years currently available, the results are statistically significant since the results for each year are so similar.

For the purposes of this exploratory research, we have focussed our analysis on the White British, Black Caribbean, White and Black Caribbean and Black African ethnic categories, but it would be useful to look at the other categories (various Asian and other white) in a more in-depth study at a later stage.

### Ethnicity:

Pupils from a Black Caribbean background are the lowest achieving ethnic group, closely followed by pupils from a White and Black Caribbean background; whilst pupils from Black African and White British backgrounds achieved very similar levels.

### Gender:

The achievement levels of boys in each ethnic group is lower than those of girls, with a slightly greater differential between the achievement levels of boys and girls in the Black Caribbean ethnic group as compared to other groups. These findings are consistent with most studies of this kind.

### Poverty:

When poverty factors are taken into consideration, there is a general reduction in levels of academic achievement in each ethnic group. However, our data shows that poverty affects pupils from a White British background to a far greater extent than pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. **Our graphs show that pupils from poor White British backgrounds are the lowest achieving ethnic group overall**, with pupils from a White and Black Caribbean background being the second lowest. Poverty would seem to have less effect on the achievement levels of pupils from a Black Caribbean or Black African background.

Our research shows that on average, poverty lowers the overall achievement levels of pupils in the Black Caribbean ethnic group by approximately 13% points; Black African achievement levels are lowered by approximately 15% points; White and Black Caribbean achievement levels are lowered approximately 22% points; and White British achievement levels are lowered by approximately 32% points.

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<sup>3</sup> The use of Free School Meals as a method of measuring socio-economic poverty is not perfect. The Prime Minister, in a recent speech about Grammar Schools, stated that “the Free School Meals measure only captures a relatively small number of pupils, whose parents are on income-related benefits.” *Teresa May PM, 9<sup>th</sup> Sept 2016*

<sup>4</sup> However it is generally acknowledged that at present we do not have a more effective means of measurement.

### 3. Summary

- When achievement levels are analysed in terms of ethnicity and gender, Black Caribbean boys are consistently the poorest achievers, with White and Black Caribbean boys a close second.
- However, when poverty is also taken into consideration, the poorest achievers are White British boys, with White and Black Caribbean boys being the 2nd most affected group.

Therefore, the data shows that socio-economic poverty affects the achievement levels of those from a White British background more than it affects the achievement levels of those from any other ethnic background. The second most affected group is the White and Black Caribbean ethnic group. **Those from a Black Caribbean background, although the lowest achievers overall, are not affected by poverty to the extent of those who have some White British heritage. Why is this?**

The remainder of this research paper will seek to investigate the possible causes of the low levels of achievement of those from a Black Caribbean and of those from a poor White British background.

### 4. Analysis of Findings in a Sociological and Historical Context:

As stated above, the central finding of this research is that the two groups who suffer the greatest level of educational disadvantage are pupils from the Black Caribbean community and those from the poor White British community. Both of these groups predominantly live in the same neighbourhoods in similar urban inner-city areas and go to the same schools as other children whose achievement level is significantly higher. So what is it about these two groups that produces a level of educational disadvantage far above other children?

#### Socio-Economic Deprivation

Clearly socio-economic poverty is a major variable. Our research shows that it is the children who receive 'free school meals' who have the lowest educational attainment. Thus their level of economic deprivation defines their level of educational success. It distinguishes them from other children in similar neighbourhoods and schools.

It should perhaps be noted at this point that poverty does not inevitably cause educational underachievement. Commenting on this issue, Russell Hobby writes that

"It is caused by things that also harm education – family dysfunction, tragedy, low aspirations, lack of knowledge about the ways to work the system, addiction, long term sickness and neglect. We all know of people who have excelled educationally from the poorest of backgrounds and of families who prize education above all else as a route out of poverty."<sup>5</sup>

However, socio-economic deprivation, and its accompanying issues, has long been recognised as a major factor in producing lower educational attainment. A wide variety of factors has been recognised such as parental interest in the child's education, the limited vocabulary used in the family home, the lack of books and reading material available to the children in poorer families and even the physical conditions in the home that produce a higher level of absenteeism from school. The family background of children is therefore a major factor influencing the child's educational progress.

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<sup>5</sup> Russell Hobby, *TES Opinion*, November 2014. <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-views/its-time-scrap-free-schools-meals-a-measure-poverty>

### Other Reports

A useful analysis of pupil achievement levels has been recently carried out by CentreForum (now the Educational Policy Institute). The 'Education in England: Annual Report' published in April 2016 highlights the gap in achievement levels of disadvantaged pupils:

"The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, when compared with their peers, remain significantly lower on every measure. .... as a typical disadvantaged pupil progresses through school, he or she falls further behind non-disadvantaged pupils." <sup>6</sup>

This report focuses mainly on the regional trends in pupil achievement over the last four years, with some reference to factors such as poverty and ethnicity. However, it does not include a full analysis of the achievement levels of the various ethnic groups and the effects that poverty has on these groups.

### African and Caribbean

It has generally been acknowledged that children from a black ethnic background are likely to have lower levels of achievement than those from other ethnicities. Our research, however, shows a significant difference between Black Caribbean children and Black African children which can only be attributable to family background and culture. The major variable here is 'slavery'. **Black African children have no history of slavery whereas Black Caribbean children can only trace their family origins back to the plantations of the Caribbean and the chattel slavery which their ancestors endured for 300 years under British colonial rule.** When they boarded the slave ships on the coast of West Africa they left behind their names, identity, language, culture, family, village, region and country. When they reached the Caribbean this became Zero Hour for their history.

### Slavery

The legacy of slavery in the Caribbean diaspora is the outstanding variable distinguishing Caribbean boys from the Africans and boys of all other ethnic origins with the exception of poor white working class boys. This legacy of slavery goes back to 1838 when the last slaves were set free from chattel slavery on the Caribbean island. Slavery instilled a sense of inferiority and low self-worth into the whole slave population. These cultural forces are hard to eliminate and are powerfully transmitted across generational boundaries.

### White British

But Poor White children also experience similar educational disadvantage to Black Caribbean children. Why is this? Here again the major variable is 'slavery'. The Poor White children in inner-city urban environments in Britain suffer from similar cultural roots whereby low self-worth has been transmitted down the generations since the days of the Industrial Revolution.

These are powerful cultural forces rooted in the struggle of the working classes that began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the land 'enclosures' that deprived the peasant classes of rural England of the land on which they grazed their cattle or pigs and goats. This was a major factor forcing families to leave the countryside and settle in the burgeoning urban complexes where labour was needed to feed the rapid development of industrialisation. While this enforced re-location is shared with the removal of people from Africa, it is not to be seen as equivalent.

However, this population movement generated a new class of landless urban poor who experienced a level of deprivation previously unknown in feudal Britain. Betty Fladeland comments:

"Slave-trading, with all of its violations of natural law, reached its height in the era when commercial growth and industrialization were changing the British Nation demographically,

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<sup>6</sup> p37 *Education in England: Annual Report, April 2016.*

forcing the working population into slum areas of cities where their poverty and degradation were highly visible.”<sup>7</sup>

The struggle for justice and social mobility to come out of grinding poverty is well illustrated by the length of time it took for the British Parliament to enact the ‘Ten Hour Bill’ that limited the number of hours infants of six, seven or eight years old could work down the mines, or in the mills and factories of England.

### Protecting Children

It was Wilberforce and his friends who achieved the first breakthrough in parliamentary reform for the protection of children. In 1788 a Bill was passed prohibiting young children being sent up chimneys to sweep them in dangerous conditions. In 1801 Wilberforce also called the House of Commons to deal with the exploitation of children in industry but powerful forces of investment made this impossible.

In 1825 the parliamentary campaign began to limit the number of hours children could be employed in industry. But it was not until 1850 that the Ten Hour Bill was finally passed limiting the number of hours children could work to 10 hours per day in the factories and mills of England and prohibiting children and women from working down the mines. Campaigners such as the Revd George Bull and Michael Sadler MP spoke of “white slavery” in the factories of Yorkshire and the cotton mills of Lancashire.<sup>8</sup>

### Labour Organisation

This was only the beginning of the long struggle to protect the working classes from exploitation. The history of the Chartist Movement and the rise of Trades Unions is a saga of struggle over many decades that instilled attitudes of ‘them and us’ into British industrial relations which are still visible today. They can particularly be seen in the recent struggle for leadership within the Labour Party and even in the attitudes between North and South in England. The social class system that stretches back to the Industrial Revolution is still very much in evidence today and is particularly influential in the social *anomie* that drives gang life among disadvantaged young people in inner-city areas. White slavery of 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain still has a legacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So too are elements of colonial slavery where in some predominantly black areas of London a white boy is the local gang leader!

### Black and White Comparison

The question still remains as to why the element of poverty has a greater effect upon educational attainment among White British boys than among Black Caribbean boys. Once again we have to turn to the cultural heritage to discover a possible answer. The difference between the two communities in present-day inner-city areas in Britain is the greater sense of community and community support for children in the Caribbean diaspora than among the native White British working class.

### Community Support

In order to understand this, once again we have to consider social roots and their legacy. Professor James Walvin neatly summarised the powerful sense of community that was developed in the era of chattel slavery in the West Indies that enabled the African Diaspora to survive in the face of prolonged cruelty and exploitation. They closed ranks and supported one another developing powerful community life. Walvin says,

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<sup>7</sup> Betty Fladeland: *Abolitionists and Working-Class Problems in an Age of Industrialization*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1984, p171.

<sup>8</sup> see Clifford Hill, ‘The Wilberforce Connection’ Monarch Books, Oxford, 2004, p150

“In the most mundane of daily events – cooking, child care, nursing, relaxing after a day’s work – or during those more significant rites of passage – birth, marriage, death and bereavement – slaves, in their families and in their community, forged a sense of collective strength which steeled them against the tribulations of life under slavery. The slave family and the slave community were locked together to form the social bedrock of slave society throughout the Caribbean.... In essence it was to form the basis for the structure of black life and society long after the process which had brought it into being – chattel slavery – had melted away.”<sup>9</sup>

That strong sense of community is still present today in the Black Caribbean communities of London and other 21<sup>st</sup>-century British cities. In the Caribbean, children are not just brought up in isolated family units of “mum dad and the kids”: they are brought up by the **community**. This is strikingly illustrated in studies of life in rural peasant and working class communities such as Edith Clarke’s classic, “My Mother Who Fathered Me”.<sup>10</sup>

### Cultural Differences

It is to this cultural difference that we have to turn if we are to understand the difference between Caribbean children and White British working class children living in the same neighbourhood and attending the same schools and being educated in the same system. The fact that Black Caribbean boys have improved their educational performance, even though slightly, over the past decade whereas the White Working Class boys have not, shows that Caribbean community life is adjusting to life in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain more easily than the white working class.

The strength of community in the Caribbean diaspora helps to provide a growing sense of self-worth and security in their children. No doubt also the achievements of Caribbean celebrities in the sporting world and in wider society all contribute to an ambition for social mobility.

The White Working Class children are too often stuck in the rut of social immobility with a sense of powerlessness that comes from a lack of ambition in their parent’s generation. Within White Working Class communities there can be a culture of dependence upon welfare provision. This is then transmitted to the children and becomes a part of the local culture that is difficult to break. It is this lack of social ambition that undermines educational achievement and produces the results that we have seen in this research.

## 5. Summary and Recommendations

This exploratory study set out to investigate claims that those in the African Caribbean diaspora experienced lower levels of educational achievement than other ethnic groups. It also aimed to investigate underachievement among the white working classes and whether there were any shared factors between these two groups.

From this initial study, limited to data that is easily accessible and already in the public domain, the key findings show that Black Caribbean Boys are consistently the poorest achievers at GCSE level if the assessment is made purely in terms of ethnicity and gender. If, however, socio-economic poverty is also taken into consideration the Black Caribbean ethnic group fares slightly better. In fact, when the combined factors of ethnicity, gender and poverty are taken into

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<sup>9</sup> James Walvin, *Black Ivory: Slavery in the British Empire*, second edition, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2001, pages 183 – 184

<sup>10</sup> Edith Clarke, *My Mother Who Fathered Me: A study of the families in three selected communities of Jamaica*, The Press University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, 1999

account, the poorest overall achievers are the White British ethnic group, with those of White and Black Caribbean ethnicity not faring much better.

Possible reasons for these results, together with some sociological and historical analysis, have already been noted in this paper. The conclusions indicate that a more in depth study could add significantly to our knowledge. It is acknowledged that this study has been limited to a single strand of data analysis, that of GCSE attainment. It is therefore recommended that further strands of data are analysed to enable wider conclusions to be made.

## **6. Recommended Areas for Further Study**

Further study of the granular data of the National pupil database is recommended. This includes data broken down to an individual pupil level which might highlight patterns and regional variations that are hidden by the 'lump sum' approach.

This in turn could lead to further related analyses, looking at broader economic indicators of a region or relevant education policies and investment at national or local levels.

### **Areas of Study should include:**

- i. Fixed term exclusion rates by ethnicity and poverty
- ii. Permanent exclusion rates by ethnicity and poverty
- iii. KS2 achievement rates by ethnicity and poverty
- iv. Progression rates from GCSE to A levels by ethnicity and poverty (and which subjects are being studied)
- v. Progression rates to university and college by ethnicity and poverty (this might indicate whether education is a route to social mobility)
- vi. Case studies to identify other social factors influencing achievement such as family background

## **7. Recommended Social Action**

It is strongly recommended that a series of key educational interventions should be undertaken in inner-city areas in different parts of the country. Their specific aim should be to combat the low self-image of both Caribbean and White boys from poor socio-economic backgrounds.

These interventions could make a significant impact upon learning potential and achievement which in turn would have a positive social outcome, reducing the dependency of these boys upon local gang culture. A programme of careful monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of these educational interventions should be undertaken, with particular stress upon comparative studies in different areas of the country.

## Appendix A:

### Attainment by pupil characteristic at a national level (UK)

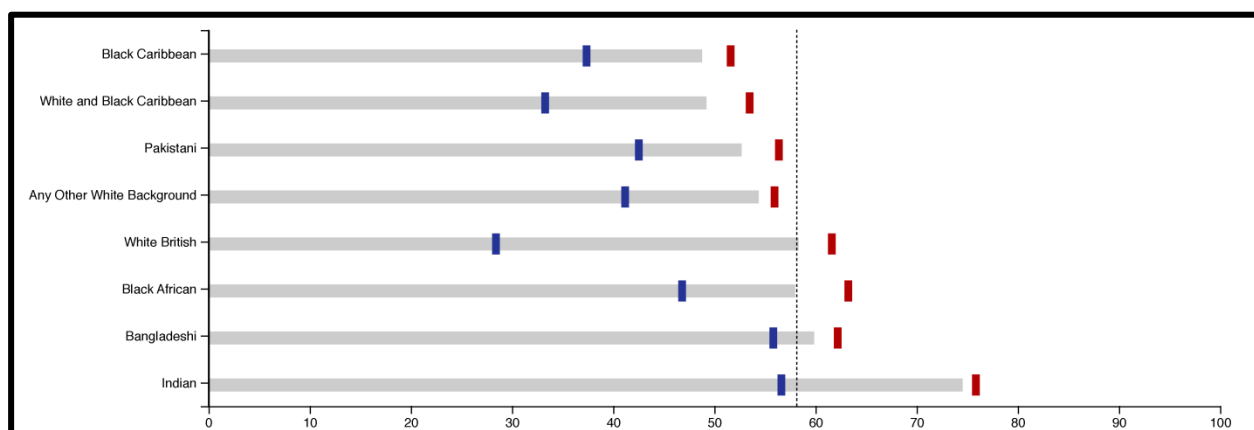
Percentage of each pupil population group achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs; with detail of gender split and the gap in achievement levels for children qualifying for Free School Meals (FSM), and those not.

- **blue** represents the achievement level of FSM pupils
- **red** represents the achievement level of non-FSM pupils
- The vertical dotted line represents the national achievement level including all pupils

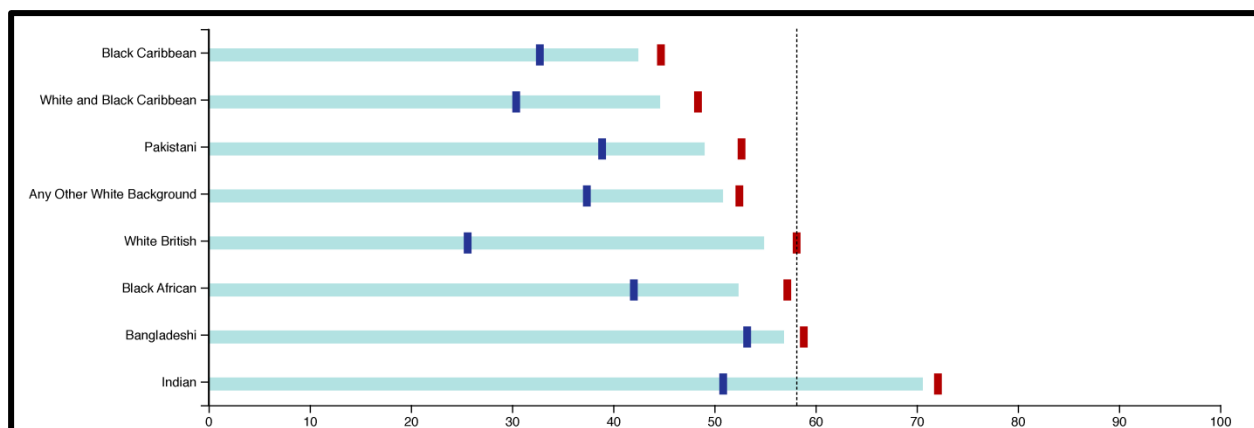
All charts produced by: Admataz Ltd © MJR 2016

Data Source: [Statistics: GCSEs \(key stage 4\) - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-key-stage-4)

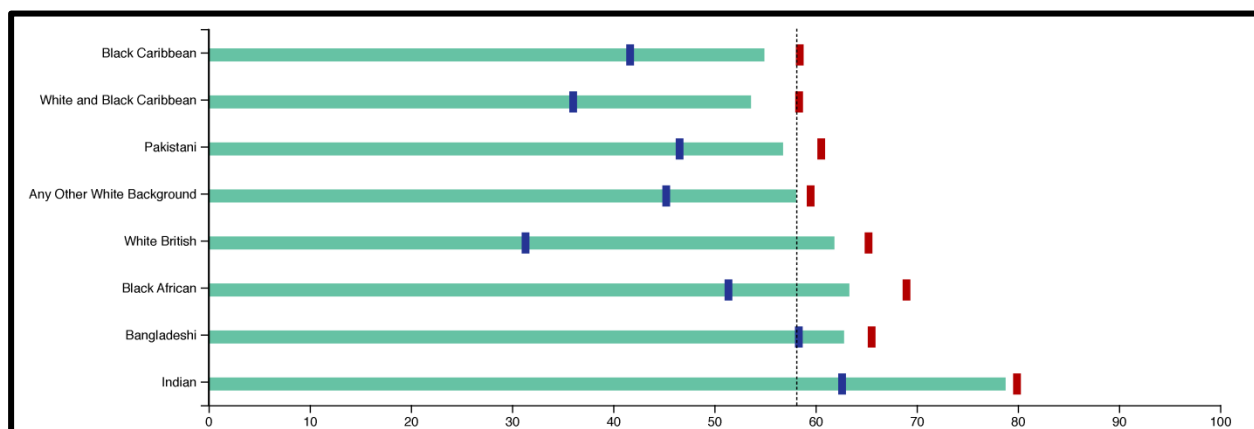
## 2010-2011



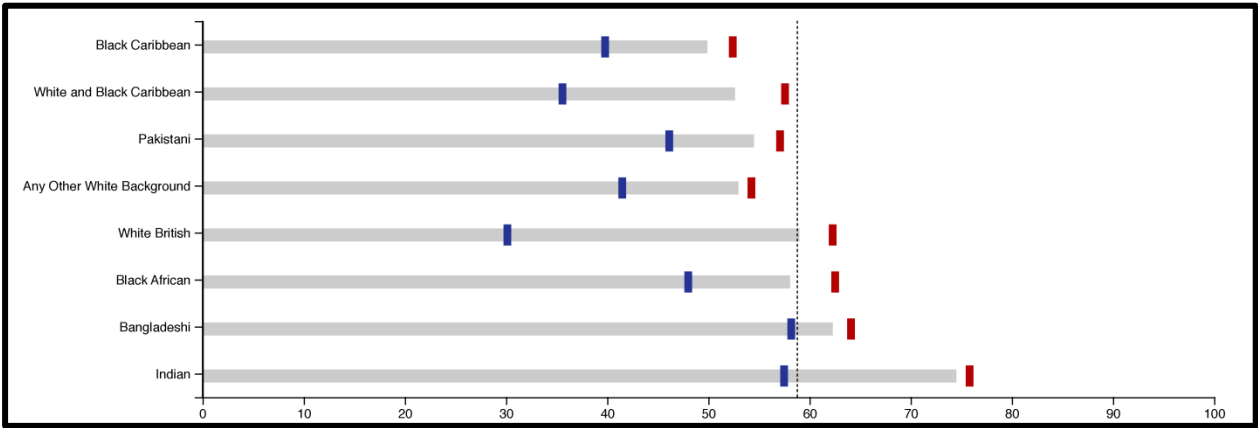
## 2010-2011 (Boys)



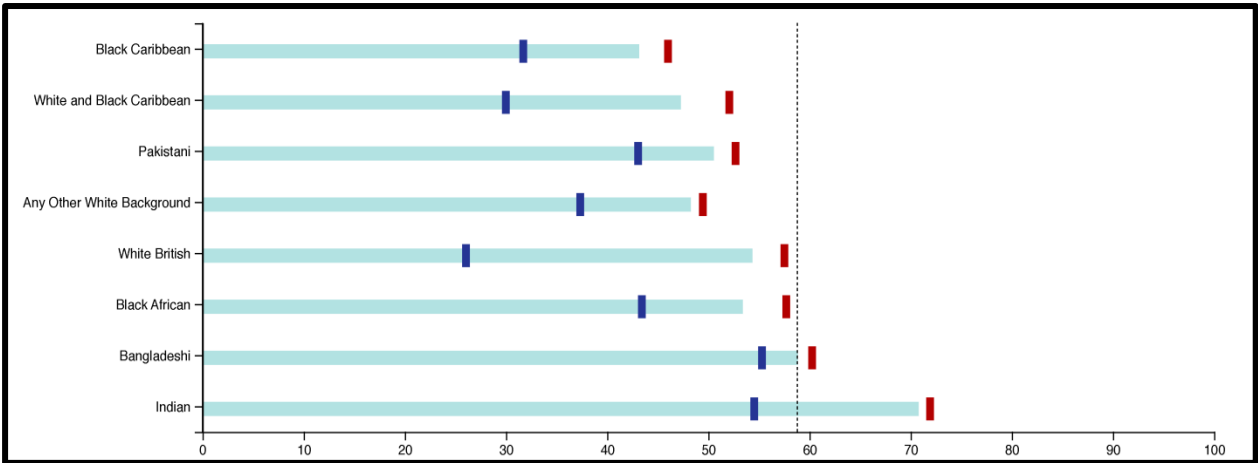
## 2010-2011 (Girls)



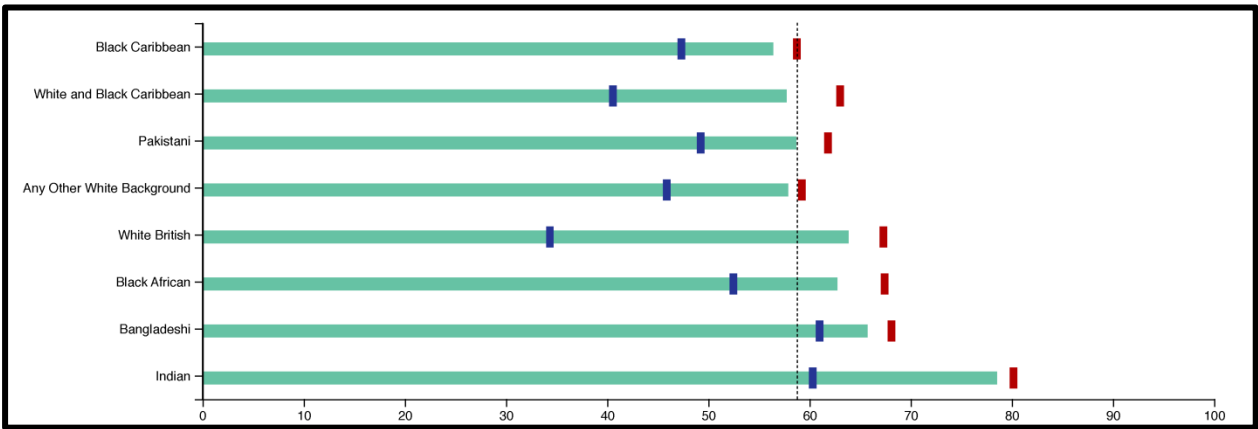
2011-2012



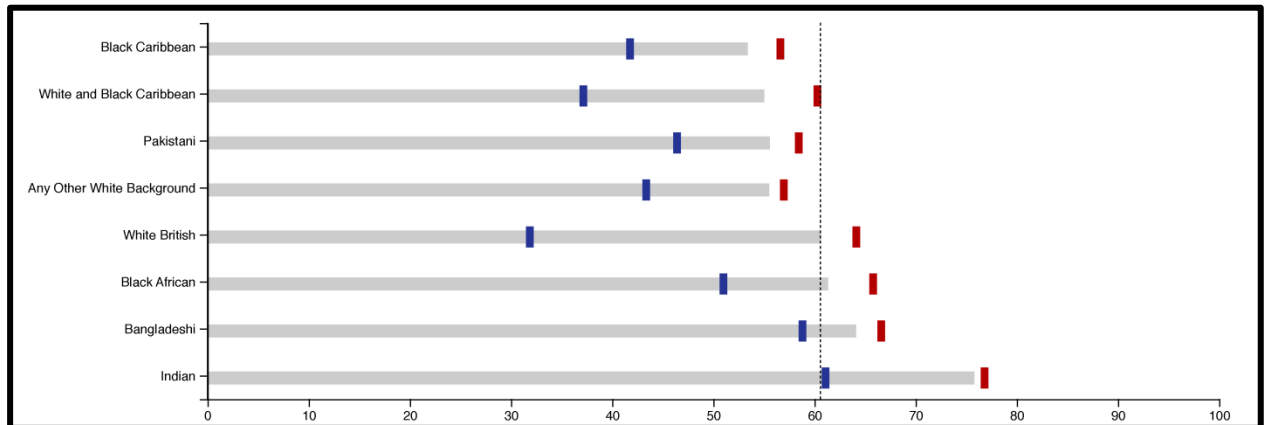
2011-2012 (boys)



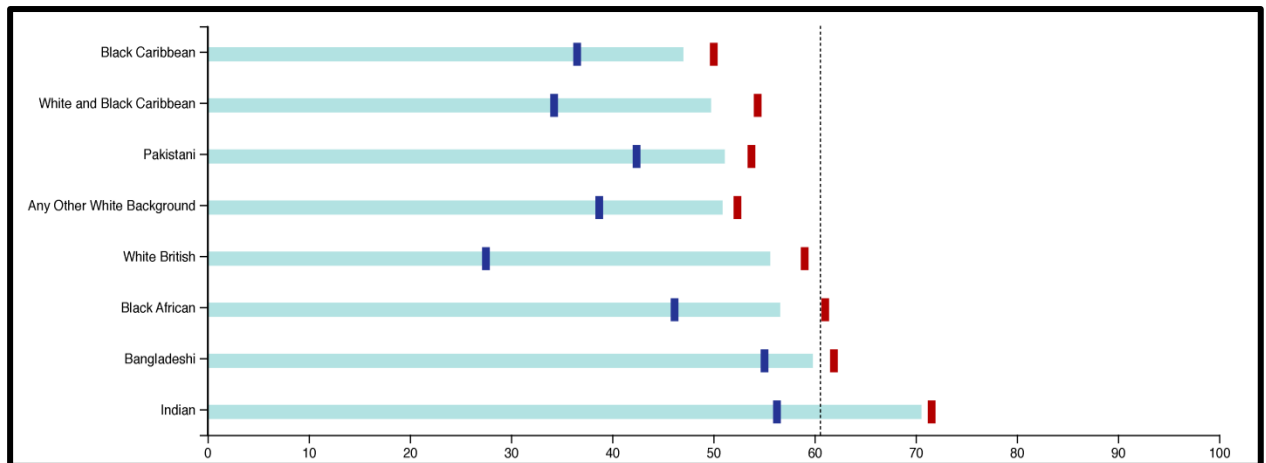
2011-2012 (girls)



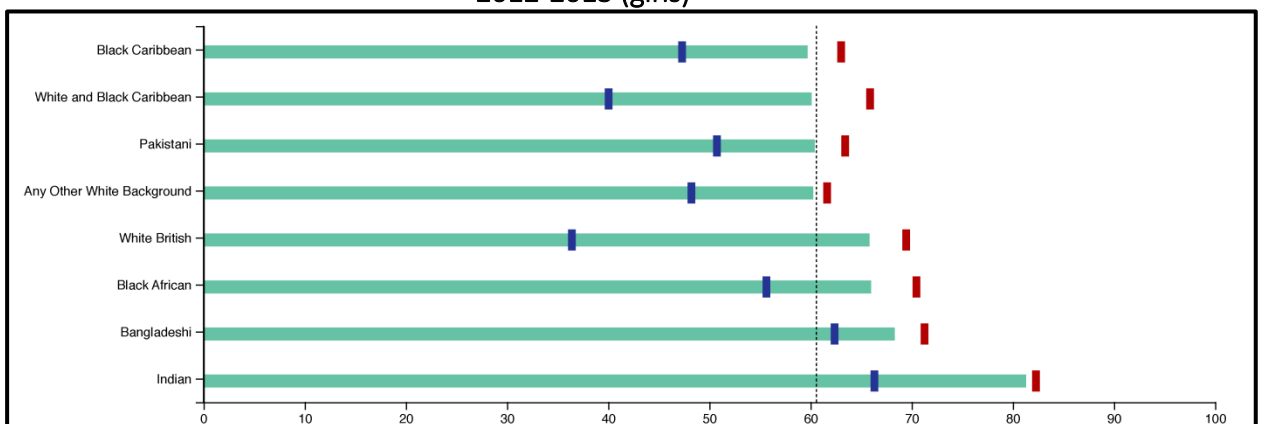
## 2012-2013



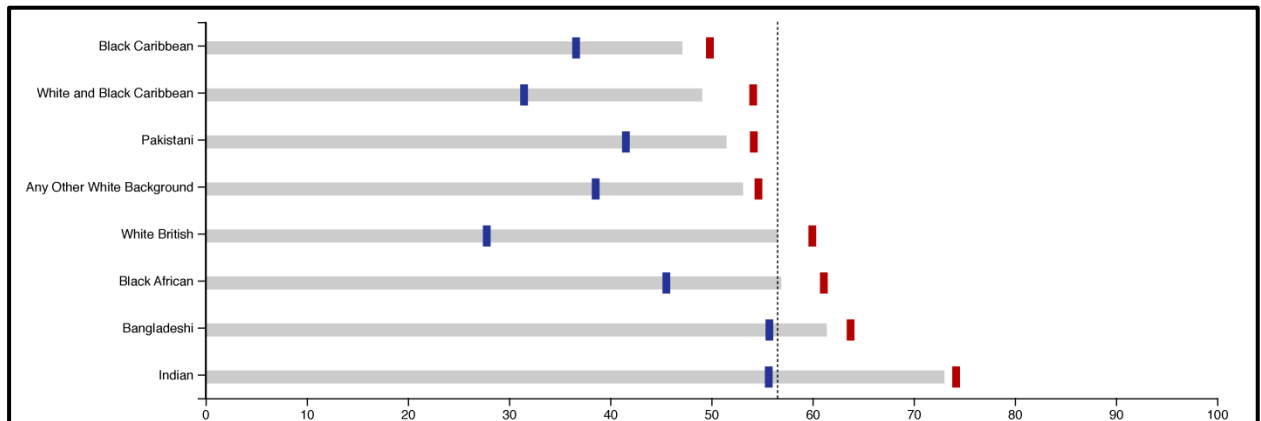
## 2012-2013 (boys)



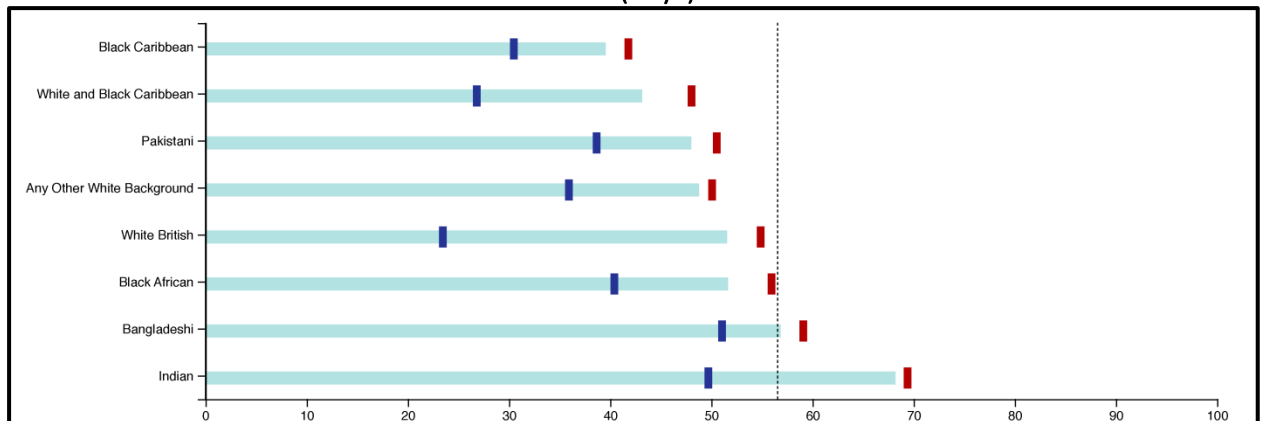
## 2012-2013 (girls)



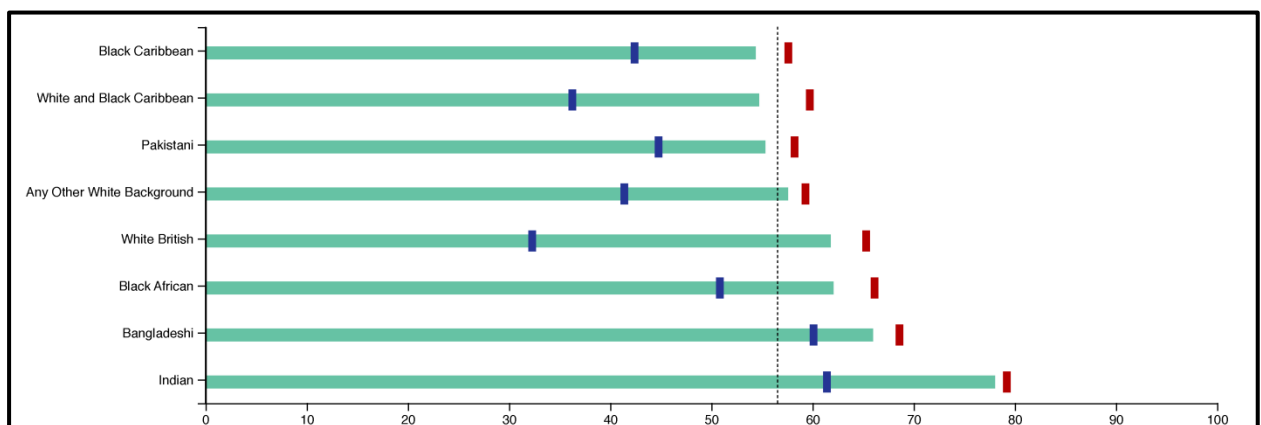
## 2013-2014



## 2013-2014 (boys)



## 2013-2014 (girls)



## Appendix B:

### Data analysis of key ethnic groups

Overall percentage of the **Black Caribbean** ethnic group achieving 5EM:

2010/11	49%
2011/12	50%
2012/13	53%
2013/14	47%

Gender breakdown for **Black Caribbean** ethnic group:

2010/11	42% boys; 55% girls
2011/12	43% boys; 56% girls
2012/13	47% boys; 60% girls
2013/14	39% boys; 54% girls

Poverty impact for **Black Caribbean** ethnic group:

2010/11	52% non-FSM; 37% FSM (33% boys only)
2011/12	52% non-FSM; 40% FSM (32% boys only)
2012/13	57% non-FSM; 42% FSM (36% boys only)
2013/14	50% non-FSM; 37% FSM (31% boys only)

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Overall percentage of the **Black African** ethnic group achieving 5EM:

2010/11	58%
2011/12	58%
2012/13	61%
2013/14	57%

Gender breakdown for **Black African** ethnic group:

2010/11	52% boys; 63% girls
2011/12	53% boys; 63% girls
2012/13	57% boys; 66% girls
2013/14	52% boys; 62% girls

Poverty impact for **Black African** ethnic group:

2010/11	63% non-FSM; 47% FSM (42% boys only)
2011/12	63% non-FSM; 48% FSM (43% boys only)
2012/13	66% non-FSM; 51% FSM (46% boys only)
2013/14	61% non-FSM; 46% FSM (40% boys only)

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Overall percentage of the **White and Black Caribbean** ethnic group achieving 5EM:

2010/11	49%
2011/12	53%
2012/13	55%
2013/14	49%

Gender breakdown for **White and Black Caribbean** ethnic group:

2010/11	45% boys; 54% girls
2011/12	47% boys; 58% girls
2012/13	50% boys; 60% girls
2013/14	43% boys; 55% girls

Poverty impact for **White and Black Caribbean** ethnic group:

2010/11	53% non-FSM; 33% FSM (30% boys only)
2011/12	58% non-FSM; 36% FSM (30% boys only)
2012/13	60% non-FSM; 37% FSM (34% boys only)
2013/14	54% non-FSM; 32% FSM (27% boys only)

\*\*\*\*\*

Overall percentage of the **White British** ethnic group achieving 5EM:

2010/11	58%
2011/12	59%
2012/13	61%
2013/14	57%

Gender breakdown for **White British** ethnic group:

2010/11	55% boys; 62% girls
2011/12	54% boys; 64% girls
2012/13	56% boys; 66% girls
2013/14	52% boys; 62% girls

Poverty impact for **White British** ethnic group:

2010/11	62% non-FSM; 29% FSM (26% boys only)
2011/12	62% non-FSM; 30% FSM (26% boys only)
2012/13	64% non-FSM; 32% FSM (28% boys only)
2013/14	60% non-FSM; 28% FSM (23% boys only)

## Part Two

### Does the Legacy of Slavery affect Health?

#### Introduction

This study seeks to consider two key questions

- a) the extent to which the experiences of colonial slavery are still impacting the psychological and mental health of those from the African Caribbean diaspora.
- b) the extent to which there is a direct link between chattel enslavement and debilitating illnesses which are prevalent among those from the Caribbean such as diabetes, alcohol addiction and sickle cell anaemia.

### (a) Mental Health

#### Towards an Aetiology of African-Caribbean Mental Health

#### 1. Method

Since this is a wide area of research, this paper will initially aim to consider the issues relating to mental health such as:

- Family dysfunctions
- Isolation and connectivity
- The long-term effects of 'shame'
- Epigenetics and trauma

This exploratory study will aim to provide an overview of research currently available on Caribbean UK populations and consider some key factors which can lead to mental health issues among the African-Caribbean population in the UK. It will also aim to examine the scientific evidence for long-term social, psychological and neurological effects on present-day Caribbean populations.

This paper will conclude by making recommendations for developing this area of research further and by outlining the case for a future research project to examine legacy issues relating to physical health.

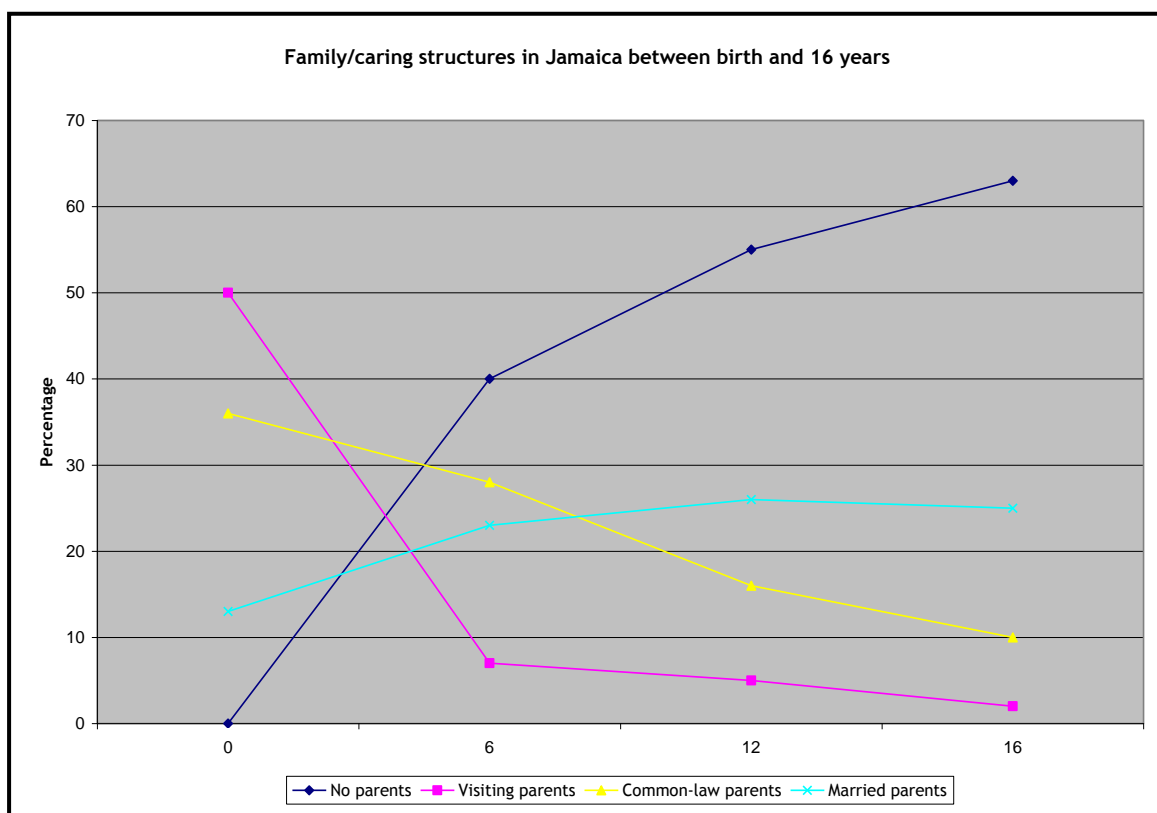
## 2. Research Findings

### i. Self-evident?

Attitudes of Caribbean people are highly conflicted over their past history of slavery. They either want it fully acknowledged, or to 'move on'. Most are profoundly aware of the resulting family dysfunctions, and want related issues of mental health and crime addressed. They want self-esteem and justice. But how can justice be achieved if the past history is not acknowledged or addressed, in depth? A key factor to be addressed is found in family background.

**Fig.1: A Child's Carers With Age.**

Only about 25% of Jamaican children have a relatively stable home with married parents.<sup>11</sup> A key social factor in mental health pathologies.



### ii. Schizophrenia And Bipolar Disorder

#### Alienation

A key factor in the escalation of mental illness appears to be a perceived sense of alienation and social isolation, which often has traceable links to family background.

Kwame McKenzie *et al* have published a sociologically significant paper<sup>12</sup> in which they summarise the well-tried explanations, such as misdiagnosis, genetic predisposition, selection

<sup>11</sup> However it is generally acknowledged that at present we do not have a more effective means of measurement.

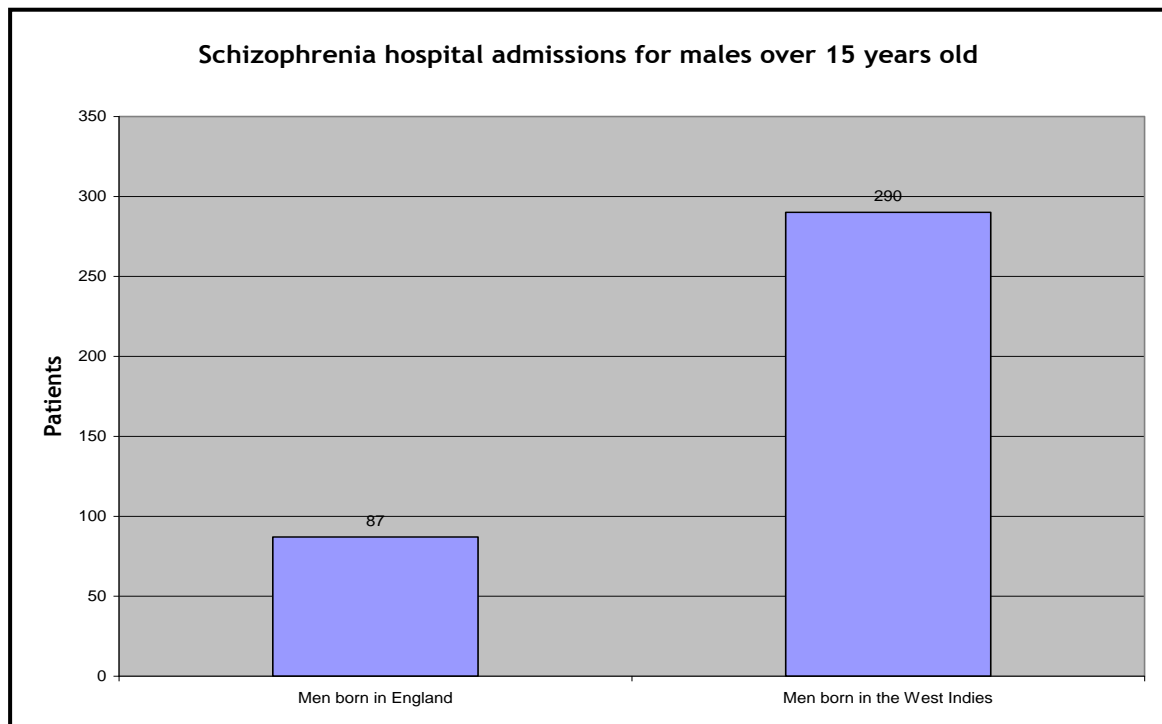
<sup>12</sup> Mandy Sharpley, G. Hutchinson, R. Murray, K. McKenzie (2001). Understanding the excess of psychosis among the African-Caribbean population in England: Review of current hypotheses, *British Journal of Psychiatry*, April 2001, 178 (40).

factors in migration, birth complications, childhood risk factors, cannabis use, the effects of urban living, social disadvantage, family dynamics and attitudes, racism, psychological factors that shape attitudes, such as education, and self-esteem.

### Environment

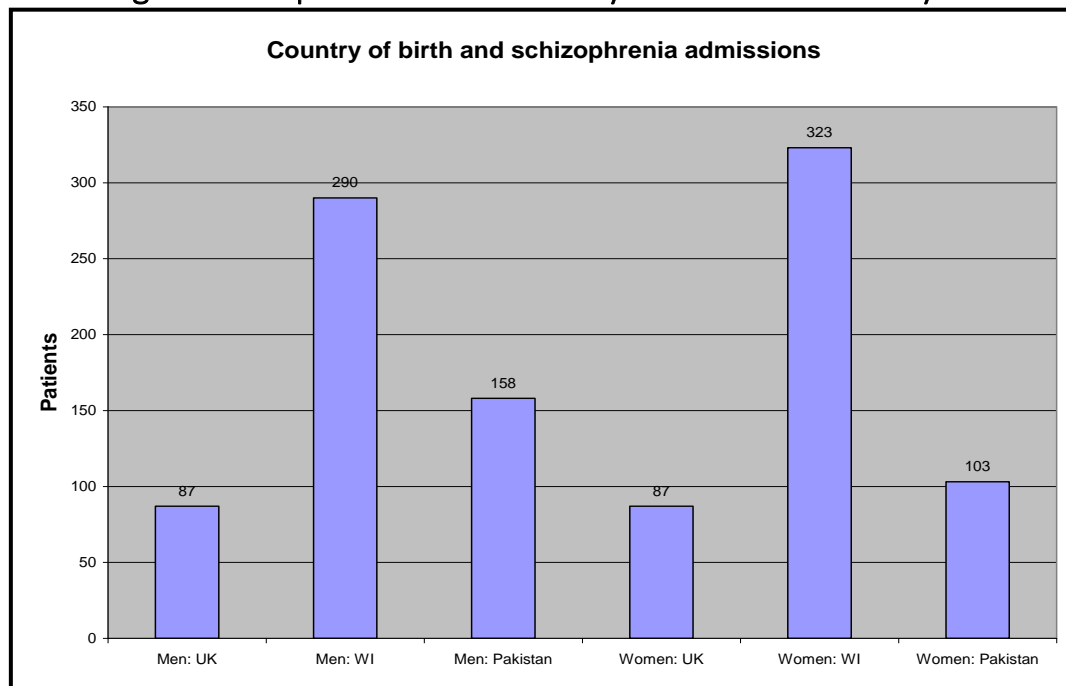
McKenzie *et al* conclude by saying that African-Caribbean people in the UK are at higher risk of meeting 'operational criteria for schizophrenia' than either people in their countries of origin, or UK white people. Such people also show a higher affective (mood component, *e.g.*, sadness) than white people; related to this is an increased rate of mania (bi-polar disorder). It seems clear that environmental factors are acting on second generation patients with schizophrenia who are in vulnerable families.

Fig 2: Schizophrenia admissions in England and Wales.<sup>13</sup>



<sup>13</sup> R. Cochrane, 1977, Mental Illness in Immigrants to England and Wales. An Analysis of Mental Hospital Admissions, *Social Psychiatry*, 12, 23-35. Cited in R. Littlewood & M. Lipsedge (1982, 2001, third edition), *Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic Minorities and Psychiatry*, London & New York, Routledge, 105.

Fig. 3. Schizophrenia admissions by culture and ethnicity. <sup>14</sup>



### iii. Status Anxiety, Fixed Mindset, Fragmented Connections, Shame

#### Status Anxiety

These four characteristics are all related, and are motivated by fear of what people may (or may not) be thinking about us. It is increasingly evident that 'status anxiety' <sup>15</sup> and self-perception as an ashamed 'loser' are very much a part of this.

By labelling the enslaved Africans in the Caribbean as 'naturally inferior', and thereby 'by nature' losers, there was quite literally nothing such incarcerated people could do. They were nature's pre-programmed 'non-achievers'. Is human potential *really* so 'fixed'? <sup>16</sup>

Psychologists and neurologists now know that such 'loser' labelling is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The smallest of things can promote it, such as a tick on a form, indicating whether a person is Black, female, or old, leading to *immediate* drops in performance. <sup>17</sup>

#### Fixed Mindset

This destructive cycle is a 'fixed mindset', and people with such an attitude tend to be insecure, defensive, aggressive, hypersensitive to criticism, and afraid of risks. <sup>18</sup> Since the brain is constantly changing, and never static (for to be static means to regress), all of this is represented at a neurological level.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> Following Alain de Botton (2004), *Status Anxiety*, London, Penguin

<sup>16</sup> Carol Dweck (2000). *Self-Theories: Their role in Motivation, personality, and development*, Psychology Press, Philadelphia; (2006), *Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential*, New York, Random House.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Adler (30/9/2000). *New Scientist*, 29-31.

<sup>18</sup> Carol Dweck, *op cit*

## Shame

‘Shame’ is defined as a ‘painful emotion resulting from an awareness of having done something wrong or foolish’. Caribbean people believe that their ancestors did precisely this.

Negative responses to shame include: denial, avoidance, aggression, defensiveness, scapegoating, feelings of rejection and inferiority, cover-ups, retaliation, helplessness and powerlessness, degradation, humiliation, and a sense of irredeemable badness—a ‘fixed identity’. This leads to a ‘fixed mindset’, in which people become obsessed with their public image.

## Fragmented Communities

A principle characteristic of Caribbean slavery was the fragility of the family. Mothers could be separated from their children at any time, either by death or being sold to another plantation. Attachment theory in psychology has shown that this break in the mother-child bond causes profound trauma for both mother and child, deeply affecting the child’s ongoing brain development. The more the child then has instability and multiple carers, the deeper the trauma. After a period of intense grief (marked by screaming and crying, looking for the absent mother, which may last for many weeks), the child enters quiet grief, which is misinterpreted as recovery. The child then grows up incapable of stable familial relationships.

In regard to behaviour characteristics in girls, it is notable that the earlier the father leaves home, the earlier the daughter will start sexual adventures, thus perpetuating the unstable family. Attachment trauma becomes not just a feature of a changed brain, but is represented by a social structure that perpetuates these traumatic brain changes.<sup>19</sup> It is the ‘first jolt of loneliness’, which establishes whether or not this will become a life-long trait.<sup>20</sup>

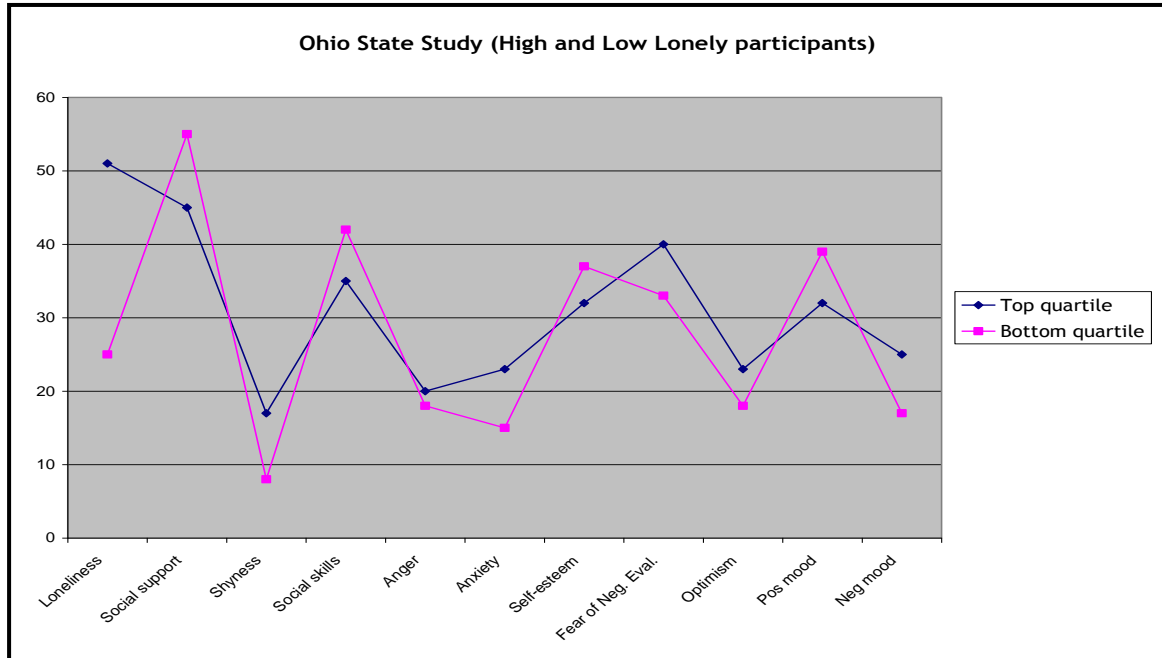
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<sup>19</sup> Sandra Bloom (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2013). *Creating Sanctuary: Toward the evolution of sane societies*, New York & Abingdon, Routledge

<sup>20</sup> J. Cacioppo (2008). *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection*, New York & London, Norton, 132.

Fig. 4: Students Level of Loneliness

Students high on loneliness reported lower levels of social support, higher levels of shyness, poorer social skills, higher anger, higher anxiety, lower self-esteem, higher fear of negative evaluation, lower optimism, lower positive mood, and higher negative mood. This matches the fixed mindset and status anxiety.



#### iv. Epigenetics and Trauma

There is scientific evidence from a growing new science known as epigenetics—‘added onto genetics’. At the heart of this approach is the study of chemical attachments to the genes. These attachments then control the ability of a gene to be ‘expressed’ or not expressed. What has emerged is the finding that trauma, especially in pregnancy, but also at other times, will affect the next generation, even if they were not themselves traumatised.

In practice, this means that the next generation will be more susceptible to schizophrenia, mood disorders such as bipolar, and depression. Set this within a vicious circle of a socialisation into dysfunctional family structures, and the result is a rolling stone that gathers constant epigenetic reinforcement in the form of mental illnesses.

Studies on the DNA of victims of famine from the permafrost in northern Norway from 200 years ago have supported this. As have research findings from traumatised victims of Nazi oppression in Holland, where 200,000 died in 1945, and on which longitudinal studies from that time to the present day, have been made. Similarly, victims of the holocaust have been found to have passed on epigenetic changes to their offspring.

In all of these cases there has been increased susceptibility to schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression.<sup>21</sup> This is only the tip of the iceberg. A study from July this year (2016) at Northwestern University, Illinois, revealed yet another twist to this story. In this study of African-American youth, genes were epigenetically switched off by the stress of trying to succeed in the face of racial prejudice.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Francis, Richard. C., *Epigenetics: How Environment shapes our genes*, London & New York, W.W Norton & Company, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> By Prof. Gregory Miller, at Northwestern University

## Dietary Deficiency

Finally, there is a fascinating possible connection to vitamin B deficiency, especially folic acid, and changes in DNA transcription according to the degree of polymorphism of the methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase gene.<sup>23</sup> In 1865 Juan Hava reported that beriberi was endemic in Cuba. In 1873 it was reported that mortality from beriberi was as much as 75% on Cuban *ingenios*.<sup>24</sup> This disease is due to dietary deficiency, in particular a lack of thiamine. Thiamine is part of the vitamin B complex, and is water-soluble. The slaves were on high carbohydrate diets, and this was their energy source. Carbohydrates require thiamine for metabolism. This means that the slaves were low on this essential vitamin.

Research shows that genetic 'expression' is altered by social factors, such as excess labour and the diet needed to cope with these stresses (through various over- or under- chemical attachment to the genes, such as by methyl), resulting in diabetes and schizophrenia, depression and mood disorders in the next generation.

What is it that helps to reverse these epigenetic effects, especially those of vitamin B deficiency? It is folic acid and vitamin B12! These can reverse the epigenetic effects of the destruction caused by malnutrition on the foetus in the womb!<sup>25</sup> It therefore may be the case that beriberi was not only a cause of death on the plantations, but was also a part of a social environment that led to malfunctioning gene expressions in the womb, these in turn giving rise to schizophrenia, depression, mood disorders, and diabetes.<sup>26</sup>

## 3. Conclusions

The description of mental illnesses given here departs from the limited 'absence of mental illness' definition. Taking such definitions as 'freedom from worry and guilt', self-acceptance, open-mindedness and flexibility, there is a great deal of mental health pathology in the Caribbean population. Steven Pinker thinks that the social setting is very much part of the equation, in that violent societies tend to be characterized by high stress levels, and hence high levels of stress-response disorders.

Social factors seem to offer the best explanations. The ÆSOP Study<sup>27</sup> showed that parental separation and loss before sixteen years was strongly correlated to the onset of psychosis.<sup>28</sup> Absent fathers in Caribbean households has been identified as a significant factor in psychosis.<sup>29</sup> One study showed a dose-response relationship, suggesting that discrimination may trigger

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<sup>23</sup> M. J. Dealberto (2007). Why are Immigrants at Increased Risk for Psychosis? Vitamin D Insufficiency, Epigenetic Mechanisms, or Both? *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, Volume 68, Issue 2, pages 259-267.

<sup>24</sup> Spanish, Plantations

<sup>25</sup> Richard C. Francis (2011). *Epigenetics: how environment shapes our genes*, London & New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 58-9.

<sup>26</sup> For a pioneering article, see Kenneth F. & Virginia H. Kiple (1980). Deficiency Diseases in the Caribbean, in *Health and Disease in Human History* (ed. Robert L. Rotbert, 2000), MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 231-248.

<sup>27</sup> Aetiology and Ethnicity in Schizophrenia and Other Psychoses.

<sup>28</sup> ÆSOP, cited in Rebecca Pinto & R. Jones (2008), Schizophrenia in Black Caribbeans living in the UK: An Exploration of Underlying Causes of the High Incidence Rate, *British Journal of General Practice*, 58 (551) : 429-434.

<sup>29</sup> C. Morgan, J. Kirkbride, J. Leff (2007). Parental Separation, Loss and Psychosis in Different Ethnic Groups: A case Control Study. *Psychological Medicine*, 37 (4): 495-503. Cited in Pinto & Jones, *op cit.*

## Proving Legacy – MJR research 2016

schizophrenia.<sup>30</sup> Pigmentocracy therefore likely plays a part, as darkness of skin invites greater racial prejudice.<sup>31</sup> Perception of discrimination increases the risk of schizophrenia.<sup>32</sup>

The challenge is to create a plausible aetiology of slavery and pathologies. Present epidemiology cannot demonstrate a causal relationship. Pinker's research however does suggest real possibilities, but this needs further investigation. The figure (below, based on Hickling) attempts this.<sup>33</sup>

The best explanation at present is represented by the following table:

<b>In Caribbean</b>				
Dysfunctional family	+ Broken social connections	+ Perceived alienation	=	Mental illness
<b>In UK</b>				
2. Dysfunctional family	+ Broken social connections	+ Perceived alienation	+ Perceived racism	= Mental illness

## 4. Further Research

This initial study has concentrated on investigating whether the experiences of colonial slavery are still impacting the psychological and mental health of those from the African Caribbean diaspora. In order to develop this research further, additional empirical data should be gathered to investigate some of the conclusions in greater depth. This could be carried out by utilizing a combination of standardised questionnaires, new questionnaire design and epigenetic testing.

A further field of study is to consider the extent to which there is a direct link between chattel enslavement and debilitating illnesses which are prevalent among those from the Caribbean such as diabetes, alcohol addiction and sickle cell anaemia. This is an area of study that is currently being developed by MJR. An outline of this study is included below.

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<sup>30</sup> <sup>30</sup> I. Jannsen, M. Hanssen, M. Bak *et al* (2003), Discrimination and Delusional Ideation, *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 182:71-76. Cited in Pinto & Jones, *op cit*.

<sup>31</sup> D. R. Williams (1999). Socioeconomic Status, and Health: The Added Effects of Racism and Discrimination, *Annual of NY Academic Science*, 896: 173-188. Cited in Pinto & Jones, *op cit*.

<sup>32</sup> W. Veling, J-P Seleten, E. Susser, *et al* (2007). Discrimination and the Incidence of Psychotic Disorders Among Ethnic Minorities in the Netherlands, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 36 (4): 761-768. Cited in Pinto & Jones, *op cit*.

<sup>33</sup> Hickling *et al*, *op cit*., 277.

## Part Two

### (b) Physical Health

#### The Bitter Sweet Legacy of Enslavement!

##### 1. Outline of Study

This is an on-going piece of research to investigate the extent to which there is a direct link between chattel enslavement and debilitating illnesses which are prevalent among those from the African-Caribbean diaspora such as diabetes, alcohol addiction and sickle cell anaemia.

Initially, this study will investigate whether there are physical and mental health issues which can be directly attributed to the trans-Atlantic slave. This will be done by:

- Gathering and analysing empirical information from sources in the Caribbean (UWI), from studies already available, relating to high levels and incidences of diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and other factors.
- Gathering information about the incidences of debilitating diseases among the BME community in the UK from the NHS statistics and compare them with those from the Caribbean.
- Extracting information relating to those directly descended from the slave community and compare it to incidences from the indigenous population in the UK.

Due to the size of this project the initial focus will be on the illness of diabetes and its impact on the African Caribbean community in the UK. Diabetes is a disease that affects people across the world, however from empirical data gathered over the past twenty years, it is clear that people from African-Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds have a greater propensity to develop Type 2 Diabetes than their European counterparts.

A few projects have already been established to study the onset of diabetes in predominately Caribbean heritage people in the UK and in the Caribbean. The findings of these projects will be a central part of the investigation. The Barbados Eye Study project (BES), funded by the National Eye Institute, focuses on examining the prevalence of diabetes among the black population in Barbados. The SABRE<sup>34</sup> and the SABRE revisited medical research projects, conducted in the London Borough of Brent, focuses on the prevalence and development of diabetes across the three ethnic groups (Europeans, Indian Asians and African-Caribbeans).

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<sup>34</sup> The Southall And Brent Revisited Study is a medical research study started in 1988 in West London and is funded by two charities; The Wellcome Trust and The British Heart Foundation. Published in *J Hypertens.* 2016 Feb; 34(2): 282-289.

As expressed in the paper investigating the mental aspects of chattel enslavement, initial investigations would seem to indicate that there is evidence that chemical attachments in genes are affected by trauma which affects the way genes are 'expressed' in future generations. There is also evidence to prove that social factors, such as family breakdown, resulting in separation and loss, have a strong bearing on the susceptibility to disease.

## 2. Development

The greater predominance of diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, sickle cell anaemia, illnesses relating to alcohol abuse, and higher levels of mental health among people with an African phenotype with a Caribbean heritage, suggest that there is a huge problem which needs to be addressed. Since the ancestry of the vast majority of those people are from the enslavement of Africans, this suggests that there is a link between the brutality experienced during enslavement and the high prominence of these diseases.

During the years of enslavement, Africans would do whatever it took to survive. So diet control and healthy eating were not part of their remit. Whilst working in the sugarcane fields, the workers would chew the sugarcane which resulted in them developing a sweet tooth and they and their descendants become addicted to sugar. The situation was further exacerbated as they then drank the alcohol produced from the rum to ease the pain of enslavement which did not ameliorate their health problems.

It is generally thought that the higher rate of diabetes among South Asian and Caribbean women is due to increased levels of obesity in particular the build-up of fat around the waist and the higher resistance to insulin which helps the body process sugar. Researchers suggest that weight control, a healthy diet and physical exercise is a general way of reducing the risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. However, the scientific discipline of epigenetics suggests that, trauma experienced by ancestors affects their descendants more than 200 years in the future.<sup>35</sup> It is also well documented that the family history of an individual i.e. their ancestry, has a direct bearing on the type of diseases that they are likely to develop in the future. Consequently, folks who have a family history of a particular ailment, such as coronary heart disease, are more likely to develop the same disease.

From the data gathered over the past 30 years, it would seem that black and minority ethnic populations have a greater propensity to develop Type 2 diabetes compared to their European counterparts. The risk is more pronounced for people of African Caribbean descent living in the UK as they seem to develop the disease around the ages of 66-67. The onset of diabetes at an older age amongst those from a Black Caribbean heritage is further substantiated by studies in Barbados, particularly the EYE Studies Group, which showed that black people were five times more likely to develop diabetes in old age compared to their white counterparts.<sup>36</sup>

## 3. Recommendations for Future Research

This exploratory piece of research would seem to suggest that the conditions endured during the period of chattel enslavement could have led to the predominance of certain diseases in the

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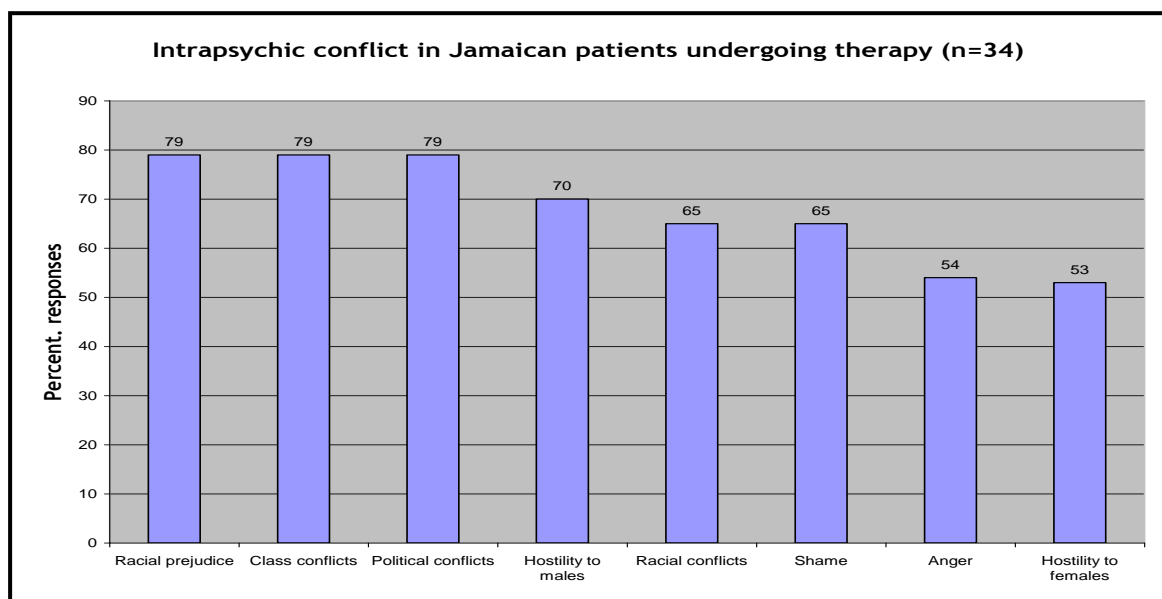
<sup>35</sup> Francis, Richard. C., *Epigenetics: How Environment shapes our genes*, London & New York, W.W Norton & Company, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> See Diabetes in the Caribbean population: epidemiological profile and implications, *International Journal of Epidemiology*: 2002, 31, p.235

African-Caribbean populous. Further research is required in order to investigate this hypothesis in more detail. The field of epi-genetics, in general, is making great strides in proving that the genome can be altered according to environmental conditions and new studies could be helpful to our investigations. An interesting line of future enquiry would be to compare the levels of diabetes among those with West African heritage and those in the Caribbean diaspora.

## Appendix C: Health Graphs

Fig. 5. Findings from a Jamaican sample in Jamaica.<sup>37</sup>



<sup>37</sup> F. W. Hickling, Jacqueline Martin, Allison Harrisingh-Dewar (2008). Redefining personality disorder in Jamaica, in F.W. Hickling *et al* (eds), *Perspectives in Caribbean Psychology*, London & Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley, 275-276.

Fig. 6: An aetiology of the effects of Caribbean slavery.

Multiple variables interact and compound or ameliorate each other.

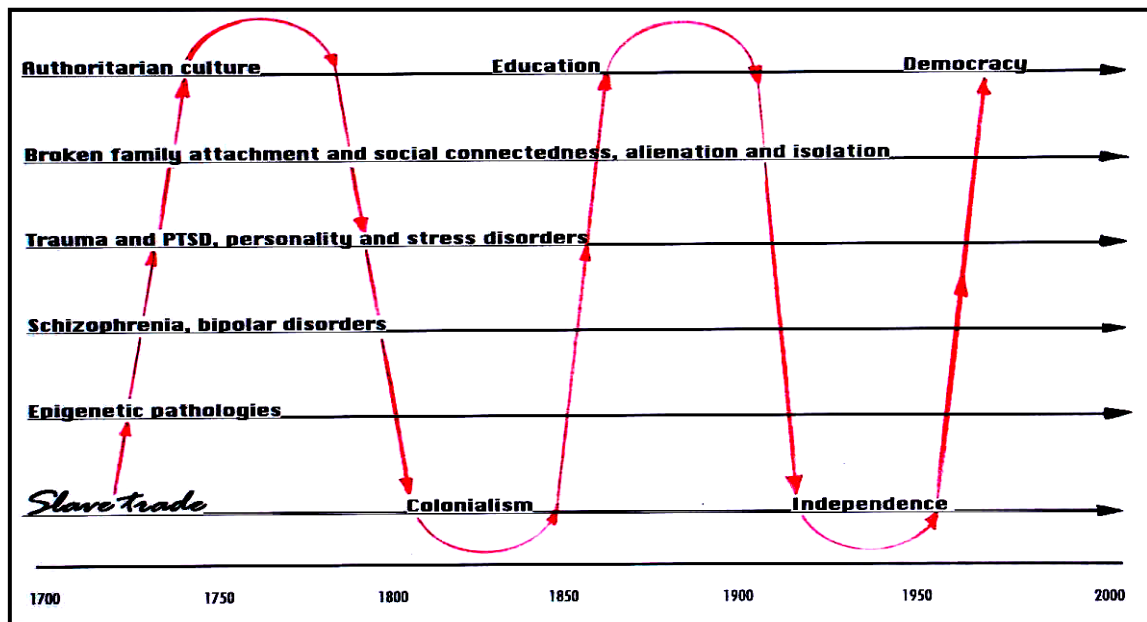
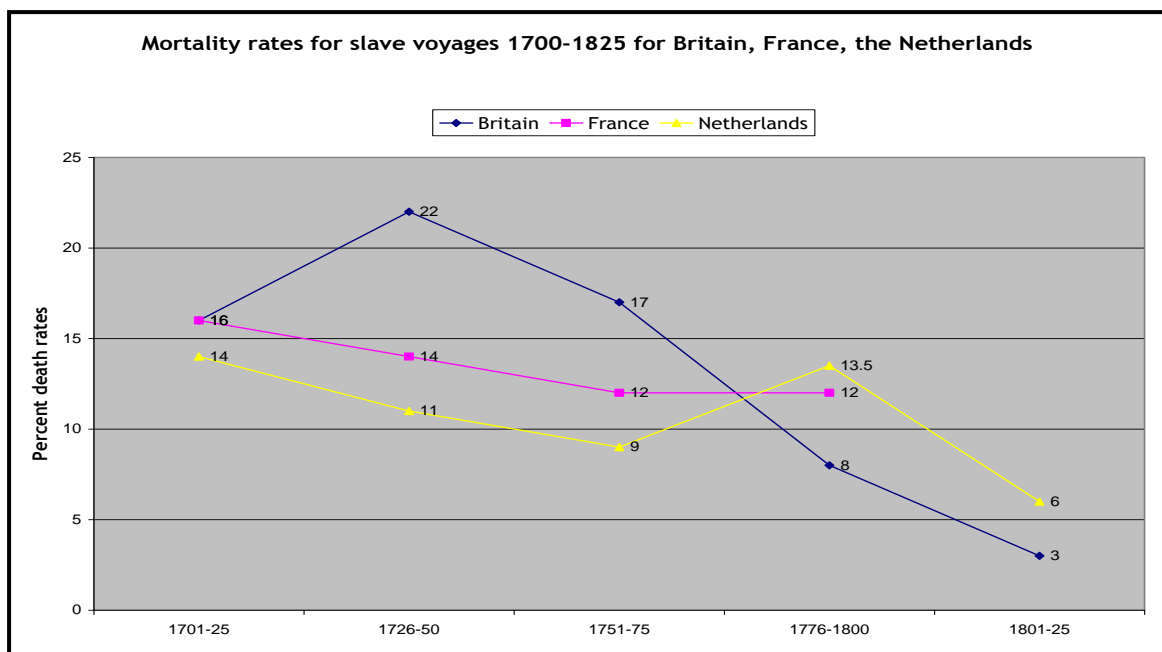


Fig. 7: Voyage Mortality Rates

A more democratic culture in England impacted the culture of violence in the slave trade: absolute monarchy vs. incipient parliamentary democracy. Autocratic France had a slave mortality rate that showed a slower rate of decline.<sup>38</sup>



<sup>38</sup> Figures computed from the *Transatlantic Slave Database*, CUP, 1999.

Fig. 8: Abolition of official torture 1675-1875.

Democracy and Protestantism are probably correlated.<sup>39</sup>

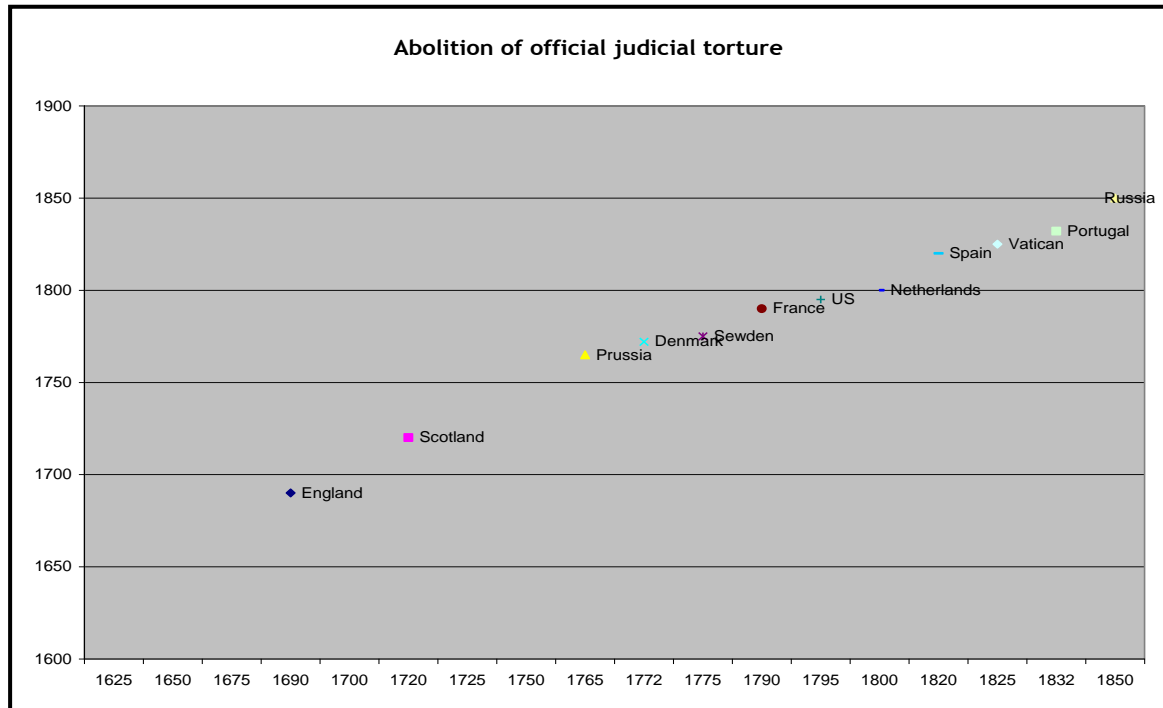
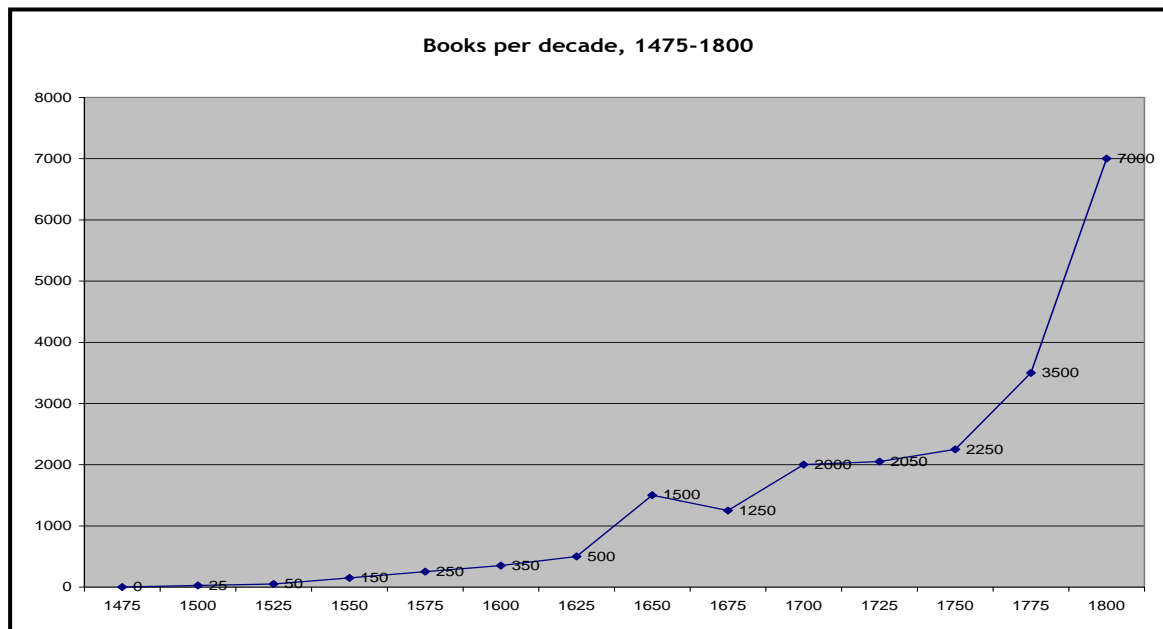


Fig. 9: Books in Education

Education is a key part of decreasing stress and violence in society through the creation of greater openness and democracy. These are books in English.<sup>40</sup>



<sup>39</sup> S. Pinker (2011). *The Better Angels of Our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and its Causes*, London & New York, Allen Lane, 149.

<sup>40</sup> Pinker, *op cit.*, 173.



## CONCLUSIONS

### Legacy

This small study, although determined by limited resources, nevertheless has a high level of academic integrity and its findings are significant. They indicate that there are strong causal links between colonial slavery in the British Caribbean territories and some of the social phenomena being identified today among members of the African Caribbean Diaspora. Although slavery was terminated by the 1833 Act of Emancipation, its effects can still be seen today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is a highly significant finding with both socio-economic and political implications.

### Social Issues

The 'Movement for Justice and Reconciliation' is not a campaigning organisation, or a lobby group seeking recompense. It is primarily a research institution set up by a group of community leaders living and working in inner-city areas of the UK. They have been deeply concerned by observable phenomena that has been largely ignored for many years. This study seeks to understand the roots of social issues identified by teachers, social workers, probation officers and other professionals.

### Results

The study has revealed some unexpected results as well as confirming conclusions that had already been reached on the basis of observable phenomena. The evidence confirms that there is a legacy of slavery that has been passed down the generations for nearly 200 years. This legacy affects the health and educational achievement of young people in the Caribbean communities in Britain and consequentially is a determinant of their lifestyles and future life-chances.

### Health

There are major health determinants, particularly in terms of mental health which the study has confirmed. It is of considerable significance that in both education and health, people of direct African descent resident in Britain do not share the same phenomena as the Caribbeans although they all have the same ethnological heritage. The difference between the two populations is 'slavery' which was never experienced by the Africans except after transportation to the West Indies.

### Education

In keeping with the findings of similar research, this study highlights the low level of educational achievement of Caribbean boys. However, the unexpected finding was that white boys in inner-city areas, although being socialised and educated alongside Caribbean boys, are actually achieving lower levels of educational attainment. Once again, this research identifies 'slavery' as a root, which goes back to a similar period in history but with a different geographical basis – the Industrial Revolution in Britain that both fuelled and benefited from colonial slavery.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The trustees of MJR wish to commend this research to social professionals, to politicians, and to all who care for the welfare of young people in inner-city areas of Britain. They have been particularly encouraged by Prime Minister Theresa May's declaration that her Government is committed to dealing with the social issues among the disadvantaged in the cities of Britain. We therefore hope that our recommendations for further research of the issues we identify in this study will be given the support that is needed; and that social policy measures will follow the

findings of this study as a step towards bringing justice into the lives of those for whom it has been denied for such a long time.

### **Summary of Recommended Areas for Further Educational Study**

Further study of the granular data of the National pupil database is recommended. This includes data broken down to an individual pupil level which might highlight patterns and regional variations that are hidden by the 'lump sum' approach.

This in turn could lead to further related analyses, looking at broader economic indicators of a region or relevant education policies and investment at national or local levels:

#### **Areas of Study should include:**

- i. Fixed term exclusion rates by ethnicity and poverty
- ii. Permanent exclusion rates by ethnicity and poverty
- iii. KS2 achievement rates by ethnicity and poverty
- iv. Progression rates from GCSE to A levels by ethnicity and poverty (and which subjects are being studied)
- v. Progression rates to university and college by ethnicity and poverty (this might indicate whether education is a route to social mobility)
- vi. Case studies to identify other social factors influencing achievement such as family background

### **Summary of Recommended Areas for Further Research on Health Issues**

This initial study has concentrated on investigating whether the experiences of colonial slavery are still impacting the psychological and mental health of those from the African Caribbean diaspora. In order to develop this research further, additional empirical data should be gathered to investigate some of the conclusions in greater depth. This could be carried out by utilizing a combination of standardised questionnaires, new questionnaire design and epigenetic testing.

A further field of study is to consider the extent to which there is a direct link between chattel enslavement and debilitating illnesses which are prevalent among those from the Caribbean such as diabetes, alcohol addiction and sickle cell anaemia. This is an area of study that is currently being developed by MJR.

Further research is also required in order to investigate the field of epi-genetics. New studies would be helpful, such as a comparison of the levels of diabetes among those with West African heritage and those in the Caribbean diaspora.

### **Recommended Social Action**

It is strongly recommended that a series of key educational interventions should be undertaken in inner-city areas in different parts of the country. Their specific aim should be to combat the low self-image of both Caribbean and White boys from poor socio-economic backgrounds. These interventions could make a significant impact upon learning potential which in turn would have a positive social outcome, reducing the dependency of these boys upon local gang culture. A programme of careful monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of these educational interventions should be undertaken, with particular stress upon comparative studies in different areas of the country.