



Abstract

This study is the first empirical exploration of the relationships between Black young people, school exclusions and incarceration in the UK, with an ethnographic focus on Birmingham, the second city in this country. It builds on Graham's study (2015) and critically explores her claims that the trends are worse in the UK than in the US after shockwaves of austerity, racism and failing public services.

Birmingham's exclusion rates for Black schoolchildren are representative of the UK, and it has similar levels of population density and ethnic diversity to London (BCC, 2020).

This research offers a place-based understanding of the practices and experiences of the education and criminal justice system from the perspective of excluded school children, parents, teachers, prisoners, and former prisoners.

Introduction

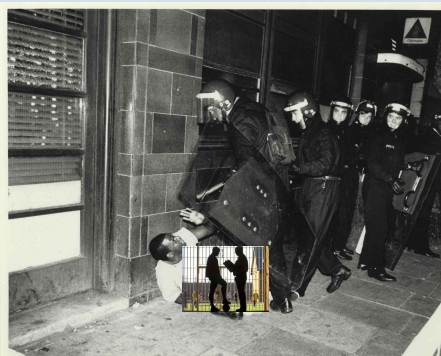
The proposed study applies Graham's (2015) gendered framework to Black Caribbean youth. Graham explores the correlations between men's experiences of the educational and judicial systems and argues that through the life experiences of the interviewees, the school served as a preparation for prison.

Building on and diverting from American research (Gilmore, 2007, Heitzeg, 2016, Sojourner, 2016, Mallett, 2016), the structural racism that channels Black young people into prison in the US is rooted in its history of enslavement. The British context, of course, is deeply implicated in this. Still, there are additional and untapped drivers of racial inequality, including different patterns of migration (e.g., historical and ongoing racism against those coming to Britain from the Caribbean), a unique political system, culture and history of colonisation. It is an urgent and timely investigation that promises to shed light on a significant form of 'symbolic violence' in contemporary Britain.

Methodology

The study uses an almost ethnographic/ life-history approach (participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups) to examine three local case studies: (1) An example of 'alternative provision' (local authority-funded education for pupils not in school). (2) The prison, HMP Featherstone, is near Wolverhampton in Staffordshire. (3) Life-history interviews with former prisoners

These case studies allow for a multi-positional view of the experiences of young Black males who have been excluded from education and/or imprisoned. This approach allows the study to explore both the experiences and processes of exclusion and incarceration.



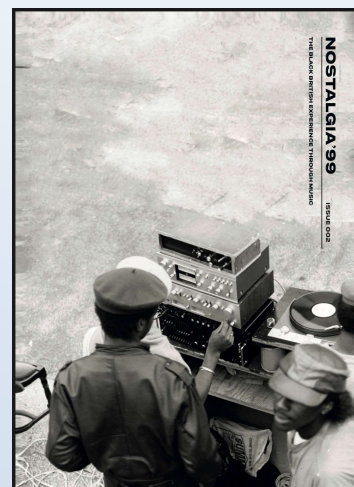
Research Questions

1. What are the linkages between educational and criminal justice experiences?
2. What are the experiences of young Black people who face exclusion from mainstream education?
3. What are there any processes through which young people and their communities resist, challenge and avoid the paths from classrooms to prison cells?



References

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Criminalization of Black Youth

My latest magazine edition of Nostalgia '99 explores the deep-rooted histories of state criminalization of 'Blackness'. These same notions are still deeply ingrained in the education system in the 21st century. Available to purchase at: www.nostalgia99.uk



Impact

This study offers a timely investigation into 'symbolic violence' in contemporary Britain. It will impact a range of debates around the nature, extent, and experience of the school-to-prison pipeline.

It also impacts debates and practices around community activism and social mobilisation - The Black Curriculum, an antiracist educational organisation, and it's No More Exclusions campaign is an example of these attempts to galvanise the Black community on the importance of education.