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Anti-racist work with white young people

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White Young People and Racism

- High proportion of racial crimes are committed by children and young people, including high-profile racist murders(CRE/British Crime Survey)
- Many white young people are much more positive about diversity than their parents(e.g. club/music culture; growing number of mixed relationships - Tariq Modood/PSI), but some young people display extreme racist attitudes and behaviour
- Parental/community racism is *partly* to blame, but some young people are actively creating cultures/ideologies of racism(Les Back) and acting them out
- Growing evidence of a 'white backlash' - some white young people and communities see themselves as the *real* victims, as victims of polices and official attitudes that 'favour' ethnic minorities, and of 'clumsy anti-racism'(Hewitt)

- Many white (and Asian) young people involved in riots and racial tension are classed by the Government as 'socially excluded' or 'not in education and training'. Is racism a symptom of much deeper poverty and exclusion?
- Territory is an issue in itself - as housing is racially segregated, how much racial tension is actually about 'turf'? (Webster)

Community Cohesion

- Community Cohesion - it is easier to describe the current lack of 'cohesion' than to analyse why we are in this situation, or how we move forward
- Integrating housing and schools is going to be a very long term process, so education-based approaches which bring young people together on a negotiated and voluntary basis offer more immediate hope

- My research with young people using youth work provision in Oldham supported this, with young people very positive about the cross-community contact involved. This can develop 'Bridging Social Capital', which enables young people to develop understanding and ties across community/territory divides

The role of Educators/Professionals

- University of Huddersfield research show that youth workers and other professionals are often scared of 'getting it wrong' when engaging with young people around racism. Training needs to emphasise professional confidence, competence and skills in tackling racism, rather than deficits of awareness and knowledge
- Community Cohesion does acknowledge the need to engage in open and questioning dialogue with all communities around their willingness to work together - we need to take that

openness and mutual respect into our own professional practice

- **Connexions** is all about 'joined up thinking' around young people's social exclusion, but how 'joined up' is our thinking and work around anti-racism/community cohesion? Are we all working together, or are we protecting our 'turf' and our work with 'our' young people?

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