**Ethnic Differences in Educational Achievement**

**LO:** To understand and evaluate the role of external factors in ethnic differences in educational achievement

**Introduction: What are the patterns of ethnic differences in achievement?**

**Firstly: what are ethnic groups?**

“People who share common history, customs and identity, as well as religion and language (mostly)”

- The ethnic group with the highest entitlement (in %) to FSM in the UK is Bangladeshi (38.5%), followed closely by Black African at 33.6%
- Chinese, Indian and Bangladeshi children tend to perform above the national average (GCSE results)
- White pupils make the lowest levels of progress between 11 and 16 than Asian and Black pupils – possible that they may become the lowest performing ethnic group.
- Only 23% of white boys on FSM (a common measure of low income) gained 5 A* - C grades at GCSE.

**External Factors and Ethnic Differences**

- **NOTE:** Worth bearing in mind that the patterns of ethnic differences are complicated due to the overlapping influences e.g. ethnicity and class (FSM), boys performing worse than girls within ethnic groups...

**Cultural Deprivation – Inadequate socialisation**

**Intellectual and Linguistic Skills**

Cultural deprivation theorists argue that many children from low income black families lack intellectual stimulation and enriching experiences. This leaves them poorly equipped for schools because they have not been able to develop reasoning and problem solving skills.

**Evidence:** Bereiter and Engelmann (1966)
Language spoken by low income black American families is inadequate – ungrammatical, disjointed and incapable of expressing abstract ideas.

“It is characterized by grammatically simple and often unfinished sentences, poor syntactic form, simple and repetitive use of conjunctions, the inability to hold a formal topic through speech sequences, a rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs, etc.”

**What about home language?**

**AO1: Description**
There is concern that children that do not speak English at home may be held back educationally.
Language barriers at home may create a barrier in communication at school, which means a child is less likely to understand questioning and written feedback in school.

**AO3: Evaluation**
However there is a wealth of evidence which challenges the negative impact of language differences. Gillborn and Mirza (2000) note that Indian pupils do very well academically, despite not having English as their home language.

**What about white working class pupils?** They often underachieve and show low aspirations!

**LINK:** This suggests that other factors may be having more influence.....

**Cultural Deprivation – Inadequate socialisation**

**Family Structure and Parental Support**

Quick discussion:
Do you think there is a difference between ethnic groups and parental support? Do some ethnic families show more support that others?

**Ethnic groups to consider:**
- Sewell (2009) – black boys – fathers, gangs and culture
- Archer and Francis (2007)
### Family Structure and Parental Support

**Archer and Francis (2007)**
Chinese pupils are more successful than any other ethnic group in the British Education System.

Archer and Francis (2007) found that the parents of Chinese pupils place an exceptionally high value on education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>White-British (working class)</th>
<th>Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian Asian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Black Caribbean</th>
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**Lupton (2004) – Asian and White British**

Adult authority in Asian families is similar to that of the authority in schools.

Respectful behaviour towards adults was expected from children at home and this had a knock on effect towards teachers in schools.

Parents were also much more likely to support the school's behaviour policy.

Lower working class White British families in the most disadvantaged areas have an indifferent or negative attitude towards learning and school, as well as low aspirations for their children.

### Cultural Deprivation – Inadequate socialisation

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**Sewell (2009) – black boys – fathers, gangs and culture**

Some facts to consider from a DofE report (1997)

- Black pupils (particularly boys) are more likely to be permanently excluded than any other ethnic group.
- Black pupils are 1.5 times more likely than white pupils to be identified with a behavioural need (consequence of this?)
- Disproportionately put into bottom sets even though this does not reflect ability
- Much less likely to be identified as gifted and talented.

Sewell (2009) suggests that these finds are related to the relatively high proportion of Black African pupils raised in lone parent families (usually the lone mother). This may lead to some boys lacking male role models and the discipline provided by a father figure.

**We will focus on the following pieces of evidence:**

- Ferguson (2001) – black identities
- Sewell (2009) – black boys – fathers, gangs and culture
- Archer and Francis (2007) – Chinese

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Cultural Hypothesis of Family Structure and Parental Support

What about white pupils?!  
White working class pupils often underachieve and have low aspirations e.g. to attend university. 
This is often blamed on lower levels of parental support and the negative attitude that white working class parents have on education.

Only 23% of white boys on FSM (a common measure of low income) gained 5 A*-C grades at GCSE.

Evidence against 'play out' the power game in streets = disruption.  
Evans (2006) street culture in white working class areas – white pupils "play out" the power game, as they do on the streets = disruption.

Critique of Sewell’s 2009 ideas

Sewell has been strongly criticised for blaming Black Caribbean’s for their underachievement rather than focusing on the inadequacies of the education system itself. 

Ferguson (2001)  
US study – black students felt they need to shed the distinguishing features of "blackness" by approximating "whiteness" in order to accumulate the cultural capital that prerequisite for achievement. 
Black pupils needed to adapt their black identity to fit in with the SCHOOL’s "ideal pupil"...

Institutional racism (will come to this later)

How can Ferguson be used to challenge Sewell's ideas?

Material Deprivation and Ethnic Achievement

- Material Deprivation –Lack of physical necessities and are seen as essential or ‘normal’ for a life in today’s society. Links to CLASS. 
- Ethnic minorities are more likely to experience material deprivation:  
  - Palmer (2012).....
  - Almost 1/3 of all ethnic minority children live in low income households. 
  - Almost 1/5 of Bangladeshi and Pakistani workers earned under £7 per hour compared with 1/4 of white British workers 
  - Ethnic minorities are almost twice as likely to be unemployed compared to whites.

Other influencing factors.....

For each factor, discuss what impact it could have on educational performance and why. 

- Ethnic minority workers are more likely to be engaged in shift work. 
- Parents (particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani women) are more likely to be engaged in low paid housework. 
- Ethnic minorities are almost twice as likely to be unemployed compared to whites.
- Many ethnic minorities are likely to live in economically depressed areas with high unemployment and low wage rates.
- Ethnic minority students are more likely to be on FSM.
- Inability to pay for trips or educational resources (both in primary and secondary schools)
- Q: Why do you think ethnic minorities are at greater risk of being materially deprived.

Cultural Difference Hypothesis

Heavily disagrees with Cultural Deprivation Theory. It is not a problem of inadequate socialisation; it is because there is a cultural difference between Home and School which means many ethnic minority pupils do not relate to, and are not recognised by the Curriculum.

Evidences For: 
- Majority of teachers and role models in school are from a white and middle class background. So students may find it hard to identify and may also feel marginalised.
- Some children may have lacked access to a decent education in early years, disadvantaging them later.

Evidences Against: 
- Does not explain why different ethnic groups with similar cultural disconnects have such different attainment. E.g. Indian and Asian families compared to Pakistani and Caribbean.
- Why do only 50% of White students attain 5 good GCSEs? Cultural Deprivation Theory may explain this better than Cultural Difference.

Material Deprivation Theory

Material Deprivation can both directly and indirectly influence attainment (NOTE: Some of these you know already!)

Evidence For: 
- Less access to varied experiences or styles of play, which can impair cognitive development.
- Less space or more stressful environment in which to study. 
- May be more open to being bullied. May also be more likely to move house regularly causing disruption.
- Q: Why you think material deprivation still perform better than most e.g. 85% of girls on FSM achieve more than 5 A*-C grades at GCSE compared to 65% of white girls NOT receiving FSM.

Evidence Against: 
- Indian and Chinese pupils who are materially deprived still perform better than most e.g. 85% of girls on FSM achieve more than 5 A*-C grades at GCSE compared to 65% of white girls NOT receiving FSM.
So, what is having the larger impact on educational performance? Is it class/material deprivation or ethnicity? Let's assess the evidence and everything so far....

- Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils are most likely to be entitled to FSM. However, being on FSM appears to affect the educational achievement of white British pupils more.
- Indian and Chinese pupils who are materially deprived still perform better than most.
- Black-Caribbean families have very similar rates of poverty to Indian families who perform extremely well.

The evidence suggests that material deprivation is having a huge impact but for some ethnic groups more than others. Others argue that the poverty itself is due to other factors – Racism in Wider Society...

Racism in Wider Society – The Evidence

‘Discrimination is a continuing and persistent feature of the experience of Britain’s citizens of minority ethnic origin.’ (Mason 1995)

Rex 1986 - Racial discrimination leads to social exclusion and this worsens the poverty faced by ethnic minorities. In housing, for instance, they are more likely to be forced into substandard accommodation than white people of the same class.

Noon 1993 - Evidence of discrimination in employment. In identical letters sent out to the top 100 UK firms, one signed 'Evans' and one 'Patel', firms were more encouraging to the white candidate. This has been repeated with the same results by the BBC and government in recent years.