

4

Prejudice and persecution

4.1

What is meant by prejudice?

What are stereotypes?

Stereotypes are the fixed pictures we carry around in our heads of various groups of people. When we stereotype a group of people we are giving them a label or category. We often find it convenient to make complicated things more straightforward by grouping and labelling them. This is why we use stereotypes to help us understand a very complex world. Stereotyping is a part of our **socialisation** and in every culture there are different stereotypes.

You may decide there is some truth in many of the stereotypes you have discussed. The problem is that sometimes people think stereotypes are totally true because it simplifies the world for them.



'Women like cooking' 'Men watch football'



'Boys like fighting'



'Girls cry a lot'

A Some commonly held stereotypes

Activity

- Copy the grid and describe the common stereotypes for each group.
 - Compare your grid with other students. If there are lots of similarities it proves how widely held stereotypes of these groups of people are.
 - Do you think stereotypes are useful? Explain your answer in a short paragraph.

Social groups	Toddlers	Parents	Elderly
Nationalities	Spanish	Americans	Japanese
Occupational Groups	Builders	Cleaners	Lawyers

Objectives

You will be able to:

understand why stereotypes are common and can be harmful

understand why people are scapegoated

understand how prejudices are formed and how they are often harmful.

Key terms

Stereotype: a fixed, general view of a whole group of people which does not recognise individual differences. Stereotypes are usually negative.

Socialisation: the process by which a child learns the ways of its culture. It can be seen as a process of stages.

Group activity

- Divide into groups. Look at the pictures in Source A.
 - Decide which common stereotypes they illustrate.
 - Do you think there is any truth in any of the four stereotypes?
 - Can you think of other stereotypes about men, women, boys and girls?

Stereotypes affect the way we think about the world. They can trick us into thinking the world is a much simpler place to understand than it really is. Stereotypes can be a little like small child's painting of a house – one-dimensional.

Why can stereotypes be harmful?

While many stereotypes can be quite innocent and inoffensive, many of them can be harmful. Stereotypes which apply to representations of gender, ethnicity, social class, age, sexuality and disability are often negative and therefore offensive.

Source B is an example of a stereotype which has led the adults to blame a whole group of people, in this case, teenagers, for something they have not necessarily done. While some teenagers may be noisy, rude and violent, they are certainly not all like that. What is more, it is not true that most crime is caused by teenagers. These adults are blaming teenagers for all violent crime – which is clearly not true.

Activity

- Look at Source B. Explain in a short paragraph why these adults are mistaken to hold this stereotype of teenagers and why it maybe harmful and offensive to you.

Imagine you heard two adults talking about teenagers in the following way.



Going further

- Research how much violent crime is, in fact, committed by teenagers. Decide for yourself how much truth is in the stereotype that teenagers are the main cause of crime in Britain. Use the British Crime Survey.
 - Keep a log of the television that you watch in an evening. Record all the instances when you believe a character is being treated as a stereotype.

Why are people used as scapegoats?

Using a stereotype to blame a whole group of people for something they have not necessarily done is called **scapegoating**. The word comes from a story in the Bible which tells how a high priest would place his hand upon a goat's head and transfer the sins of the people to the goat which was then released into the desert. The goat was blamed for the mistakes committed by others. It is common to blame others for our own mistakes, and especially those who are unable to defend themselves.

Minorities, or **outsider groups**, are often the targets of scapegoating because they are the weakest groups in society with less power to influence popular opinion. The majority are more easily convinced about the negative characteristics of a minority with which they have no direct contact because they do not hear the opposing points of view. Unemployment, rising prices, diseases and crime are all examples of problems which have been blamed on minorities. The mass media often helps to form and influence stereotypes and scapegoats.

Activity

- 3 Look at Source C.
- a Match the newspaper headings on the left with the sub-headings on the right.
 - b Which three groups of people are being scapegoated?
 - c Why do you think scapegoating is a common reaction to problems and why is it unhelpful in solving them?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Government fails to hit education targets | a Another unwelcome visit by caravan dwellers |
| 2 Eastern Europeans flock to new jobs in Peterborough | b Immigrants add to unemployment amongst Brits |
| 3 Council taxes rise to spend more on litter collection | c Britain's mosques fuel fundamentalism |
| 4 London on terrorist alert | e More and more children don't have both parents as role models |

C Newspaper headings and subheadings

Key terms

Scapegoating: blaming a person or group for things they did not necessarily do.

Outsider groups: people whose culture is new or different to those who hold most power in society.

Did you know ??????

The average foreign worker in Britain is earning about £2,000 a year more than the average British-born worker, according to Government figures. This means they are paying taxes which the government then uses to pay for lots of services such as hospitals and schools.

Did you know ??????

The Office for National Statistics reported that 385,000 people emigrated in the year to July 2006, the highest figure since current counting methods were introduced in 1991.

Going further

- 2 Research the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti – a famous case of scapegoating from American history.

A working mother's first job is to be a scapegoat

A recent Cambridge University report says that most people now believe that a mother who works harms family life. We hear that increasing teenage crime is primarily the fault of the parents, especially the mother who juggles home and work unsuccessfully. The message is that a mother's place is in the home.

'When it comes to the clash between work and family life, doubts about whether a woman should be doing both are starting to creep in. The idea of mothers with careers who also bake cookies and read bedtime stories is increasingly seen to be impossible.'

This adds to the many other messages about how inadequate we are every single day.

We work too hard, which makes us heartless. We work too little, which makes us an item of property. We're too fat. We're dangerously thin. We're exercise addicts. We can't find time for the gym. We're too old. We're too young. We have worn out skin. We have Botox. We can cook, which makes us old fashioned. We can't cook, which makes us a disgrace. We're too trendy. We're too dowdy. We have cellulite. Or have we had lipo? It's a wonder women don't commit mass suicide, frankly.

It is true 75 per cent of mothers work. They work because they have to. You can think that harms the family, or think it does the family good, but it's irrelevant. Most of us don't have any choice: if we stopped working, our place wouldn't be in the home but in the trailer, or in the cardboard box on the pavement, and our children wouldn't have any clothes to wear or food to eat.

Adapted from India Knight, The Times, 10 August 2008

D



E Juggling children and a career

Activity

- 4 Use Source D to answer the following questions.
- a Who is scapegoated in the article?
 - b What are they being scapegoated for?
 - c Explain in your own words what India Knight says in response to the scapegoating.

Going further

- 3 Have a debate with other students in your group on the topic: 'A working mother's place is in the home'.

AQA Examiner's tip

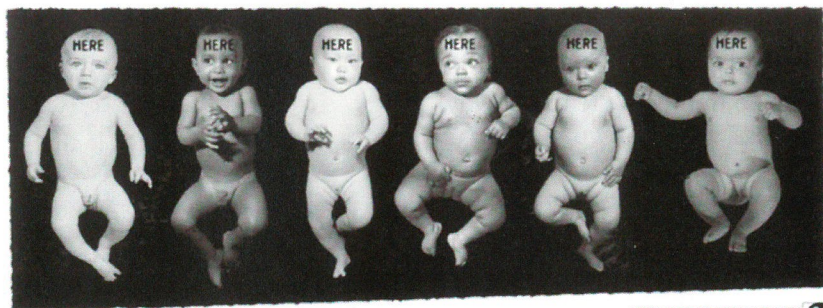
When you are asked to use the sources, don't copy whole sentences. Use one or two phrases but put them inside your own sentences.

What are prejudices?

Prejudice means to form an opinion of someone before knowing anything about them i.e. to pre-judge them. It is often a negative opinion and it often stems from a stereotype. For example, if the stereotype of Americans is that they are loud and obese then it may lead to a negative opinion of Americans. Not wanting to get to know or accept anything positive about Americans is a prejudice because a whole nation is being pre-judged.

Where does prejudice come from?

THERE ARE LOTS OF PLACES IN BRITAIN WHERE RACISM DOESN'T EXIST.



COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

F



G



Activity

- 5** At some time in their lives, many people experience some form of prejudice.
 - a** Using the images in Source **G**, list the types of prejudice the people represented might have experienced in their lives.
 - b** Ask other students to see if they have ever been the victims of forms of prejudice: **racial**, ageist, sexist, sexual, disability or religious. Find out how the prejudice was expressed.
 - c** Can you think of prejudices you personally have towards others?

Key terms

Prejudice: a negative opinion formed against a person or group based on a stereotype.

Racial prejudice: a belief that one race or ethnic group is superior to another.

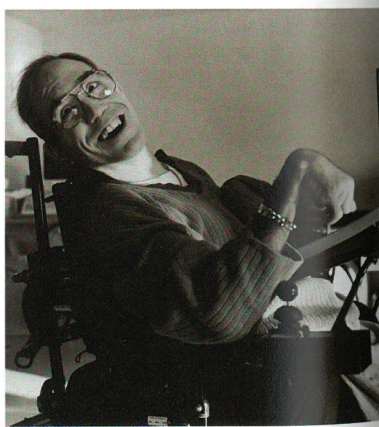
Tribalism: the existence of people who share a strong group identity.

Nationalism: the belief that one's country is superior to other countries.

Imperialism: the act of creating an empire by invading other countries.

Propaganda: information which is used to influence others' opinions. It may 'bend' the facts or not tell the whole story.

Insider group: people who hold most power and influence in a society.



Activity

- 6 a** What does Source **F** tell us about where our attitudes to others come from?
- b** List the various places and people we get our attitudes from.

Throughout history, people have formed prejudices which have led them to carry out aggressive actions. **Tribalism** occurs when people come together in groups called tribes because they have a shared identity. This can be an ethnic or religious group, or a group with strongly held beliefs such as football fans. When one tribe comes into contact with another tribe, they can be suspicious or afraid of each other. Aggression often results from their opposing attitudes.

Some countries have believed they are superior to others and this **nationalism** has prompted them to invade other countries. Many European countries did this when they colonised most of Africa in the 19th century, a phenomenon known as **imperialism**. Countries building their empires, such as Britain and France, often used **propaganda** to persuade people of their reasons. They presented empire-building as a kindness to their colonies, helping them 'get started'. However, their motives were usually more selfish. British propaganda frequently showed Africa as the 'white man's burden', suggesting that the British had a duty to educate and civilise a primitive and backward people. The British sent people, the **insider group**, to run the colonies. In India this was the British Raj. The Indian people, who vastly outnumbered the British, were the outsider group, with next to no power or influence.

Spanish students on an exchange trip to taste British culture in Sheffield were ambushed by a hooded gang who hurled bricks and bottles at them.

The Times, 19 July 2008

The leader of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, has frequently expressed the view that homosexuals are "worse than pigs and dogs" and have "no rights at all". He has dismissed criticism of his policies from the British government, calling it a "gaymafia" and in need of lessons on human reproduction.

The Independent, 9 June 2008

In November 2007, a Year 9 Sikh student was excluded from school for refusing to remove a Kara bangle. Sarika Singh said the bangle was very important to her, as a symbol of her religious faith.

BBC newsonline July 2008

Check your understanding

- 1 What is a 'stereotype'?
- 2 What is a 'scapegoat'?
- 3 Describe two ways people form prejudices.
- 4 Explain how prejudice can lead to aggressive behaviour.

Activity 8

- 7** Read the news stories in Source **H**. Decide what type of prejudice is involved in each case.

AQA Examiner's tip

Not all stereotypes are negative but in this topic on Prejudice and Persecution you only need to use the ones which are.

Look out for stereotyping and scapegoating in your everyday life. You can use these examples when a question says 'using your own studies'.

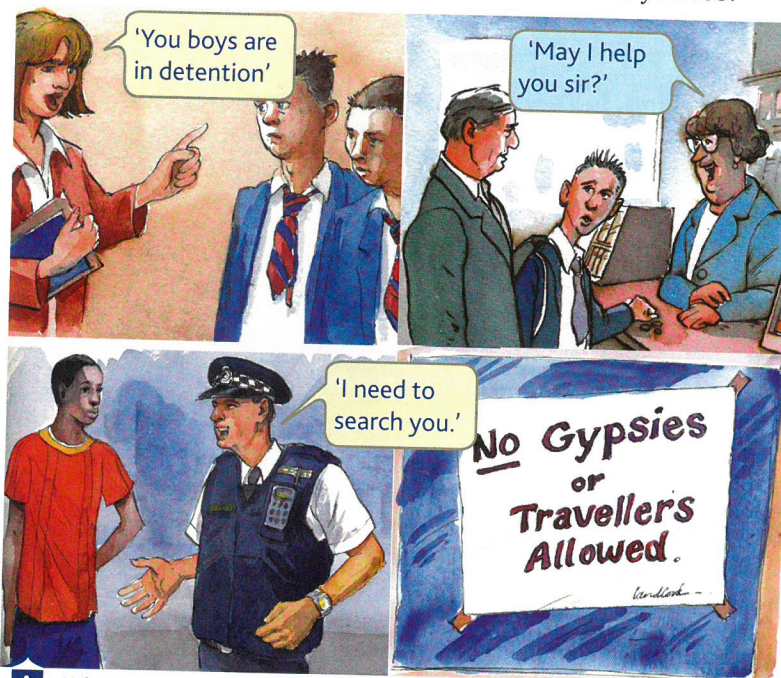
Going further

- 4** Research the Milgram experiment at Stanford University (look up 'milgram experiment' on Wikipedia). Think back to Source **F** at the start of this chapter. What does the experiment tell us about how people can learn prejudices?

4.2 How do prejudices lead to discrimination?

From prejudice to discrimination

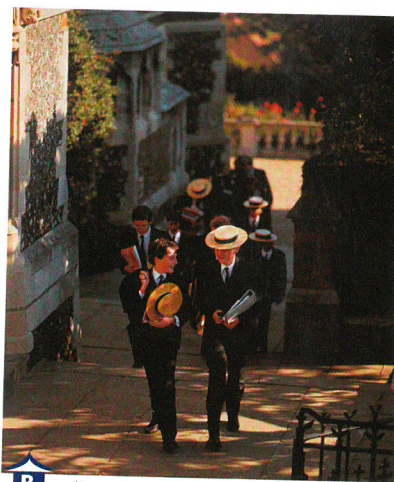
We have seen how stereotyping can lead to scapegoating and prejudice. When these attitudes are taken further, they can lead to **discrimination**. Discrimination is when prejudices are acted on and the attitudes become actions. Discrimination exists in many areas of life and affects many kinds of people. Look at Source A for examples of prejudice in action. What kinds of discrimination can you see?



A Where does discrimination exist?

Discrimination in society: race, gender, class

There are various types of discrimination which can arise from stereotyping and prejudice.



B



Objectives

You will be able to:

understand how many prejudices can lead to types of discrimination

understand that prejudice and discrimination are all around us

understand how discrimination prevents people enjoying their basic human rights.

Key terms

Discrimination: unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice about things such as age, gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion or class.

Activity

- Use Sources C, D and E to answer these questions.
 - In each of the three sources who is being discriminated against?
 - Who is doing the discriminating?
 - Which stereotypes may have led to these examples of discrimination?

Racial discrimination

Captain Doug Maughan says racial comments by his colleagues at British Airways are common and treated as normal. He was not successful in persuading BA's management to take racism among its senior staff seriously. He lodged his first complaint after hearing a senior training captain use the word 'coon'. Another pilot referred to men from Saudi Arabia as 'rag-heads'. On one flight a colleague, referring to Asians in Britain, said to Captain Maughan, who lives in Scotland, 'I don't suppose there are many of them up your way.' Captain Maughan replied: 'Well, there's my wife'. He comments, 'racism is as prevalent now in BA as it was in the RAF 25 years ago.'

Andy McSmith, *The Independent*, 26 March 2008



Gender discrimination

Under current rules, women are not allowed to serve in either the infantry or the Royal Armoured Corps. A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said: "Women serve bravely on the frontline in many ground combat support roles. For combat effectiveness reason though, women do not serve in roles where they may be required to engage the enemy deliberately face to face in combat, often at the point of a bayonet."

Sean Rayment, *The Telegraph*, 2 October 2008



Class discrimination

State school pupils are still being 'ignored' by top institutions. Britain's leading universities are making slow progress in admitting more students from state schools and from poor backgrounds. Only 6 of the 20 top universities met the Government target for the proportion of state school pupils they admit. Only 7% of children are educated in private schools but they fill approximately 25% of university places.

At Oxford under 10% come from the poorest families.

Figures from Higher Education Statistics Agency



Did you know ????????

During [the Second] World War there were protests in the American army that black nurses treating white soldiers would not be appropriate. As the war went on the USA Government changed its decision and the first group of black nurses in the Army Nurse Corps arrived in England in 1944.

National Geographic News, 15 February 2001

Going further

- Research the group Fathers For Justice who have carried out a number of legal and illegal actions to bring public attention to their cause. What other arguments do they present which claim fathers are discriminated against?

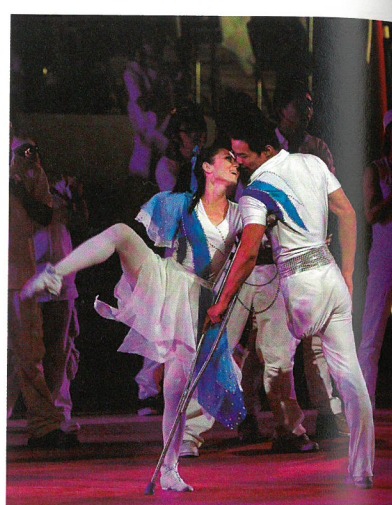
AQA Examiner's tip

Know that prejudice is an attitude towards another person or group of people.

Discrimination in society: disability



F



Disabled people have often been viewed with a mixture of suspicion, **ridicule**, fear and pity. The mass media still frequently presents disabled people as those who deserve our pity or as those who deserve extra attention because they have achieved superhuman feats. Disabled people are also ridiculed in everyday language. Terms such as 'spaz', 'mong' or 'retard' are sometimes used as insults which reflect deeply held prejudices.

People with disabilities are often seen as having a problem which makes them less than complete human beings. Such attitudes have led society to treat them separately in almost every area of life. Source G identifies some of the ways attitudes have had an impact on people's lives.

Activity

- 2 Look at Source F.
- What image of disability does each photo give?
 - In what ways do these photos confirm or challenge stereotypes of people with disabilities?

“ In the past, disabled children were not educated alongside non-disabled children. There were schools for the crippled and the deaf and the blind. This was educational segregation. Nowadays there are still special schools for severely disabled children but many are educated in mainstream schools. ”

Disabled students were prepared for jobs which paid less as they were not considered capable of doing the same jobs as able-bodied people.

Steps, heavy doors and small toilets meant many places were inaccessible.

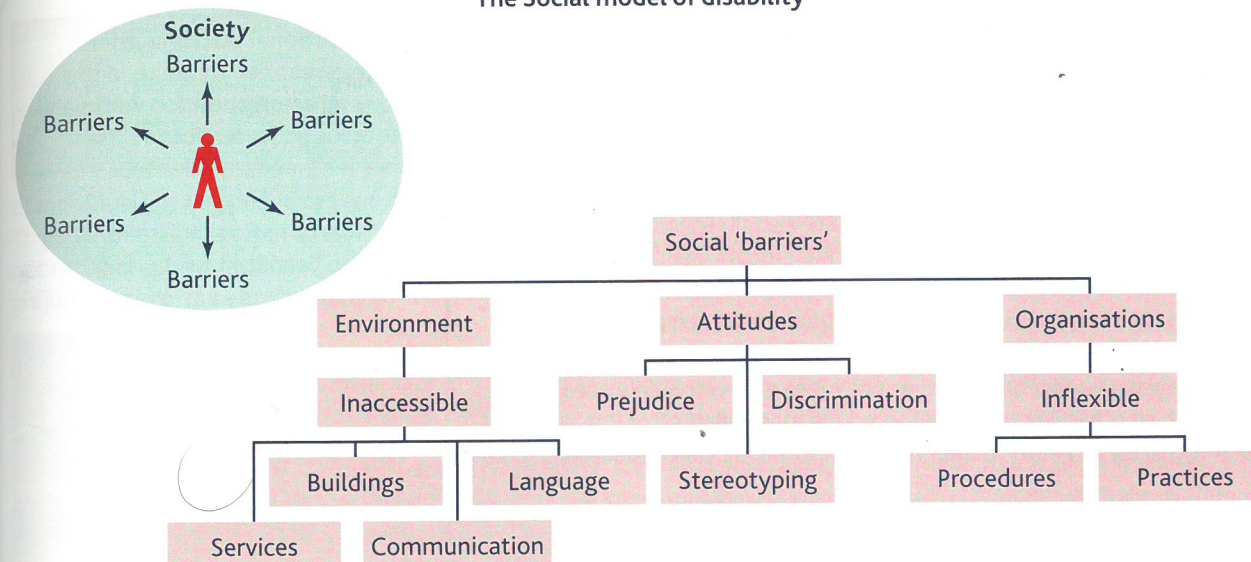
G

Key terms

Ridicule: words or actions which make fun of people to hurt their feelings.

Barriers of access: ways of preventing disabled people participate fully in society.

The Social model of disability



H Society disables people

Source H illustrates the fact that it is society which disables people by presenting them with barriers which too often stop them from realising their potential. These barriers lead to unfair treatment which is called discrimination.

Society should be encouraged to give up the idea that disability is a medical problem requiring 'treatment', but to understand instead that disability is a problem of exclusion from ordinary life.

Tanni Grey-Thompson winner of the London Marathon six times, breaker of world 28 records and holder of 11 Paralympic gold medals

By the age of seven, I was paralysed, but I think the head teacher chose not to tell anyone in the education authority that I was using a wheelchair, otherwise I would have been packed off to a special school. Special education didn't provide a real education: there was no way I would have done the same O-levels or A-levels or gone to university.

At 15 I saw a careers adviser who said, 'The only job you're going to get is answering the phone'. I got 9 O-Levels and 4 A-levels. I spent a year looking at universities for their wheelchair access. In athletics, I'm not disabled. If there are two steps, then I am disabled.

I

Tanni Grey-Thompson's autobiography *Seize the Day*

New laws have led to improved facilities for the disabled in schools, shops and businesses and changing attitudes are slowly reducing the barriers for disabled people. Changing steps into ramps, providing information in Braille, providing textphones and minicomms are examples of breaking down the barriers which discriminate.

Activity

- 3 Use Sources G, H and I.
- Draw up a list of the barriers which disabled people come up against.
 - How have people with disabilities been discriminated against in the world of work?
 - Explain what Tanni Grey-Thompson means when she says, 'If there are two steps, then I am disabled.'

Going further

- 2 Do an audit of the facilities in your school for people with disabilities. Find out what **barriers of access** there are for people in wheelchairs (physical disability) and for those who are deaf or partially sighted (sensory disabilities).

The impact of discrimination

Case study

Discrimination in employment

In a suburb north of Paris, 31-year-old Sadek quit his job delivering food. Sadek has finished his school education but he knows he will not be considered for certain jobs because of his name and his Muslim background. 'With a name like mine, I can't have a sales job.' If he wanted a job selling on the phone he would have to use a different name.

This is typical of many people living in Paris who have to try to disguise their culture and religion if they are to improve their career prospects. They may have a French passport but this does not mean they are widely accepted along with all other French citizens. A young man called Ali or Rachid is much less likely to get a job interview than someone called Alain or Richard.

Nearly a third of French Muslims with a university education are unemployed, compared to a national average of 5 per cent. Yazid Sabeg, a French Muslim graduate sums up the situation with the comment 'doors are closed'.

**Help Wanted
No Irish need apply**

J Discriminatory job advertisement

Activity

- 4 Read the Discrimination in employment case study.
 - a Why might Sadek need to change his name if he works in telemarketing?
 - b What do you think may be the impact of prejudice and discrimination on the rest of Sadek's life?

Activity

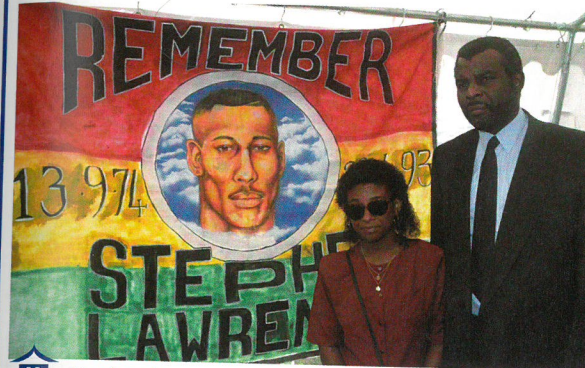
- 5 Source J was taken from a sign where people were invited to apply for jobs in Britain in the 1950s. How does the photo relate to the situation in France today?

Key terms

Institutional discrimination: existence of prejudice in the way an organisation works and delivers its services.

Discrimination in the police force

Discrimination exists in lots of places in society and so it is no surprise that it should exist in both the public and private sectors. It is not always easy to identify because it is not necessarily intentional. It is not merely a matter of individuals having prejudices and expressing them. The discrimination is often a result of many years of not recognising old-fashioned practices when certain prejudices were more accepted by society in general.



K Stephen Lawrence

In 1999 a report by Sir William Macpherson followed an inquiry into the Metropolitan police's investigation of the murder of black teenager, Stephen Lawrence. The 18-year-old A-level student was fatally stabbed in an unprovoked attack as he waited for a bus in south London, in April 1993. Nobody was convicted of his murder.

Police officers in charge of the case were accused of being incompetent and racist. The Macpherson report said the Metropolitan police and, policing generally, was guilty of 'institutional racism'. Macpherson discovered that many officers would assume black people, especially young black males, were more likely to be involved in crime than other ethnic groups.

The report made 70 recommendations, many aimed at improving police attitudes to racism. It stressed the importance of a rapid increase in the numbers of black and Asian officers. The Government pledged to increase the number of officers from minority ethnic groups from around 2,500 to 8,000 by 2009. Retention and career development of officers, as well as recruitment, were also to be given greater attention.

Case study

The Secret Policeman, a BBC undercover documentary revealed that racism still exists within the police force. The programme told the story of eight police officers, five who had resigned and three who had been suspended, all for racist remarks and behaviour. One of the policemen could be seen dressed like the Ku-Klux Klan and making offensive racist comments. The police forces were very critical of such behaviour and promised they would root out such racism amongst their officers.

L

Activity

- 6 Divide into groups, then use the text and Sources K and L to answer these questions.
 - a What might be the reasons why there has been such a small number of ethnic minority police officers?
 - b What areas of policing have been highlighted for improvement following the Macpherson report and the BBC documentary?
 - c Explain why the Macpherson Report recommended there should be more police officers from minority ethnic groups.

Going further

- 3 Research the existence of **institutional discrimination** in other institutions and services, such as education, prisons and housing.

Check your understanding

- 1 Name two groups of people who are victims of discrimination in society.
- 2 What is 'institutional discrimination'?
- 3 Explain how discrimination can affect a person's education.
- 4 Give two reasons why discrimination should be eliminated.