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1991 Census Statistical Paper No 4

ETHNIC MINORITIES IN GREAT BRITAIN:  
*Housing and family characteristics*

David Owen

April 1993

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ETHNIC MINORITIES IN GREAT BRITAIN:

Housing and family characteristics

1991 Census Statistical Paper no. 4

by

David Owen

National Ethnic Minority Data Archive

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<b>Contents</b>	<i>Page</i>
Table of contents	i
List of tables	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Household size	1
3. Household types	3
3.1 "Traditional" families	3
3.2 Single-adult households	5
3.3 Pensioners and other types of household	6
4. Housing tenure	7
5. Housing conditions and economic and social circumstances	9
5.1 Physical housing problems	9
5.2 Economic and social deprivation indicators	10
5.3 Housing characteristics as measures of relative deprivation	12
7. Conclusions	13
Notes and references	14
 Appendix	

<b>Table</b>	<i>Page</i>
1 Variations in household size by ethnic group: Great Britain, 1991	1
2 Regional variations in household size by ethnic group: Great Britain, 1991	2
3 "Traditional families" by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991	4
4 Single-adult households by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991	5
5 Pensioners and same-gender households by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991	7
6 Housing tenure by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991	8
7 Households experiencing physical housing problems by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991	9
8 Variations in the incidence of car ownership and limiting long-term illness among households by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991	11

## 1. Introduction

The Census of Population contains a substantial amount of information on family structures and housing conditions, which can be used to study variations in social well-being and affluence between sections of the population and areas of the country<sup>1</sup>. Census data for ethnic groups is more limited than that for the population as a whole, but can still be used to identify differences in housing need, measured by physical problems such as lack of amenities or overcrowding, and in household income, measured by car ownership and housing tenure. It can also be used to study the extent to which emerging societal trends such as the growing numbers of single-person households, lone pensioners and one-parent families and the increasing prevalence of home ownership are common to all ethnic groups.

This Statistical Paper examines these aspects of household structure and housing circumstances for the ethnic groups identified by the Census, focussing upon the results for Great Britain as a whole. The first part of the paper is concerned with variations in household structure between ethnic groups, while the latter part of the paper presents results on differences in housing tenure and housing deprivation between ethnic groups.

## 2. Household size

The rate of population growth in Great Britain has been slowing through most of the twentieth century (with occasional exceptions such as the late 1940s and early 1960s "Baby Booms"). As fertility rates fell, so did the average size of household and the "typical" British family of two parents and (approximately) two children emerged. There is now growing concern amongst social commentators and politicians about the perceived break-up of these "nuclear" families into yet smaller units and the consequences of this trend. Given the very different demographic histories of the various ethnic groups now present in the British population, considerable variations in household size would be expected to have developed between them.

**Table 1: Variations in household size by ethnic group: Great Britain, 1991**

Ethnic group	Households (000s)	Persons per hhd	Percentage of all households with		
			One-adult	Two-adult	Three+ adults
White	21,026.6	2.43	31.1	52.2	16.7
<b><i>Ethnic Minorities</i></b>	<b>870.8</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>25.4</b>
<i>Black</i>	328.1	2.59	44.7	37.9	17.3
Black-Caribbean	216.5	2.52	44.9	36.4	18.6
Black-African	73.3	2.84	41.4	41.0	17.3
Black-Other	38.3	2.51	49.8	40.0	9.9
<i>South Asian</i>	357.2	4.22	12.6	51.5	35.8
Indian	225.6	3.80	12.9	51.6	35.4
Pakistani	100.9	4.81	12.8	51.3	35.7
Bangladeshi	30.7	5.34	10.3	50.9	38.7
<i>Chinese &amp; others</i>	185.5	2.96	29.0	51.0	19.8
Chinese	48.6	3.08	25.6	50.2	23.9
Other Asian	59.0	3.15	23.9	53.2	22.7
Other other	77.9	2.74	34.9	49.8	15.2
<b>Entire population</b>	<b>21,897.3</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>17.0</b>

Source: 1991 Census Local Base Statistics (ESRC purchase); Crown Copyright.

Table 1 presents different ways of looking at ethnic group variations in household size. The second column presents the mean numbers of persons in each household. Overall, the average is now less than 2.5 persons per household, with the figure for white households slightly smaller. On average there is nearly one extra person in ethnic minority households, but this average figure conceals marked variations between ethnic groups. The average number of people in Black households is slightly higher than the overall average, mainly due to the larger size of Black-African households, while Chinese and "Other-Asian" households contain more than three people on average. The most distinctive feature is the comparatively large average size of South Asian households; Pakistani households contain just under five people on average, while Bangladeshi households are more than twice as large as the overall national average.

This may reflect differences in fertility between ethnic groups, and there is certainly evidence that Pakistani and Bangladeshi families have relatively large numbers of children. However, Table 1 also indicates that differences in household formation may be as important a factor. Overall, single-adult households account for just under a third of the total, with more than half of all households containing two adults. However, approaching a half of all Black households contain only one adult, while only an eighth of South Asian households contain only one adult. Conversely, the proportion of households containing three or more adults is nearly double the overall average for all three South Asian groups, and is also above average for the Chinese and Other-Asian groups. Black ethnic groups also stand out from the rest in their relatively low proportion of two-adult households. This result appears to demonstrate that household fragmentation is most prevalent amongst Black ethnic groups (though because of their relative youth, many single-person households contain young adults who have not yet formed families), while Asians may be more likely to preserve extended families.

**Table 2: Regional variations in household size by ethnic group: Great Britain, 1991**

Standard region or metropolitan county	Entire population	Persons per household						Chinese and others
		White	Ethnic minorities	Black	Indian	Pakis -tani	Bangla -deshi	
South East	2.4	2.4	3.1	2.6	3.6	4.4	5.3	2.9
<i>Greater London</i>	2.4	2.3	3.1	2.6	3.6	4.1	5.4	2.9
East Anglia	2.5	2.4	3.1	2.7	3.3	4.8	4.8	2.9
South West	2.4	2.4	2.9	2.5	3.4	4.3	4.5	2.8
West Midlands	2.5	2.5	3.7	2.5	4.2	5.2	5.6	3.2
<i>West Midlands MC</i>	2.5	2.4	3.7	2.5	4.2	5.2	5.7	3.2
East Midlands	2.5	2.5	3.5	2.5	3.9	4.7	5.4	3.2
Yorkshire & Humberside	2.5	2.4	3.9	2.5	4.0	5.2	5.6	3.1
<i>South Yorkshire</i>	2.5	2.4	3.4	2.5	3.5	5.0	4.9	3.0
<i>West Yorkshire</i>	2.5	2.4	4.2	2.5	4.2	5.3	5.9	3.2
North West	2.5	2.5	3.7	2.5	4.0	4.9	5.3	3.1
<i>Greater Manchester</i>	2.5	2.4	3.6	2.5	3.9	4.8	5.5	3.1
<i>Merseyside</i>	2.5	2.5	2.8	2.5	3.1	3.6	4.5	2.9
North	2.4	2.4	3.6	2.6	3.6	4.7	5.2	3.1
<i>Tyne and Wear</i>	2.4	2.4	3.6	2.6	3.6	4.5	5.4	3.0
Wales	2.5	2.5	3.3	2.7	3.4	4.5	5.3	3.1
Scotland	2.4	2.4	3.6	2.7	3.7	4.7	4.0	3.1
<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>

Source: 1991 Census Local Base Statistics (ESRC purchase); Crown Copyright.

Table 2 demonstrates that regional variations in household size are small, all regions and metropolitan counties in the table having overall average household sizes within one percentage point of the national average. White households show some tendency to be slightly smaller than the national average in Greater London, a feature common to other ethnic groups, with the exception of Bangladeshis. Ethnic minority households tend to be largest in the West Yorkshire and West Midlands metropolitan counties, and smallest in Merseyside, the South West and East Anglia. There is little regional variation in the size of Black or Chinese and other households, though the latter tend to be larger in the West Midlands and West Yorkshire and smaller in Greater London, Merseyside and more peripheral regions. The largest variations occur amongst South Asian households. For Indians, household sizes are largest in the East and West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire and smallest in Merseyside and East Anglia. The pattern for Pakistani households is very similar, with the largest households in West Yorkshire and those in Merseyside and Greater London being much smaller than the national average. Bangladeshis have the largest households in all regions except South Yorkshire and Scotland. The largest Bangladeshi households once again occur in the West Yorkshire and West Midlands metropolitan counties.

### 3. Household types

These trends can be explored in more detail by turning attention to different types of household structure. A feature of Western society in recent decades has been the weakening of traditional nuclear family structures and the emergence of new types of household. This has been associated with declines in household size and in the average numbers of children born to mothers. It has also been associated with the changing age structure of the population, with increasing household formation in the younger age ranges and growing numbers of pensioner households.

In this section variations in the prevalence of different types of household between the ethnic groups distinguished in the Census will be explored. There are 17 types of household which can be distinguished from Census data (presented in the Appendix). It is unmanageable to discuss this number of types simultaneously, and therefore households are grouped into broad categories.

#### 3.1 "Traditional" families

The conventional view of household structure is that the majority are organised around families consisting of two or more adults (the parents plus adult relatives or adult children) of differing genders and a number of dependent children. The Census identifies such households, distinguishing between those consisting of 2 adults and those with 3 or more adults and between those containing dependent children and those without. Table 3 presents the incidence of these small and large families for each ethnic group.

"Couples" are defined here as a household with two adult members of different genders without dependent children. It is not possible to say what stage in the family life-cycle stage these represent, since this category will include young couples who have not yet had children, older couples whose children have left the family home and other married and unmarried couples who do not intend to have children. There is a very marked difference in the incidence of such households between the white and ethnic minority populations; they account for nearly 30 per cent of white households, more than twice the proportion for ethnic minorities. Only a tenth of South Asian households are childless couples, a somewhat lower proportion than for Blacks and "Chinese and others". Pakistanis and Bangladeshis stand out as having very low proportions of households in this category. One factor in these differences may be the older age structure of the white population; more households will therefore have adult children who have left home. However, the known tendency for higher fertility in South Asian ethnic groups may also imply that most married couples in these ethnic groups intend to have children.



Table 3: "Traditional families" by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991

Ethnic group	Couples	Family types as a percentage of all households			Total
		Small Families	Large families no child	1+ children	
White	29.5	19.4	11.1	5.0	65.0
<b><i>Ethnic Minorities</i></b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>66.0</b>
<i>Black</i>	14.7	17.2	9.7	6.1	47.7
Black-Caribbean	16.0	14.8	11.4	5.9	48.1
Black-African	11.4	22.3	6.8	7.7	48.2
Black-Other	14.0	20.9	5.1	3.9	43.9
<i>South Asian</i>	10.6	38.3	10.9	23.9	83.7
Indian	12.8	36.4	13.4	21.2	83.8
Pakistani	7.4	41.0	7.4	27.3	83.1
Bangladeshi	4.4	43.3	3.9	32.8	84.4
<i>Chinese &amp; others</i>	16.0	30.2	8.5	9.6	64.3
Chinese	15.7	29.6	9.8	12.3	67.4
Other Asian	14.0	34.7	8.9	11.6	69.2
Other other	17.8	27.2	7.3	6.5	58.8
<b>Entire population</b>	<b>28.9</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>65.2</b>

Source: Source: 1991 Census Local Base Statistics (ESRC purchase); Crown Copyright.

This conclusion may be supported by the inverse pattern displayed by the proportion of all households accounted for by "small families"; two adults of different genders with at least one dependent child. Perhaps surprisingly, only a fifth of white households are of this type, a figure nearly 9 per cent lower than for ethnic minorities. The proportion for Black groups is slightly lower than for other ethnic minorities, lowest for those of Caribbean origin and highest for those of African origin. About 30 per cent of Chinese and other households are accounted for by small families, the proportion being highest for Other Asians. The largest proportions are found in the South Asian ethnic groups, with over 40 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households being small families.

The patterns for large families are somewhat more complex. The difference in the proportion of all households accounted for by large families without dependent children between the white population and ethnic minorities as a whole is not great; around a tenth of the total for both. The proportions in this category are low for both Black-Africans and Black-Others. Amongst South Asians, Indians emerge as having a particularly high proportion in this category, with once again the smallest proportion of childless households being recorded by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Age structure clearly affects these results; the older ethnic minorities (Black-Caribbeans, Indians and Chinese) tend to have higher proportions and the younger ethnic groups (notably Bangladeshis) the lowest proportions. This is because these households may contain adult non-dependent children or other adult relatives; in younger ethnic groups children have not yet reached the age of independence and there are fewer older relatives in extended families.

Ethnic group differences are even more marked for large families with dependent children. These are three times more common amongst ethnic minority households than among white households. Within ethnic minority groups, their incidence is lowest in the Black groups, though there are more large families among those of African origin. In the Chinese and other group, there is a marked contrast between the Chinese (for which these represent an eighth of all households) and the Other-other group. Nearly a quarter of South Asian households fall into this category, but there is a contrast between Indians, for whom only a fifth of all households are of this type, and Bangladeshis, amongst whom a third of all

households have 3 or more adults and dependent children. In ethnic groups such as the Bangladeshis, families clearly accommodate both children and adult relatives (both elderly dependents and additional wage-earners), largely accounting for the much larger average number of persons per household reported in Table 1.

Another interesting feature is the differences between ethnic group in the total of the percentages for these "traditional" household types. For most ethnic groups (including white people), these types now account for only two-thirds of all households. However, there is a marked contrast between South Asians, amongst whom they account for over eighty per cent of all households, and Black households, for whom they represent less than half of the total.

### 3.2 *Single-adult households*

The preceding section has clearly demonstrated that the nuclear family is now by no means the most common type in any ethnic group. In recent decades, an increase in the rate of household formation has been noted as young people leave home to live on their own and families break up due to the increasing incidence of divorce. At the other end of the age range, increasing life expectancy, especially for females, has resulted in a growing number of pensioner households, many of whom are single-person. Men have a shorter life expectancy than women, and thus many single-pensioner households consist of widows.

**Table 4: Single-adult households by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991**

Ethnic group	Single non-pensioner adult		One-parent family		Lone pensioner	
	(000s)	(% hhlds)	(000s)	(% hhlds)	(000s)	(% hhlds)
White	2,424.3	11.5	833.4	4.0	3,277.6	15.6
<b><i>Ethnic Minorities</i></b>	<b>139.8</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>80.9</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<i>Black</i>	77.3	23.6	55.5	16.9	13.7	4.2
Black-Caribbean	50.0	23.1	35.5	16.4	11.6	5.3
Black-African	17.5	23.8	11.7	16.0	1.2	1.6
Black-Other	9.8	25.6	8.3	21.6	1.0	2.5
<i>South Asian</i>	26.5	7.4	13.2	3.7	5.5	1.5
Indian	17.7	7.8	7.0	3.1	4.4	2.0
Pakistani	7.2	7.2	4.9	4.8	0.9	0.9
Bangladeshi	1.6	5.2	1.4	4.4	0.2	0.7
<i>Chinese &amp; others</i>	36.0	19.4	12.2	6.6	5.5	3.0
Chinese	9.1	18.8	2.1	4.4	1.2	2.4
Other Asian	9.8	16.6	3.3	5.5	1.1	1.8
Other other	17.1	22.0	6.8	8.7	3.3	4.2
<b>Entire population</b>	<b>2,564.1</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>914.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3,302.3</b>	<b>15.1</b>

Source: Source: 1991 Census Local Base Statistics (ESRC purchase); Crown Copyright.

Table 4 presents the main categories of single-adult households; single people, one-parent families and lone pensioners. These types together account for about 30 per cent of all households in the British population as a whole, but there are substantial variations in the incidence of these household types between ethnic groups. On average, single adults of less than pensionable age account for 11.7 per cent of all households, and 16.1 per cent of ethnic minority households. The greater incidence of this household type for ethnic minorities conceals a much higher incidence amongst Black, Chinese and other ethnic groups and a much lower incidence amongst South Asians. Almost a quarter of Black households contain a single adult of less than pensionable age, with little variation among the three constituent ethnic

groups. The percentage for "Other-others" is almost as high, while that for Chinese households is somewhat lower. The proportions for Indians and Pakistanis are only a third of that for Blacks, and that for Bangladeshis is even lower. This pattern may be partly explained by the age structure of ethnic groups; Black groups contain a relatively high proportion of people of younger working age who have set up independent households. A large proportion of the children of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households have not yet reached working age or are still in education and have therefore not set up their own households. However, given the prominence of families amongst South Asian households, it may also be that there are cultural barriers to individuals setting up households. This may also indicate that the influence of divorce leading to the formation of single-adult household households is less strong for South Asians.

Similar factors may underlie the pattern of incidence of one-parent families. These now account for 914 thousand households, 4.2 per cent of the total. They are more than twice as common among ethnic minority households than among white households. This phenomenon emerges as being particularly common in the Black ethnic groups, accounting for 16.9 per cent of all households. This percentage reaches 21.6 for Black-Others. Only Indians display a lower percentage of single-parent families than white people, with somewhat higher percentages in the other Asian ethnic groups. In the Other-other category, 8.7 per cent of households are one-parent families. Both "Other" ethnic groups have young populations on average<sup>2</sup>, tending to experience high unemployment rates and high levels of deprivation (see section 4), which may increase the pressures for family break-down.

In contrast, lone-pensioner households are very much a feature of the white population. These account for 15.6 per cent of all white households, but only 2.8 per cent of ethnic minority households. However, these households form a significant percentage of the total for ethnic minorities with older age structures; 5.3 per cent of all Black-Caribbean households and 2.4 per cent of Chinese households consist of a lone pensioner, while 4.2 per cent of Other-other households fall into this category, despite the youthfulness of this section of the population. The low proportions for South Asian groups may suggest that a factor in the emergence of single-pensioner households is the decline in family ties, and the lesser willingness of other ethnic groups to accommodate aged parents.

### *3.3 Pensioners and other types of household*

The remaining household types are pensioners with more than one person and households containing adults of the same gender, either with or without child dependents. The percentage of all households in each ethnic group represented by each of these household types is presented in Table 5. More than a quarter of all white households now contain people of pensionable age, while the much younger age structure of ethnic minorities is reflected in only 4.2 percent of the total being pensioner households. The percentage of pensioner households is highest for Black-Caribbeans, followed by Other-Others, Chinese and Indians.

The same-gender households account for only a small percentage of all households, but there are some interesting features in the pattern of variation by ethnic group. Households without children probably mainly consist of people sharing accommodation (examples being students and younger workers sharing housing because of high mortgage costs in the late 1980s) but may also include some unconventional family arrangements. This type of household is more common among Black (particularly Black-African) and "Chinese and other" ethnic groups than among white people and South Asians. Single-gender adult households with dependent children probably reflect other types of domestic arrangement, one possibility being where the father has left home and a female relative or friend has moved in with the mother. These households are quite rare, representing only 0.6 per cent of the total. However, they are most common for Black groups, representing 2.3 per cent of all households, 7.4 thousand in all. Half of all ethnic minority households of this type are of Black-Caribbean or Black-African ethnic origin.

Table 5: Pensioners and same-gender households by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991

Ethnic group	Pensioner households		Same-gender without children		Same-gender with children	
	(000s)	(% hhs)	(000s)	(% hhs)	(000s)	(% hhs)
White	5,393.6	25.7	671.3	3.2	122.1	0.6
<b><i>Ethnic Minorities</i></b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<i>Black</i>	18.3	5.6	17.1	5.2	7.4	2.3
Black-Caribbean	15.5	7.2	10.4	4.8	4.5	2.1
Black-African	1.5	2.0	5.0	6.8	2.3	3.2
Black-Other	1.3	3.4	1.7	4.3	0.6	1.7
<i>South Asian</i>	9.8	2.8	8.6	2.4	4.3	1.2
Indian	8.1	3.6	5.2	2.3	2.0	0.9
Pakistani	1.5	1.4	2.4	2.3	1.7	1.7
Bangladeshi	0.3	1.0	1.0	3.4	0.6	1.8
<i>Chinese &amp; others</i>	8.1	4.4	9.8	5.3	2.2	1.2
Chinese	1.8	3.7	2.7	5.5	0.6	1.2
Other Asian	1.5	2.6	3.2	5.5	0.8	1.3
Other other	4.8	6.2	3.9	5.0	0.9	1.1
<b>Entire population</b>	<b>5,429.9</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>706.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>135.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>

Source: Source: 1991 Census Local Base Statistics (ESRC purchase); Crown Copyright.

#### 4. Housing tenure

During the 1980s, government policy encouraged a major shift in housing tenures away from public sector housing towards owner-occupation, reinforcing a trend which had already been evident in recent decades. House ownership has become a major route for capital accumulation in recent decades and the public sector is becoming increasingly residualised and restricted to serving the poorer members of society. In this context, the relative concentration of some ethnic minorities in public sector housing may have severe consequences for the future development of social inequalities, and it is therefore important to identify inter-ethnic group differentials in housing tenure.

Table 6 presents a breakdown of households into four major tenure types; owner-occupation, renting from a private landlord, renting from a housing association and renting from a local authority, New Town or Scottish Homes. Overall, two-thirds of all households now own their own home, but the corresponding percentage for ethnic minorities is somewhat lower than for white households. Similar proportions rent from the public sector, but the percentage renting from housing associations and private landlords is much higher for ethnic minorities.

Considering owner-occupation first, major differences appear between minority ethnic groups in the proportion of households owning or buying their own homes. Only two-fifths of Black households fall into this category, compared to nearly four-fifths of South Asian households and more than half of "Chinese and other" households. However, there are also substantial differences within these three broad groupings. While 48.1 per cent of Black-Caribbean households are home-owners, only 28 per cent of Black-African households are. Similarly, 81.7 per cent of Indian households are home-owners, but only 44.5 per cent of Bangladeshis fall into this category. Chinese are also more likely to be home-owners than the "other" ethnic groups.

Table 6: Housing tenure by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991

Ethnic group	Households (000s)	Owner-occupied (%)	Households renting from		
			Local authority (%)	Housing Association (%)	Private Landlord (%)
White	21,026.6	66.6	21.4	3.0	7.0
<b><i>Ethnic Minorities</i></b>	<b>870.8</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>10.8</b>
<i>Black</i>	328.1	42.3	36.8	10.1	9.2
Black-Caribbean	216.5	48.1	35.7	9.7	5.6
Black-African	73.3	28.0	41.1	10.8	17.8
Black-Other	38.3	36.7	34.5	11.2	13.6
<i>South Asian</i>	357.2	77.1	11.1	2.5	7.6
Indian	225.6	81.7	7.8	2.2	6.5
Pakistani	100.9	76.7	10.4	2.2	9.6
Bangladeshi	30.7	44.5	37.0	6.1	9.6
<i>Chinese &amp; others</i>	185.5	56.1	15.9	4.9	19.9
Chinese	48.6	62.2	13.1	3.5	17.0
Other Asian	59.0	53.9	13.6	4.4	24.5
Other other	77.9	54.0	19.3	6.2	18.2
<b>Entire population</b>	<b>21,897.3</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>7.1</b>

Source: Source: 1991 Census Local Base Statistics (ESRC purchase); Crown Copyright.

The corollary of this is an inverse pattern for the incidence of renting from the public sector. Black households are over 1.5 times as likely as white households and three times as likely as South Asian households to rent from the local authority (or a New Town or from Scottish Homes). The percentage of South Asians in this tenure type is only half the overall average, while Chinese and Other Asians are also underrepresented. The individual ethnic groups most dependent upon the public sector for housing are Black-Africans and Bangladeshis, but even for these groups it only provides accommodation for two-fifths of all households.

Government policy since 1979 has sought to lessen the local authority role in housing provision and replace it in the rented sector through the provision of housing by housing associations and other bodies. In 1991, housing associations still housed less than half the number of households in privately-rented accommodation, but this tenure type will expand as a result of future transfers of tenants from the public sector. The proportion of ethnic minority groups being accommodated by housing associations is about twice that for white households. Black ethnic groups are much more likely than Chinese and other, and even more so South Asians, to be accommodated by these organisations. The only exceptions to this are Bangladeshis and Other-others, for each of whom over 6 per cent of households live in housing association property.

Renting from private sector landlords has been in long-term decline throughout most of this century, but in recent years government policy has sought to encourage private landlords. Even so, only 7.1 per cent of households are in privately-rented accommodation. More than a tenth of ethnic minority households rent from a private landlord, with nearly a fifth of Chinese and others in this tenure category. Nearly a quarter of Other Asians rent accommodation from private landlords, while a relatively high percentage of Black-Africans and Black-Others also rent privately. The percentages of Black-Caribbean and Indian households in privately-rented accommodation are both lower than that for white households.

## 5. Housing conditions and economic and social circumstances

Housing deprivation, measured by lack of physical amenities or poor living conditions, is commonly used as a measure of socio-economic disadvantage and income differentials. It is an important variable in many indices used for allocation of grants to local authorities and to combat urban deprivation. In the past some indicators have used the presence of ethnic minorities as a measure of deprivation. With improved data from the 1991 Census, it is possible to generate more sensitive indicators which directly measure the relative deprivation of individual ethnic groups, using information on housing conditions for each. This section uses Census data to study a number of common indicators of physical and social housing problems for each ethnic group.

### 5.1 Physical housing problems

The Census provides information on a number of aspects of physical housing deprivation for ethnic groups; overcrowding (expressed as the number of persons per room), the lack of or need to share amenities such as bath or WC, lack of central heating and whether the accommodation is self-contained. These indicators are presented in Table 7. Even though physical housing problem is becoming a less useful indicator of deprivation as the standard of the national housing stock improves, there are clear ethnic group differentials in the incidence of households living at a density of more than 1 person per room. The national average is 2.2 per cent of all households, somewhat higher than the average for white households. However the figure for ethnic minorities is 13.1 per cent; more than an eighth of all ethnic minority households.

**Table 7: Households experiencing physical housing problems by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991**

Ethnic group	More than 1 person/room (%)	Not self-contained accommodation (%)	Without exclusive use of bath or WC (%)	Without exclusive use of bath or WC (persons per hhd)	Without Central Heating (%)	Without Central Heating (persons per hhd)
White	1.8	0.9	1.2	1.50	18.9	2.16
<b>Ethnic Minorities</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>3.33</b>
<i>Black</i>	7.2	3.1	2.3	1.69	17.4	2.33
Black-Caribbean	4.7	2.0	1.4	1.65	17.4	2.30
Black-African	15.1	6.5	5.1	1.73	15.8	2.46
Black-Other	5.6	3.2	2.4	1.67	20.2	2.27
<i>South Asian</i>	20.5	1.1	1.4	3.08	19.5	4.43
Indian	12.8	1.0	1.1	2.65	12.4	3.59
Pakistani	29.7	1.2	1.7	3.31	34.2	4.95
Bangladeshi	47.1	1.3	2.0	4.17	23.6	5.19
<i>Chinese &amp; others</i>	9.4	3.6	3.0	1.78	15.0	2.62
Chinese	10.6	3.5	3.2	1.95	16.0	2.82
Other Asian	11.0	3.7	3.0	1.79	12.1	2.83
Other other	7.4	3.7	3.0	1.67	16.7	2.39
<b>Entire population</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>2.21</b>

Source: Source: 1991 Census Local Base Statistics (ESRC purchase); Crown Copyright.

More than a fifth of all South Asian households and nearly a tenth of Chinese and other households live at a density of more than one person per room. The incidence of

overcrowding amongst Black households is much lower, but still far greater than for white households. All individual minority ethnic groups experience a greater incidence of overcrowding than the white population, with the lowest incidence for Black-Caribbean and Black-Other households. The highest figures are recorded by South Asians; 47.1 per cent of Bangladeshi households and nearly 30 per cent of Pakistani households live in overcrowded accommodation. This phenomenon is clearly related to household size, but overcrowding amongst the smaller Black households indicates that inability to afford the cost of larger dwellings is also an important influence on the pattern of overcrowding.

The number of households not living in self-contained accommodation displays a different pattern of variation by ethnic group. The proportion of households in South Asian ethnic groups in such accommodation is close to the national average, just higher than the proportion for white households. However, the percentage of Black and Chinese and other households not in self-contained accommodation is three times the national average, with Black-Africans displaying a particularly high percentage.

Another indicator of physical housing problems is the lack of exclusive use of a bath or WC. Improvement in the physical condition of the British housing stock has lowered the national average percentage to 1.3 per cent. Again the proportion of ethnic minorities is above the percentage for white households, but is highest for Chinese and others and Black households. Amongst individual ethnic groups, the percentage lacking these amenities is highest for Black-African and Chinese households, which also have the highest percentage of households living in non self-contained accommodation. On the whole, lack of access to a bathroom or WC seems to be more typical of smaller households. However, Bangladeshis represent an exception, for whom the 2 per cent of households lacking these amenities contain twice as many people on average as households without exclusive use of baths or WCs in other ethnic groups.

The 1991 Census recorded for the first time the number of households living in accommodation lacking central heating. Nearly 19 per cent of all households live in such accommodation, reflecting the large number of relatively old dwellings which still exist, since nearly all modern accommodation in both the public and private sectors has central heating. The percentage of ethnic minority households living in such accommodation is slightly lower than the figure for white households, but households without central heating tend to be slightly larger among the ethnic minorities than for white households. The percentage of households lacking central heating is lowest for the Chinese and other ethnic groups and just below the overall average for Black groups. The average figure for South Asians conceals a marked contrast between Indians and Pakistanis. The percentage without central heating is 12.4 for the former ethnic group (similar to Other Asians), but over a third of the latter do not have central heating. Bangladeshis occupy an intermediate position. The mean size of South Asian households without this amenity is far higher than for other ethnic groups; about 5 persons per household for both Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Across all ethnic groups, households without central heating tend to be larger than those lacking exclusive use of a bath or WC, suggesting that this is experienced more by families living in self-contained housing. Low percentages are recorded by ethnic groups with more reliance on public sector rented accommodation, in which the vast bulk of dwellings have central heating. This indicator implies that Pakistani owner-occupiers tend to live in older housing without central heating. The comparatively high figure for Bangladeshis, despite their degree of reliance on public sector accommodation, demonstrates that they tend to occupy lower quality housing. The contrast with Indians may be a result of the greater ability of the latter ethnic group to afford higher quality accommodation.

## *5.2 Economic and social deprivation indicators*

In this section, two alternative measures of economic and social well-being will be considered. The first is the percentage of households without access to a motor vehicle, and the second is the percentage of households containing a person suffering from a limiting long-term illness<sup>3</sup>. The former has usually been interpreted as an indicator of household income,



while the latter may be used as an measure of health in a geographical area or population subgroup.

Levels of car ownership increased greatly during the 1980s as income levels rose and investment in public transport declined. The lack of a car is an increasing constraint on the mobility and activity of a household and hence this has become a more powerful indicator of economic well-being over time. Only a third of British households do not have access to a motor vehicle. However, over 40 per cent of ethnic minority households do not own a car. This is in part a consequence of the geographical pattern of settlement; ethnic minorities tend to live in larger urban areas where public transport facilities are best, and overall rates of car ownership are lowest<sup>4</sup>. This average figure masks considerable variations between individual ethnic groups. More than half of Black households have no car, compared to just over a third of Chinese and other households and 30 per cent of South Asian households. Amongst South Asians, Indians have a very high level of car ownership, with less than a quarter of households not possessing a car; the lowest percentage for any ethnic group. In contrast, over 60 per cent of Bangladeshi households do not possess a car. Only Black-Africans experience a lower rate of car ownership.

Households with no car tend to be smaller than average, as demonstrated by the fact that the share of all residents living in such households is smaller than the share of households without a car. This result holds for all ethnic groups with the exception of Bangladeshis, indicating a tendency for larger households to lack access to a car in this ethnic group. However, the difference is not large; on average, Bangladeshi households without cars contain 5.37 persons, compared to an overall average household size of 5.31 persons and 5.29 persons for households with cars.

**Table 8: Variations in the incidence of car ownership and limiting long-term illness among households by ethnic group in Great Britain, 1991**

Ethnic group	% of all households	Households with no car persons per hhd	Percent of residents	person with limiting long- term illness (% hhlds)
White	33.0	1.81	24.6	24.9
<b><i>Ethnic Minorities</i></b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>20.9</b>
<i>Black</i>	56.1	2.31	50.0	19.0
Black-Caribbean	54.8	2.21	48.2	21.7
Black-African	62.0	2.60	56.6	12.8
Black-Other	52.0	2.23	46.2	15.6
<i>South Asian</i>	30.1	3.83	27.6	26.1
Indian	23.2	2.96	18.1	24.0
Pakistani	36.3	4.28	32.3	29.2
Bangladeshi	60.9	5.37	61.2	31.3
<i>Chinese &amp; others</i>	34.2	2.39	27.4	14.3
Chinese	29.4	2.38	22.7	10.6
Other Asian	32.4	2.53	25.9	13.9
Other other	38.6	2.30	32.4	16.9
<b>Entire population</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>1.86</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>24.7</b>

Source: Source: 1991 Census Local Base Statistics (ESRC purchase); Crown Copyright.

In the population as a whole, about a quarter of all households contain a person suffering from a limiting long-term illness, compared to just over a fifth of ethnic minority households. This indicator probably measures both age structure and general levels of health.



Percentages are highest for households in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic groups, probably indicating poor levels of health due to relatively deprived living conditions, and possibly the influence of working in low-status manual occupations. The next highest percentages are recorded by the Black-Caribbean and Indian ethnic groups, in which the influence of age-related disabilities and illnesses are stronger. The lowest rates of illness occur in Chinese, Other-Asian and Black-African households. The figure for the Chinese ethnic group is perhaps surprising, given that this ethnic group contains a significant number of older people; however, members of this group also experience comparatively low unemployment rates, and tend to work in the service sector rather than the manufacturing sector, and therefore have less exposure to stress-related and industrial illnesses. Given that many of the health problems picked up by this indicator are related to age, its value as an measure of levels of health for ethnic groups for use in health service planning must be limited, as child-related illnesses will provide a greater part of the workload of doctors for ethnic minorities.

### *5.3 Housing characteristics as measures of relative deprivation*

The variables discussed above will be used in many studies of deprivation to indicate ethnic group differentials in economic prosperity and physical living conditions. The results presented here suggest that these measures tend to pick up three aspects of ethnic minority experience - cultural differences, age structure and household structure - in addition to economic factors. Ethnic minorities tend to live at higher densities than white people, but the greater percentage of high-density South Asian households is a reflection of larger household sizes as well as the ability to purchase large enough accommodation. It may also reflect a greater propensity of South Asians to purchase their own homes rather than rent property. This factor may account for the high percentage of Pakistanis without central heating, since having lower incomes (indicated by other evidence on unemployment and economic activity rates), they tend to purchase older property. High levels of car ownership amongst Indians may also be related as much to larger household sizes as to higher levels of income. Thus, it would be incorrect to conclude from the finding that a higher proportion of Indian households than white households have cars that Indians have higher levels of income than white people.

As a consequence, deprivation indicators for ethnic groups using Census data will have to be constructed with care. It may be possible to standardise some of these variables for age structure and household size, and if so, this would be desirable. The data to become available from the Sample of Anonymised Records will enable more sensitive indicators to be constructed for larger local authority districts.

## 7. Conclusions

This Statistical Paper has reviewed the information available on household types and housing conditions for ethnic groups for Great Britain as a whole. Marked differences have been revealed between ethnic groups in household size and organisation, housing tenure and levels of relative housing deprivation. The key findings may therefore be summarised as;

- Larger households are more common among South Asians than in the white or Black ethnic groups;
- Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have the largest households;
- The nuclear family is by no means the most common type of household organisation. Amongst white and Black households, families with dependent children are a minority household type;
- Families with children are most common among South Asian ethnic groups. Single-person households and childless couples are relatively uncommon for these ethnic groups;
- Black groups stand out as having high proportions of single-adult households, one-parent families and households with adult members of the same gender and dependent children;
- Pensioner households are far less common among ethnic minorities than in the white population;
- Black households rely on the public sector and other rented tenures for accommodation to a greater extent than South Asians, who display a high rate of home ownership;
- South Asians, especially Bangladeshis, experience relatively high levels of overcrowding in their accommodation;
- South Asian households experience relatively high rates of lack of housing amenities;
- Black ethnic groups, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis have low rates of car ownership, while Indians have higher rates of car ownership than the population as a whole;
- Black-Caribbeans and South Asian ethnic groups tend to experience poorer levels of health than other ethnic minorities, as measured by the percentage of households containing persons suffering from limiting long-term illnesses.

The patterns of social organisation and economic disadvantage implied by the results presented here show quite different experiences between ethnic groups. Black groups experience similar trends in household evolution to the white population, with small household sizes and more single-person and pensioner households, but also have a higher incidence of one-parent families than other ethnic minorities, are relatively dependent upon public sector housing and have low levels of car ownership. Family structures are stronger in South Asian groups and household sizes larger. While South Asians are more likely to own their own houses than other minority ethnic groups, Indians seem to have achieved greater material success in terms of car ownership and living conditions than Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

**Notes and references**

- 1 The Census of Population is structured by households, with one person being designated to fill in the details for all members of the household. Most households only contain one family, but some may contain more. The tables in the Census containing data for ethnic minorities are concerned with households rather than families. Where the term "family" appears in this paper, it is used in a descriptive manner.
- 2 The median age of "Black-Others" is 15.7 years and that of "Other-Others" is 21 years; see Owen, D. (1993) "Ethnic minorities in Great Britain: Age and gender structure", NEMDA 1991 Census Statistical Paper no 2, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations.
- 3 The Census form asks the person filling it in to identify whether any household member has "any long-term illness, health problem or handicap which limits his/her activities or the work he/she can do", and instructs them to include problems which are due to old age. Consequently, this variable is influenced by the age structure of the population, but it can be used to indicate the general level of health of a population group.
- 4 It can be argued that lack of access to a car is a less good indicator of deprivation in the conurbations and larger urban areas than in rural areas, since the presence of good public transport means that possession of a car is less essential in the former areas than in the latter.

## APPENDIX

The typology of households for which data on ethnic groups is available in the 1991 Census

Household structure		Number of adults		
Types of adult	Dependent Children	One adult	Two adults	Three+ adults
Mixed gender adult households	None		Couple	Adult Family
	1 or more		Small Family	Large Family
Single gender adult households	None	Single person	small same-gender household	large same-gender household
	1 or more	One-parent family	small same-gender family	large same-gender family
Pensionable age		Lone pensioner	Pensioner household	

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