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TOWARDS 2001

Ethnic Minorities and the Census

by

David Owen

National Ethnic Minority Data Archive

COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

Towards 2001:

Ethnic Minorities and the Census

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Foreword

The 1991 Census was a breakthrough for ethnic monitoring. It made available, for the first time, comprehensive, national data based on ethnicity. It provided an unprecedented wealth of information about the geographical distribution of different ethnic groups, their living conditions, family structure, health, education and employment. David Owen's analyses of this data provide us with a definitive picture of multi-racial, multi-cultural Britain at the end of the twentieth century.

Information of this kind is important for two specific reasons. Firstly, it enables services to be targeted at particular groups and in particular ways. Secondly, it allows possible discrimination to be monitored. Reliable information of this kind is a powerful tool in making an argument for action to be taken to counter any patterns of discrimination and disadvantage.

Inevitably, the ethnicity question will be modified for the 2001 Census, not least of all because of the changing nature of ethnicity. We hope that this publication will assist the process of reviewing the nature of data and information that will be required in the future, and assist discussions on such detailed areas as ethnic classification. The information summarised in this publication remains invaluable for those of us working towards racial equality.

Herman Ouseley
Chair, Commission for Racial Equality

Introduction

The 1991 Census of Population provides the benchmark for quantitative analyses of the living conditions of people from ethnic minorities resident in Great Britain, since it was the first to include a question on the ethnic group of each individual in the population. This report reviews the experience of collecting ethnic group data and looks forward to how the exercise may be repeated in the next Census. The first section of this report describes the key findings of the 1991 Census on a range of social and economic dimensions. The Census has revealed the continued existence of marked disadvantage for people from ethnic minorities relative to white people, and has in addition highlighted the considerable differences in experience which exist between individual minority groups. It has, moreover, enabled these patterns to be studied at a local scale for the first time.

The amount of use which has been made of the 1991 Census data by central and local government, business, community organisations and academics, fully justifies the inclusion of a question relating to ethnic group. Section Two of this report describes the process through which it was decided to include the question in the Census and evaluates the experience of collecting ethnic group data for the first time. The inclusion of such a question in the next Census (due to be held in April 2001) is now much less controversial, and Section Three of the report discusses some of the issues surrounding the design of the question to be included in the forthcoming Census, together with the information which it might be required to yield.

Part One

Summary of the findings of the 1991 Census of Population

Part One — Summary of the findings of the 1991 Census of Population

The 1991 Census of Population was the first conducted in Great Britain which asked people to report the ethnic group to which they (or the person on whose behalf they were filling in the Census form) belonged. As such, it yielded a great deal of new information on the ethnic composition of the population and the living conditions of people from different ethnic groups. Although sample surveys which collected this type of information had been carried out for a number of years, the Census provided the first nationally comprehensive benchmark information on the different ethnic groups present, and had the great benefit of yielding comparable information across the whole of England, Wales and Scotland, for very small geographical areas.

The availability of ethnic group data for small areas represented a major advance. Critics of the inclusion of an ethnic group question in the Census had argued that national sample surveys could provide all the information needed. However, none of these yielded reliable information on areas smaller than the ten Standard Regions. In contrast, the Census provided detailed information for areas as small as electoral wards (the areas represented by local councillors) and could thus be used by local authorities, social services and education authorities to help in planning their services to ethnic minorities. Unfortunately, the Northern Ireland Census does not include a question on ethnic group, and thus analysis of the ethnic composition of the population is limited to Great Britain only, rather than the entire United Kingdom.

1 Demographic characteristics

Before describing the findings of the 1991 Census in detail, it may be useful to place it within the context of the growth of the ethnic minority population of Great Britain since the Second World War.

Growth of the ethnic minority population of Great Britain since 1945

The number of people born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan stood at 256,000 in 1951 (all but 100,000 of whom were white), rising to 500,000 in 1961 (with around 400,000 from ethnic minorities).

National sample surveys (the Labour Force Survey, for example) and estimates based on the country of birth of individuals provided information on the growth in the number of people of 'immigrant' and then 'New Commonwealth and Pakistan' ethnic origin in subsequent decades; these samples yielded little information on their social and economic characteristics, however. The samples estimated that over the fourteen years from 1966 to 1980, the number of people from ethnic minorities more than doubled, rising from 886,000 to 2.1 million.

The Labour Force Survey revealed a further growth of more than half a million during the 1980s. By the period 1989–91, it estimated that ethnic minorities formed nearly

5 per cent of the population, or 2.7 million people (Figure 1). This source also revealed that ethnic minorities accounted for 45 per cent of the overall growth of the British population (of 1.3 million) during this decade, since the white ethnic group only increased by 1 per cent over the same period. Changes were as follows:

- The greatest increase was in the Pakistani ethnic group, which grew by more than 200,000 to match the size of the West Indian ethnic group by the end of the decade, while the Bangladeshi ethnic group more than doubled in size. Rapid growth was also displayed by the Chinese and African ethnic groups, and in the number of people of 'Other' ethnic origin.

- The Indian ethnic group was the largest ethnic group throughout the 1980s but its rate of growth was substantially slower than that during the 1970s. The number of people from the West Indian ethnic group declined by 14 per cent between 1981 and 1989–91.

The number of people born outside Great Britain increased by 388,200, or 10.8 per cent between 1981 and 1991. The greatest increases were in the numbers of people born in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Germany, the USA, the Middle East, India and Japan. In contrast, the number of people born in the Caribbean, Ireland and Eastern Europe declined between 1981 and 1991.

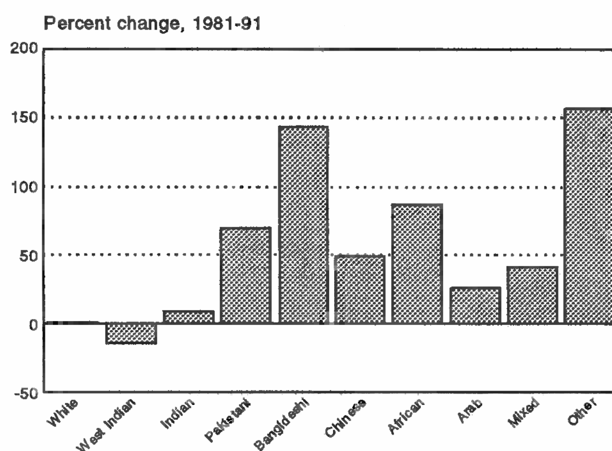


Figure 1: Change in ethnic minority populations during the 1980s

The ethnic composition of Great Britain in 1991

The 1991 Census of Population revealed that ethnic minorities formed 5.5 per cent of the population of Great Britain, representing 3.015 million people out of an enumerated population of 54.9 million people (see Figure 2). The key features of the minority population are summarised below.

The Indian ethnic group was by far the largest of the ethnic minorities, comprising 840,000 people, or 1.5 per cent of the British population. The Indian ethnic group on its own represented more than a quarter of all people from ethnic minorities living in Great Britain. The Black-Caribbean and Pakistani ethnic groups were the next largest, each containing around half a million people. Overall, there were 1.48 million people from the South Asian ethnic groups and 890,000 people from African Caribbean ethnic groups resident in Britain in 1991.

Other, more recently arrived ethnic groups had also become substantial by 1991. There were 212,000 Black-African people, 163,000 Bangladeshi people and 157,000 Chinese people resident in Britain.

Newer ethnic groups

The Census also highlighted the growth of 'other' and 'mixed' ethnic groups. There were 198,000 'Other – Asians', comprising mainly south-east Asian people, together with Sri Lankans and people of South Asian ethnic origin from the Caribbean and East Africa.

There were 290,000 in the 'Other – Other' category, which combined people from the Middle East, Iran and North Africa with people of mixed white and Asian parentage and those of other ethnic origin.

The 'Black – Other' category contained 178,000 people, 58,000 of whom had identified themselves as being 'Black British', with the remainder mainly having one Black parent, the other being either white or from another ethnic minority. This category also included Black US servicemen as well as people from a diverse range of countries outside Africa and the Caribbean.

Country of birth

By 1991, nearly half (46.8 per cent) of all people from ethnic minorities living in Great Britain had been born in the UK. Some 4 million (7.3 per cent of the population) people living in Great Britain had been born elsewhere, including 245,000 people born in Northern Ireland. Of the remainder, the Irish Republic

(592,000) and India (409,000) were the most common national origins. Overall, 60.6 per cent of all people born outside Great Britain in 1991 were white.

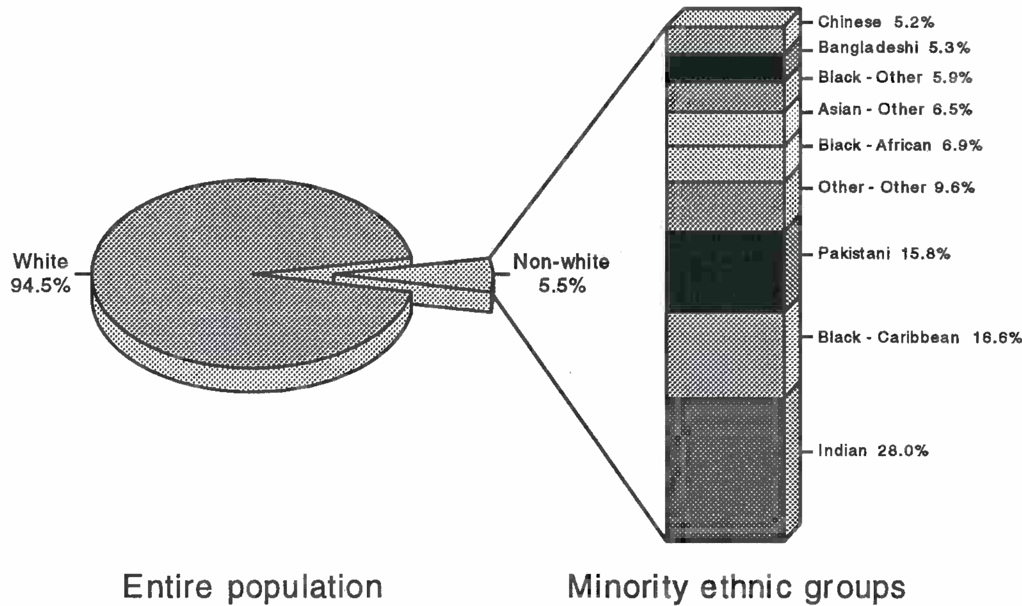


Figure 2: Composition of the ethnic minority population in 1991

Age and gender structure of ethnic groups

Ethnic minorities living in Great Britain have very different characteristics to those of the majority white population, and to each other. One of the most important contrasts between the majority white population and ethnic minorities is the difference in age structure and gender balance. The population pyramids presented in Figure 3 graphically highlight the markedly greater average age of white people relative to people from ethnic minorities. The pyramid for white people is much narrower at the base and broader at the apex than that for ethnic minorities, demonstrating the greater numbers of older people and pensioners in the white population and the large share of children and young people amongst ethnic minorities. Given that their populations are so youthful, the number of people from ethnic minorities is likely to grow by at least a fifth over the decade 1991–2001, and their share of the British population will probably continue to increase until the middle of the twenty-first century. The most notable features of the contrasting age and gender structures of the ethnic groups living in Great Britain in 1991 are outlined below.

Male–female ratios

Overall, females outnumbered males in 1991, since there were only 939 males per 1000 females living in Great Britain. In contrast, there was near equality in the number of males and females from ethnic minorities, representing a shift in the gender balance towards females over the decade 1981–91.

However, there were marked contrasts between individual ethnic groups. At one extreme, there were only 901 and 919 males per 1000 females in the Other – Asian and Black-Caribbean ethnic groups respectively. At the other extreme, there were 9 per cent more males than females in the Bangladeshi ethnic group, and 7 per cent more males than females in the Other – Other ethnic group; the excess of males over females was 6 per cent in the Pakistani ethnic group.

Age structures

The median age of the population was 36.5 years in 1991, with the median for females 37.9 years, 2.9 years older than males (the medians for white people were about one year greater). This is a consequence of the greater life expectancy of females.

The median age of all people from ethnic minorities was 25.5 years in 1991, with little difference between males and females. In marked contrast, the median age of people born in Northern Ireland was around 44 years and that of the Republic-born was around 50 years. However, the mean age of Black-Caribbean and Other – Asian people was 30.2 years, the median age of Chinese people was 28.7 years, and that of Indian people was 28 years.

There were also some very youthful ethnic minorities. Half of all Black – Other people were aged 15.7 years or less, while the median age of Bangladeshis was 17 years and that of Pakistanis was 19.7 years.

In the Black – Other ethnic group, 84.4 per cent had been born in the UK. However, in the other most youthful ethnic groups, the percentage born in the UK was only 36.7 per cent for Bangladeshis and 50.5 per cent for Pakistanis, pointing to the continuing influence of international migration upon the growth of these ethnic groups.

Ethnic group share by age

The share of ethnic minorities in the population varied according to age group. For example, they formed only 1.1 per cent of the population aged 65 and over in

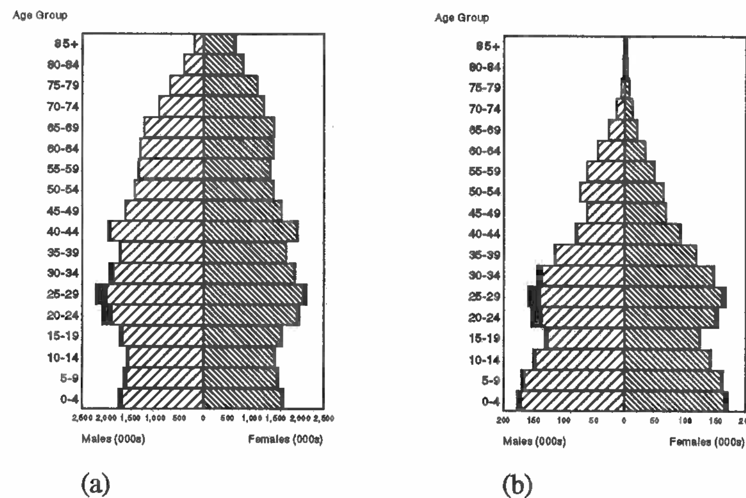
1991, but represented 9.2 per cent of those aged 0–4. Ethnic minorities formed 9 per cent of the school age (aged 5 to 15) population, but only 6.1 per cent of people in the prime working age range (25 to 44 years).

The share of individual ethnic groups in each age group varied according to their age structure. For example, the share of Indians and Pakistanis in the population was highest for school-age children, while the population share of Black – Others was highest in the pre-school age group. Black-Caribbeans differed from other ethnic minorities in exhibiting an almost constant share of the population of each age group up to retirement age, and their share of the population aged 65 and over was higher than for any other ethnic minority. Chinese and Other – Asian people contrast strongly with other ethnic minorities in their relatively high percentages of people aged 25–44 in 1991, the age group in which their percentage of the total population was highest.

Dependency

The dependency ratio is an important demographic measure which expresses the 'dependent' population (children and old people) as a percentage of people of working age. This illustrates contrasts between ethnic groups in the average number of people each worker is potentially supporting. Ethnic minorities exhibited lower dependency ratios on average than the white population in 1991, at 59.7 per cent compared with 63.6 per cent.

Dependency ratios for ethnic minorities in 1991 were largely determined by the size of the child population. Thus they were around 40 per cent for Chinese, Other Asians and Black-Caribbeans, but 82.2 per cent for Pakistanis, 95.4 per cent for Bangladeshis and 109.3 per cent for Black – Others.



(a) (b)

Figure 3: Population pyramids for (a)white people and (b)people from ethnic minorities in 1991.

2 The geographical distribution of ethnic minorities

People from ethnic minorities migrating to the UK in the decades following the end of the Second World War initially settled in the largest cities of Britain. Most of these cities are located in the area of greatest population density, stretching from London to Leeds, and hence the ethnic minority population of Great Britain came to be predominantly concentrated in the southern half of England. This pattern of settlement was dictated by the availability of jobs in the service industries of London, the engineering industries of the West Midlands and the clothing and textile industries of the Pennine conurbations during the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, there were substantial local populations from ethnic minorities in port cities such as Liverpool and Cardiff, where seamen from New Commonwealth and Third World countries had settled for many decades.

The last thirty years have seen a dramatic change in the geographical distribution of population and employment in Great Britain, as people and jobs have increasingly moved away from the major cities to smaller towns and rural areas, and from the central areas of cities to their outer areas. However, the geographical distribution of ethnic minorities has remained extremely stable, with population growth tending to occur predominantly in and around the areas of initial settlement. Analysis of 1991 Census data allowed the geographical distribution of individual ethnic groups to be analysed in detail for the first time and revealed the following.

Overall distribution of ethnic minorities

While people from ethnic minorities were found in all parts of Great Britain, they were still predominantly concentrated in the most urbanised parts of Britain.

More than half (56.2 per cent) of all people from ethnic minorities lived in the South-East standard region in 1991 (compared to 29.9 per cent of white people), most of whom (44.6 per cent of the Great Britain total) lived within Greater London. A further 14.1 per cent of the

ethnic minority population of Great Britain lived in the West Midlands.

The greatest relative concentrations of people from ethnic minorities occurred in these two regions. More than a fifth of the population of Greater London as a whole (20.2 per cent), a quarter of the population of Inner London (25.6 per cent) and 14.6 per cent of the population of the West Midlands metropolitan county were from ethnic minorities.

Areas of high ethnic group density

There were even greater local concentrations of people from ethnic minorities within these two city regions. For example, Birmingham (with a population of a million people) contained the largest number of people from ethnic minorities (206,800), forming 21.5 per cent of the city's population. Even greater local concentrations occurred within London – the share of the population from ethnic minorities was 44.8 per cent in Brent, 42.3 per cent in Newham, and 35.6 per cent in Tower Hamlets. These London Boroughs were also more diverse in terms of their ethnic mix than any other parts of Britain.

Nevertheless, there were also significant local concentrations of people from ethnic minorities elsewhere. Examples were Leicester (28.5 per cent), Slough (27.7 per cent), Luton (19.8 per cent), Wolverhampton (18.6 per cent), Bradford (15.6 per cent) and Blackburn (15.4 per cent). Most of these were cities and towns with a substantial amount of manufacturing industry, often in the textiles and clothing sector.

Areas of low ethnic group density

In contrast, ethnic minorities formed less than 1.5 per cent of the population of Wales, Scotland, the Northern Region of England and South-West England, and were mainly concentrated in the larger cities of these countries and regions.

The share of the population from ethnic minorities was lowest in the most rural parts of Britain (0.7 per cent), resort and retirement areas (1.1 per cent), higher status growth areas (1.9 per cent) and 'mixed town and country' areas (2 per cent); the last of these being the areas gaining most from the relative 'urban–rural shift' of employment and population.

Areas of change

There is a tendency towards increasing concentration of the ethnic minority population in the larger urban settlements of Britain. The share of ethnic minorities in the population of Greater London increased from 7.9 per cent

in 1971 to 20.2 per cent in 1991, during which period the population of London declined by 7.4 per cent. In contrast, the population of East Anglia grew by 26.1 per cent over the same period, but the share of minorities in the population grew from 0.7 per cent to 2.1 per cent.

The spatial segregation of ethnic minorities remained substantial in 1991. Three-quarters of white people lived in electoral wards in which the share of the population from ethnic minorities was below the national average of 5.5 per cent; conversely, three-quarters of people from ethnic minorities lived in wards in which the minority share of the population was above the national average. People from South Asian ethnic groups were most likely to be geographically segregated, with the highest levels of segregation being experienced by Pakistani and Bangladeshi people living in former 'textile towns' such as Blackburn.

African Caribbean ethnic groups tend to be more spatially concentrated than other ethnic minorities. Two-thirds of Black-Caribbean people and 83.5 per cent of Black-African people lived in South-East England in 1991, and 77.7 per cent of Black-Africans lived in Greater London. The West Midlands and Greater Manchester metropolitan counties were the main areas of settlement outside the South-East for Black-Caribbeans. Black – Other people had a more widely dispersed pattern of settlement, with a greater representation in less urbanised areas, such as East Anglia. In part this pattern reflected the location of people with one white and one African Caribbean parent, but it was also influenced by the location of US military bases, and hence Black American servicemen.

Areas of South Asian settlement

There were marked differences in the geographical distribution of South Asians in 1991. Indian people were predominantly located in South-East England, but their concentration within Greater London was lower than that for many other ethnic minorities. The West Midlands metropolitan county and the Leicester area contained the next largest concentrations of this ethnic group, followed by West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. In contrast, Pakistani people were more strongly concentrated in the West Midlands, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, and only 18.4 per cent of this ethnic group lived in Greater London. Bangladeshi people were mostly found in Greater London, the West Midlands metropolitan county and Greater Manchester.

Areas of Chinese and 'Other' settlement

Chinese people had a much more geographically dispersed pattern of settlement than other ethnic minorities. Only 36.1 per cent lived in Greater London, with other concentrations in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Birmingham and Tyne and Wear (Newcastle). In common with Pakistani people, Chinese people formed a substantial part of the minority populations of Scotland and Wales. In contrast, 72.4 per cent of Other – Asian people lived in South-East England, and elsewhere tended to live in the larger urban areas. The Other – Other ethnic group had a more even geographical distribution, with largest concentrations in Greater London, the West Midlands metropolitan county and Greater Manchester.

People born in the Irish Republic had a similar geographical distribution to ethnic minorities as a whole in 1991, with 54.6 per cent living in South-East England and a further 11 per cent in both the West Midlands and North-West standard regions. However, those born in Northern Ireland had a more widespread distribution, similar to that of white people as a whole, with the exception that 10.8 per cent lived in Scotland.

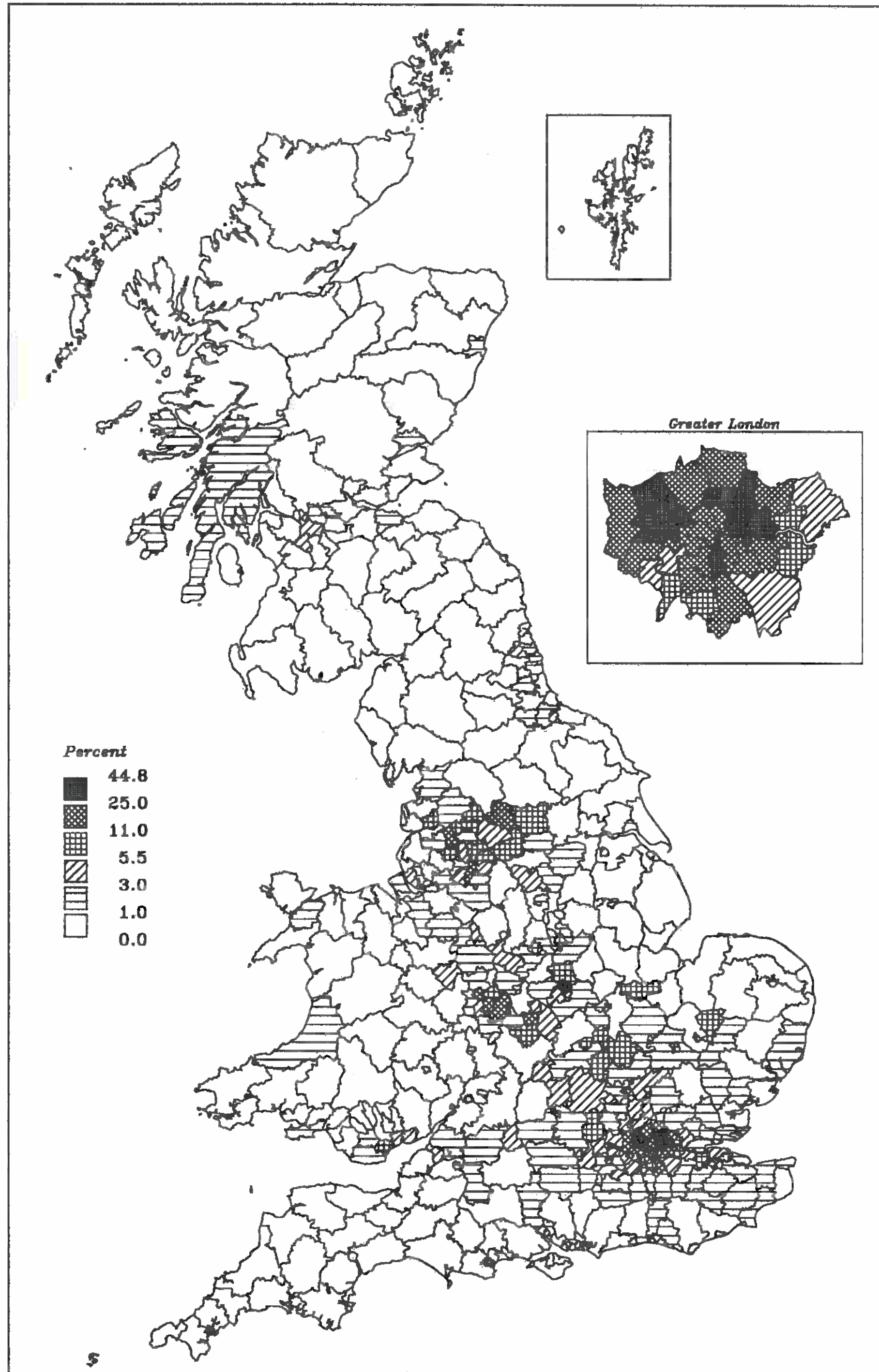


Figure 4: Geographical distribution of people from ethnic minorities, 1991

3 Contrasts in health between ethnic groups

The 1991 Census was the first to collect information on the health of the population. A question was included which was intended to yield information on the incidence of long-term illness and disability within the population. Worded 'Does the person have any long-term illness, health problem or handicap which limits his/her daily activities or the work he/she can do?', the responses to the question can be regarded as a reasonably good indicator of the general level of health of the population. However, the usefulness of the information yielded by the question for

the study of illness is limited by the fact that all types of health problem are treated as being of equal severity. The Census enables the proportions of males and females suffering a long-term health problem to be calculated for each ethnic group, and also provides information on the number of households containing people suffering from a limiting long-term illness, again disaggregated by the ethnic group of the household head. The data revealed the following key features:

Long-term illness by ethnic group

Only 8.4 per cent of people from ethnic minorities suffered limiting long-term illnesses in 1991, compared with 13.4 per cent of white people. The Irish-born had the poorest health, with 17.8 per cent suffering from a long-term illness.

About a quarter of white households contained a person suffering from a long-term health problem, compared with just over a fifth of all ethnic minority households, but 27 per cent of those with Irish-born heads.

There were marked differences between ethnic minorities. For example, 29.2 per cent of Pakistani and 31.3 per cent of Bangladeshi households contained people suffering limiting long-term illnesses, but only 10.6 per cent of Chinese and 12.8 per cent of Black-African households contained such a person.

Using this information, it is possible to compare long-term illness rates between ethnic groups. However, the differences in age structure described above complicate this comparison, because rates of illness tend to be closely related to age. Thus, a more youthful ethnic group might have low rates of long-term illness purely because there are fewer older people in the population than in a more elderly ethnic group. In order to identify health differentials between ethnic groups more accurately, it is thus necessary to carry out a standardisation of the data first, in which the number of long-term ill people in an ethnic group is compared with the number which would occur if that ethnic group had the same age structure as the population as a whole. An index of the relative health of an ethnic group can then be calculated by dividing the actual number of long-term ill people by this hypothetical number (see Figure 5). This reveals that:

Health differentials

Ethnic minorities had, on average, poorer relative health than white people. The number of long-term ill males was 15 per cent greater than that which would be expected given their age structure, while the number of long-term ill females was 32 per cent higher than the expected value.

In contrast, the number of Irish-born people with long-term illnesses was not much greater than would be expected from their age structure.

Amongst ethnic minorities, females tended to experience poorer relative health than males, with the exception of the Black – Other and Pakistani ethnic groups. Pakistani and Bangladeshi people suffered the poorest relative levels of

health. Chinese and Other – Asian people experienced much lower relative illness rates than all other ethnic groups.

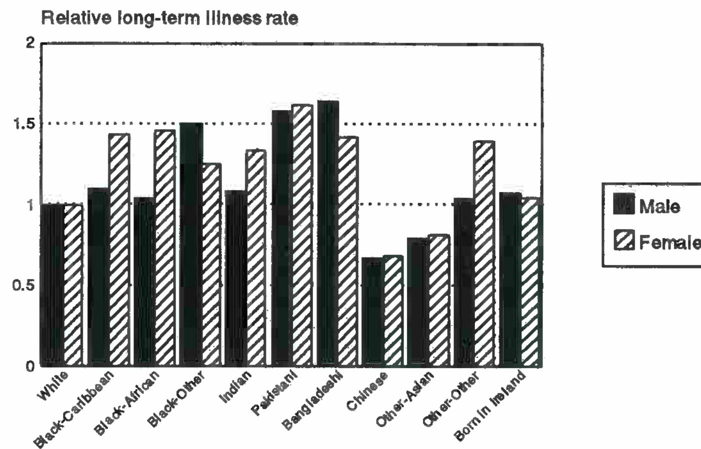


Figure 5: Contrasts in relative illness rates between ethnic groups, 1991

4 Contrasts in households, family structures and housing conditions between ethnic groups

There are marked differences in household and family organisation between the ethnic groups present in Great Britain. During the twentieth century, the 'nuclear' family of two (married) adults plus two or more children came to be regarded as the 'norm', but in the last thirty years other forms of household organisation have become increasingly common, including one-parent families, cohabiting couples (with and without children) and adults living on their own. As the population has aged, lone pensioners have become much more common. In contrast, extended families have been common among some ethnic minorities. Consequently, the household and family composition of the British population has become quite complex, and different types of household and family organisation are typical of different ethnic groups. In 1991, there were 21 million households in Great Britain, with the following features:

Size of household

The average household contained 2.47 persons; households headed by people from ethnic minorities were larger, containing 3.34 persons on average.

There were considerable variations in household size between ethnic groups. The average African Caribbean household was only slightly larger than the average white household, containing 2.5 people. However, there was an average of 4.2 people in each South Asian household.

Bangladeshis had the largest households on average, with a mean size of 5.34 persons, followed by Pakistanis with a mean size of 4.8 persons, and Indians with 3.8 persons per

household. The mean household sizes for Other – Asians and Chinese people were 3.15 and 3.08, respectively.

While 31 per cent of white households contained only one adult, 25.4 per cent of households with a head from an ethnic minority contained three or more adults. Over a third of households in the three South Asian ethnic groups contained more than two adults. In contrast, over two-fifths of African-Caribbean households, and nearly half of all Black – Other households, contained only one adult.

Small families (couples with dependent children) were most common for Bangladeshi (43.3 per cent), Pakistani (41 per cent), Indian (36.4 per cent) and Other – Asian (34.7 per cent) households, and least common for Black-Caribbean households (14.8 per cent).

Childless households

Couples living without children (because they had none or the children had left the family home) represented 29.5 per cent of all white households but 13.3 per cent of ethnic minority households, and were least common among Pakistani and Bangladeshi households. Large families without children (3 or more adults and no dependent children) were most prevalent in Indian (13.4 per cent), Black-Caribbean (11.4 per cent) and white (11.1 per cent) households, representing either families with older children who had not yet left home, or the presence of older relatives living with a couple.

People living alone

Nearly a quarter of all African-Caribbean households consisted of single non-pensioner adults, and this household type was more than twice as common for these ethnic groups than for white households. They were also common in the Other – Other (22 per cent) and Chinese (18.8 per cent) ethnic groups.

In contrast, 15.6 per cent of white households contained a lone pensioner, compared with only 2.8 per cent of ethnic minority households. In all, 25.7 per cent of white households contained pensioners, compared with 4.2 per cent of all households from ethnic minorities.

Single parents

Over a fifth of all ethnic minority families (20.9 per cent) were one-parent families. These were most common in the African-Caribbean ethnic groups, accounting for more than two-fifths of all families, compared with only a tenth of South Asian families and 13.1 per cent of white families. The highest percentages were 43.4 for Black – Other families and 42 per cent of Black-Caribbean families.

Divorce and widowhood

Rates of widowhood and divorce were particularly high for Irish-born people. The percentage of women divorced was 13.1 per cent for those born in Northern Ireland and 11.6 per cent for those born in the Irish Republic, compared with the average figure of 6.8 per cent for all white women and 5.2 per cent for women from ethnic minorities.

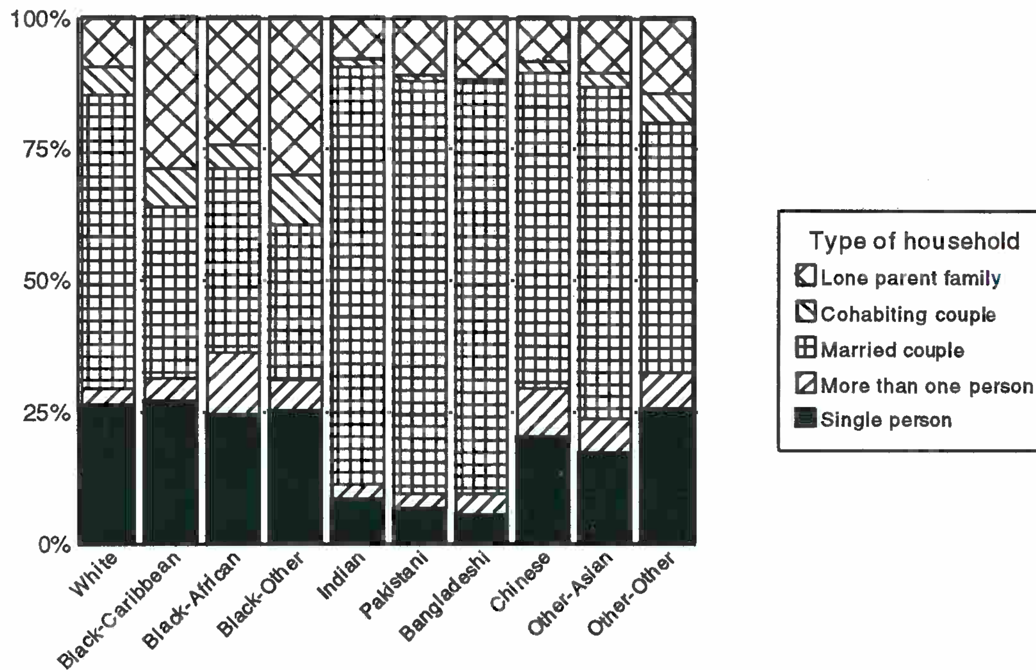


Figure 6: family types by ethnic group, 1991

In the immediate post-war decades, the amount of publicly owned rented accommodation increased substantially as a result of slum clearance and urban renewal programmes. Since 1980, government policy has encouraged a major shift away from public sector renting and towards home ownership. Owner-occupation has become an important method of capital accumulation and the public sector is becoming increasingly marginalised and restricted to serving the poorer social groups. The relative concentration of some ethnic minorities in public sector housing may thus exacerbate existing social inequalities which are manifested in contrasting housing circumstances.

Owner-occupation

Overall, two-thirds of white households and 59.5 per cent of ethnic minority households owned their own accommodation in 1991. However, only 42.3 per cent of African-Caribbean households were owner-occupiers, compared with 62.2 per cent of Chinese households and 77.1 per cent of South Asian households. Black-Africans (at 28 per cent) were least likely to be home owners, while

81.7 per cent of Indian households owned their own dwelling.

Rented accommodation

Just over a fifth of all households lived in local authority rented accommodation in 1991, with little difference in the overall averages for white households and those from ethnic minorities.

However, more than a third of African-Caribbean households rented in the public sector. Households from the Bangladeshi (37 per cent) and Black-African (41.1 per cent) ethnic groups were most likely to live in local authority rented accommodation.

Black-African (10.8 per cent) and Black – Other (11.2 per cent) households were much more likely than those from other ethnic groups to rent from housing associations, whilst only 2.2 per cent of Indian and Pakistani households lived in such properties.

Private renting accounted for 10.8 per cent of ethnic minority households in 1991 and 10.9 per cent of all households with Irish-born heads. This tenure type was most common for the Other – Asian ethnic group (24.5 per cent of all households), followed by Other – Other (18.2 per cent), Black-African (17.8 per cent) and Chinese households (17 per cent). Households from the Black-Caribbean (5.6 per cent) and Indian (6.5 per cent) ethnic groups were least likely of all to live in private rented accommodation.

Shared accommodation

Overcrowding was not a serious problem for white households in 1991, since only 1.8 per cent lived at a density above one person per room. However, 13.1 per cent of ethnic minority households were overcrowded, and this problem was most serious for the South Asian ethnic groups. The percentage of households living in overcrowded conditions was greatest for households from the Bangladeshi (47.1 per cent), Pakistani (29.7 per cent) and Black-African (15.1 per cent) ethnic groups.

The percentage of households in non self-contained accommodation was also greater for ethnic minorities than for white people, largely due to the very high (6.5 per cent) share of such accommodation for Black-African people, and the high percentages of Other – Other (3.7 per cent), Other – Asian (3.7 per cent) and Chinese (3.6 per cent) households in such accommodation. This pattern is repeated in the percentage of households without exclusive use of a bath or WC, and probably reflects the relatively

large percentage of students living in shared accommodation in these ethnic groups.

Amenities

The percentage of households lacking central heating in 1991 was similar for both white households and ethnic minorities as a whole, at just under a fifth of all households. However, Pakistani (34.2 per cent) and Bangladeshi (23.6 per cent) households were least likely to have this amenity, probably reflecting their location in some of the older private rented housing and poorest quality public sector housing.

Car ownership is often regarded as a good indicator of differentials in wealth. While a third of white households did not possess a car in 1991, 40.8 per cent of ethnic minority households were without a car. However, there were interesting variations between ethnic minorities. In all three African-Caribbean ethnic groups, more than half of all households had no car, while 60.9 per cent of Bangladeshi households were similarly deprived. However, only 23.2 per cent of Indian households, 29.4 per cent of Chinese households, 32.4 per cent of Other – Asian households and 36.3 per cent of Pakistani households did not own a car in 1991. Some 45.5 per cent of Irish-headed households did not possess a car.

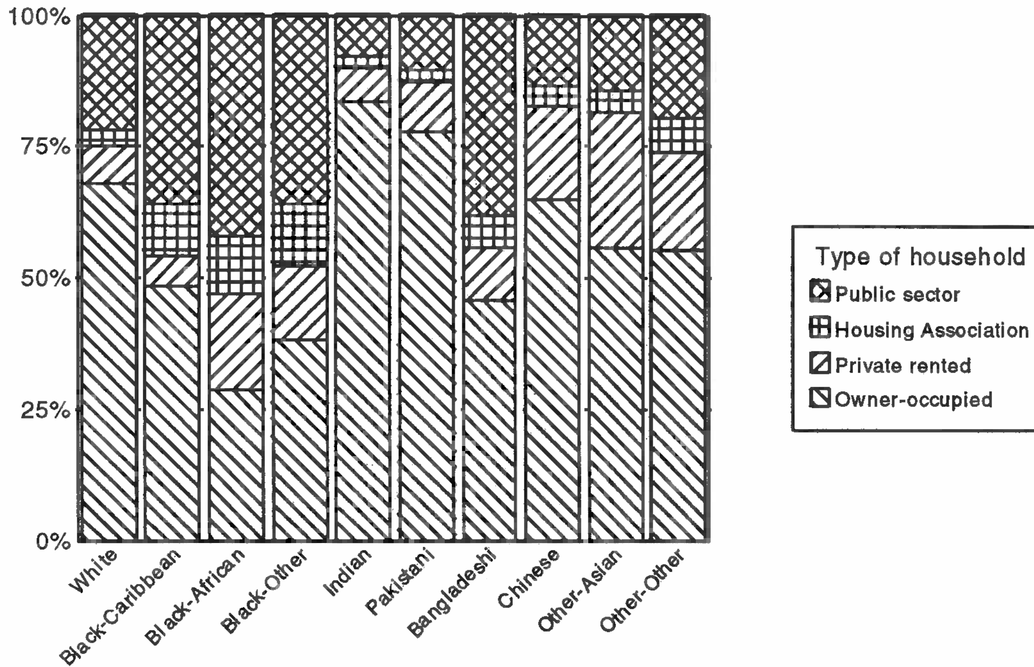


Figure 7: Housing tenure by ethnic group, 1991

5 Differences in economic activity between ethnic groups

There were very marked differences between ethnic groups resident in Great Britain in the extent to which they participated in the labour market in 1991. The economically active population contains those people who are either working, unemployed or participating in a government training scheme.

Employment patterns

Overall, there were 17.4 million men and 16.2 million women of working age (16 to retirement age) in Great Britain in 1991. Of this total, 949,900 men and 937,700 women were from ethnic minorities.

Men of working age represented about two thirds of the male population, and a slightly smaller percentage of men from ethnic minorities (63 per cent). This percentage was highest for Chinese (72.8 per cent), Other – Asian (71.8 per cent) and Black-Caribbean (70.4 per cent) men, and lowest for Black – Other (46.6 per cent) and Bangladeshi men (51.7 per cent). Similarly, 72.8 per cent of Other – Asian, 71.6 per cent of Chinese and 70 per cent of Black-Caribbean women were of working age, compared with 56.9 per cent of white women and only about half of Black – Other and Bangladeshi women.

Men were more likely than women to be economically active in 1991, with 86.6 per cent of men and 67.6 per cent of women (of working age) either working or seeking work. White people were also more likely to be economically active than people from ethnic minorities. For white people, 87 per cent of men and 63.8 per cent of women were economically active, but 79.6 per cent of men and 56.6 per cent of women from ethnic minorities were participating in the labour market.

Variation in ethnic groups

This average figure disguises marked differences between ethnic minorities. For example, the economic activity rate of Black-Caribbean men was nearly as high as that for white men, at 86.4 per cent, while 73.3 per cent of Black-Caribbean women were economically active, a rate well above that for any other ethnic group. Black – Other (83.7 per cent) and Indian (82.3 per cent) men and women (64.8 and 60.4 per cent, respectively) exhibited higher economic activity rates than other ethnic groups.

Amongst men, the Chinese (72.4 per cent) and Pakistani (71.3 per cent) ethnic groups exhibited the lowest economic activity rates. For women, the differential between the highest and lowest economic activity rates was even greater. Only 28.2 per cent of Pakistani women and 22.2 per cent of Bangladeshi women of working age

were economically active. For most ethnic minorities, just over half of the women aged 16 to 59 participated in the labour market.

Overall, about a quarter of all men aged 16 and over were economically inactive in 1991, but about half of women aged 16 and over were inactive. For men, the Black-African (31 per cent) and Chinese (29.9 per cent) ethnic groups displayed the highest inactivity rates, while for women, three quarters or more of Pakistanis (72.9 per cent) and Bangladeshis (78.2 per cent) were inactive.

Young people

Young people (aged 16–24) were less active in the labour market than all persons of working age. The white economic activity rate was 72.4 per cent, and that of ethnic minorities was 53.4 per cent.

The Black-Caribbean ethnic group had the highest economic activity rate of any ethnic minority (70.6 per cent), followed by Black – Others (65.7 per cent), but that for Black-Africans was much lower, at 49.7 per cent. Amongst South Asians, the economic activity rate was highest (at 52.2 per cent) for Indians. The lowest rate was displayed by Chinese people, at 36.7 per cent. The economic activity rate for those born in Ireland was much higher, at 83.5 per cent of men and 76.6 per cent of women.

The major factor determining economic activity rates in this age group was participation in further and higher education. While about a quarter of white people aged 16 to 24 were full-time students, nearly half of all people from ethnic minorities in this age group were full-time students. The percentage of 16–24-year-olds in full-time education was highest in the Chinese, Black-African and Other – Asian ethnic groups, and much higher for all South Asian ethnic groups than for people from the white and African Caribbean ethnic groups.

The increase in economic activity rates with age was much slower for people from Black-African, South Asian, Chinese and Other – Asian ethnic groups than for white and other African Caribbean people, owing to the longer period spent in higher education by these ethnic groups.

With the exception of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups, women's labour market participation was lower for women in their late twenties and early thirties, the time in life at which many women took a career break to have children, and rose again through the later 30s and early

40s, afterwards declining. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were distinctive, in that labour market participation was greatest in the younger economically active age groups, and declined with increasing age.

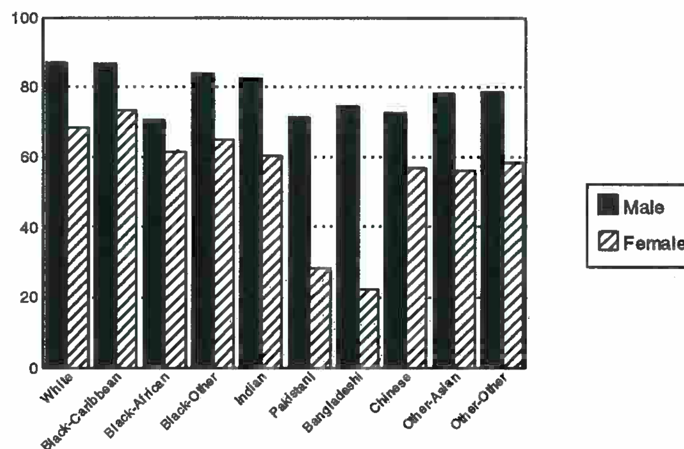


Figure 8: Economic activity rates by ethnic group and gender, 1991

6 Contrasting patterns of work between ethnic groups

The broad features of work

The 1991 Census was taken at a time of recession, following a decade in which employment had first fallen dramatically, and then risen rapidly. The nature and location of employment also changed markedly, affecting ethnic groups in different ways. These major changes included a rapid increase in self-employment, the growth of female and part-time employment at the expense of male and full-time jobs, the growth of white collar jobs and decline in manual jobs and the relative geographical shift of employment away from cities and inner urban areas and into towns and more rural areas. The key features of the pattern of work by ethnic group in 1991 are outlined below.

There was a total of 23.9 million people in work, of whom 1.03 million were from ethnic minorities. Just over half this total (13.4 million or 56 per cent of the total) were men, with the male share of the total workforce slightly higher among ethnic minorities than for white people.

There were marked differences between men and women, and between white people and people from ethnic minorities, in the types of work they were engaged in.

Part-time employment has grown dramatically in the last two decades, but remains predominantly female in

character. Only 4.2 per cent of white men in work were part-time employees, but 39.7 per cent of white women in work were employed part-time.

Men from ethnic minorities were slightly more likely than white men to work in part-time jobs (5.7 per cent), but women from ethnic minorities were much less likely to be part-time workers than white women (only 23.8 per cent). Amongst men, Black-Africans (11.8 per cent) were most likely by far to work part-time, with Pakistanis (7.2 per cent) the next most likely to be part-time employees.

Working hours

On average, both white men and men from ethnic minorities worked for 38.2 hours per week. However, white women worked an average of 33.8 hours per week, while women from ethnic minorities worked for 36.2 hours per week on average.

African Caribbean men had shorter than average working weeks and South Asian men worked around the average number of hours per week, but Chinese men worked 1.5 hours longer per week on average. Chinese women also worked longer hours on average than any other ethnic group, but only 0.6 hours longer than the average for all women from ethnic minorities.

Self-employment

Self-employment grew by over a million during the 1980s, and was encouraged by government policies. It was more common for men than women, and more prevalent for ethnic minorities than white people; of all people in work, 19.5 per cent of men and 8.2 per cent of women from ethnic minorities compared with 17.6 per cent of white men and 6.6 per cent of white women were self-employed.

However, not all ethnic minorities participated in self-employment to the same degree. Only 10.2 per cent of Black-Caribbean men and 1.9 per cent of Black-Caribbean women were self-employed, and the percentages of men and women from other African-Caribbean ethnic groups who were self-employed were similarly low.

In marked contrast, over a quarter of Indian and Pakistani men (25.3 per cent and 26.6 per cent respectively) and 32.8 per cent of Chinese men were self-employed. Chinese women also displayed the highest rate of self-employment (20.3 per cent), followed by Pakistani women (15.6 per cent) and Indian women (12.7 per cent).

Self-employment can include both people running their own businesses and people whose terms of employment have been redefined as services and are 'contracted out' by

major employers. The former category can be identified as people who are self-employed, employing others, a definition of *entrepreneurs.* Such people were more common in the ethnic minorities than among white people; in the former category, 6.7 per cent of economically active men and 2.7 per cent of women were 'entrepreneurs', compared with 5.1 per cent of economically active white men and 2.2 per cent of white women.

African Caribbean and Irish-born men were less likely to be entrepreneurs than men from other ethnic groups (4.9 per cent of Irish-born men, 1.6 per cent of Black-Caribbean men, and 2.2 per cent of Black-African and Black – Other men who were economically active). South Asian and Chinese men were much more likely to be entrepreneurs; the percentages of the economically active who were entrepreneurs for Chinese, Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani men were 17.8, 10.6, 9.6 and 7.1 per cent, respectively.

Amongst women, less than 1 per cent of economically active African-Caribbean women were entrepreneurs, compared to 9.3 per cent of Chinese women. Women from all South Asian ethnic groups were more likely than white women to be entrepreneurs, but less likely than Chinese women or men from the same ethnic group to be so. The percentages who were entrepreneurs were 4.2 per cent for Indian women, 3.7 for Pakistani women and 2.5 per cent for Bangladeshi women.

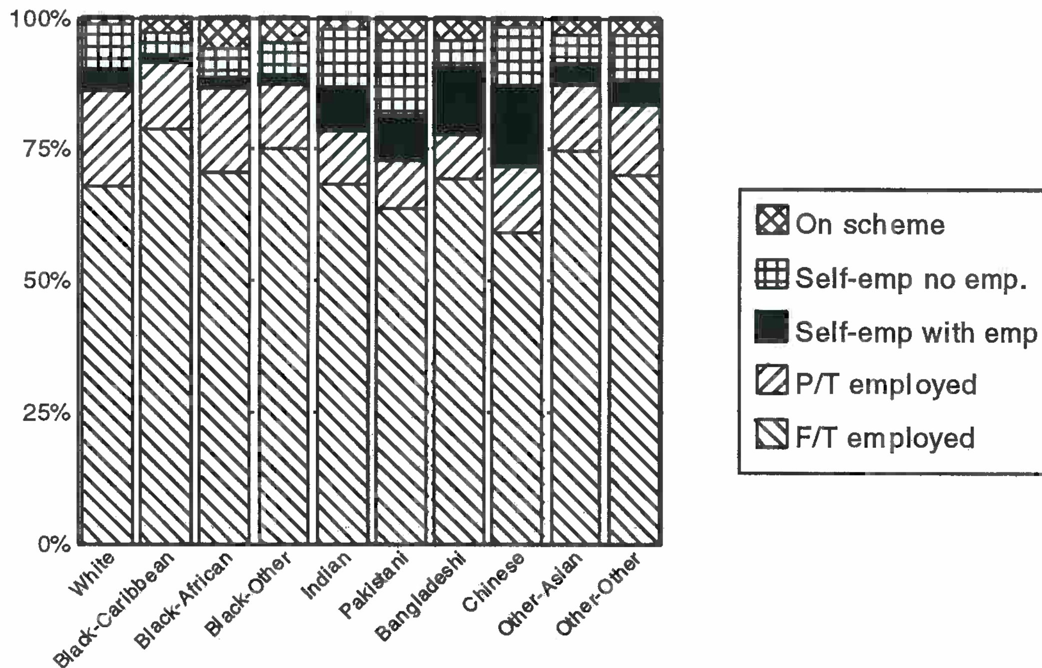


Figure 9: Types of employment by ethnic group, 1991

There are also important differences between men and women and between ethnic groups in the types of work in which they are engaged. The 1991 Census identifies both the industries and occupations in which people work. Overall, there were still marked gender and ethnic divisions in the types of work in which people were engaged in 1991.

Contrasting industrial patterns of work

White men were predominantly employed in four industrial sectors: distribution (16.7 per cent), engineering (13.2 per cent), construction (12.5 per cent) and business services (11.2 per cent). Irish-born men followed broadly the same pattern, except that 32.1 per cent of those born in the Irish Republic worked in the construction industry. White women were concentrated in the service sector, with around a quarter (24.1 per cent) working in the distribution sector (retailing, catering, restaurants, etc.), and a fifth in health and education services (20.8 per cent). Irish-born women were even more likely to be working in the health and education services.

The great majority of men from ethnic minorities worked in the service sector, rather than in manufacturing or construction. The largest single source of employment was the distribution sector (28.9 per cent), followed by the engineering industry. Women from ethnic minorities were also most likely to work in distribution (24.3 per cent), but were more likely than white women to work in engineering (5.0 per cent). Health and education services

were the second largest employers of women from ethnic minorities (18.9 per cent).

The industrial structure of work for Black-Caribbean men was quite similar to that of white men, with the exception that they were more likely to work in transport and communications (17.7 per cent, compared with 8.7 per cent). Black-African men were concentrated in the service sector, but were more likely to work in 'miscellaneous services' (11.7 per cent) and the health and education sectors (12.4 per cent) than other African Caribbean men. Black – Other men predominantly worked in distribution (20 per cent), public administration (18.1 per cent) and transport and communications (11.4 per cent).

African Caribbean women were strongly concentrated in the service sector, in particular public sector services; 28 per cent of Black-Caribbean women and 24.2 per cent of Black-African women worked in the health and education sector, and over a tenth of women from all three ethnic groups worked in public administration.

The distribution sector provided jobs for 29.6 per cent of Indian and 30.1 per cent of Pakistani men. However, 67 per cent of Bangladeshi men worked in this sector. The other major employers of Indian men were engineering (14.3 per cent), business services (10.9 per cent) and transport and communications (10.8 per cent). Pakistani men were less likely to work in white-collar services and more likely to work in transport and communications (15.9 per cent) and engineering (11.5 per cent) and textiles and clothing (10 per cent) in the manufacturing sector. The last named also employed 8.8 per cent of Bangladeshi men.

Distribution was also the largest employer of South Asian women, accounting for more than a quarter of women from all three ethnic groups. The manufacturing sector was a more important source of work than for white women, mainly through the engineering and textiles and clothing industries. The latter employed 12.3 per cent of Indian women, 14.1 per cent of Pakistani women and 19.4 per cent of Bangladeshi women, compared with 2.7 per cent of white women. Health & education were the largest service sector employers of South Asian women, accounting for over an eighth of Indian and Pakistani women and 20.8 per cent of Bangladeshi women. Indian women were more likely (12.4 per cent) than other South Asian women to work in business services.

Chinese people were even more strongly concentrated into the distribution sector than other ethnic groups. This sector employed 60.5 per cent of men and 50.9 per cent of women. A further eighth of both men and women worked in business services, with health and education the other major employer, representing 15.7 per cent of women.

Men from the Other – Asian and Other – Other ethnic groups were most commonly employed in distribution 927.5 per cent and 23.4 per cent, respectively), together with business services (19.2 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively) and health & education (12.7 per cent and 10.1 per cent).

Distribution and health and education together employed more than half of all Other – Asian women, the remainder largely concentrated in business services and miscellaneous services. Other – Other women were less likely to work in distribution (18.1 per cent), and were more likely than women from other ethnic groups to be working in business services (19.1 per cent), with health and education the other major employer (23.3 per cent).

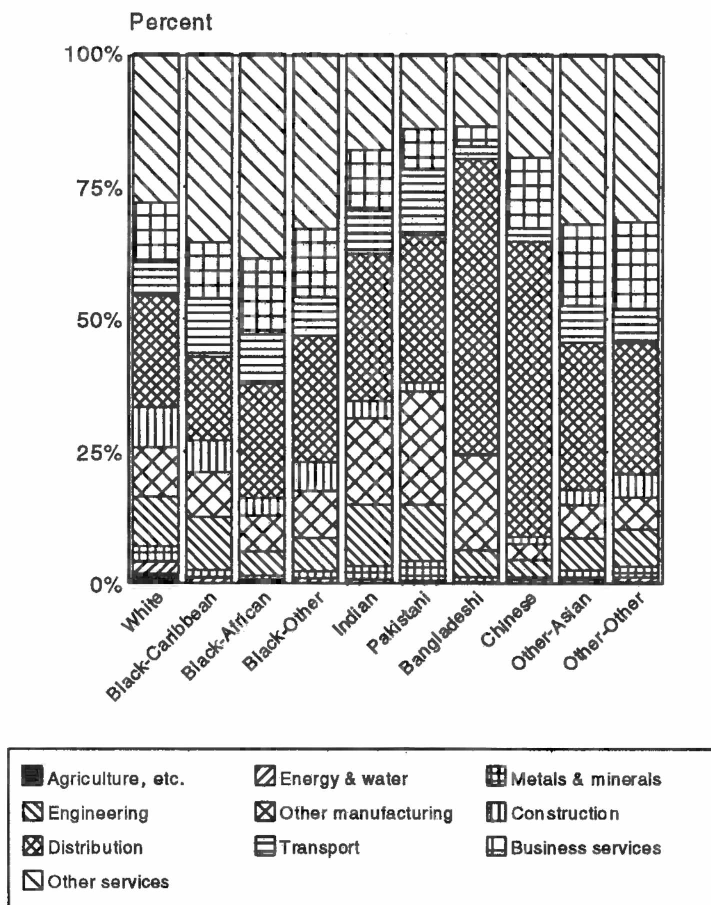


Figure 10: The industrial composition of work for white people and ethnic minorities, 1991

Ethnic group and gender contrasts in occupational specialisation

There is a marked contrast in the occupations in which men and women work. Turning first to white men, the most common occupations in 1991 were corporate managers and administrators (12.4 per cent), other skilled trades (11 per cent), skilled engineering trades (7.9 per cent), industrial plant and machine operators (7.7 per cent), other elementary occupations (unskilled manual jobs) and managers and proprietors in agriculture and services (both 7.1 per cent). In contrast, the main occupational categories for white women were clerical occupations (18.3 per cent), personal service occupations (12.4 per cent) and secretarial occupations (10.3 per cent).

Northern Irish-born men were more likely than white men as a whole to be managers and administrators (13 per cent), while women born in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic were both more likely than white women as a whole to be health associate professionals (including nurses: 8.3 per cent and 10.9 per cent, respectively).

Amongst ethnic minorities, the most common occupations for men were protective service occupations (11.1 per cent), industrial plant and machine operators (11.1 per cent), managers and proprietors in agriculture and services (9.9 per cent) and secretarial occupations (9.1 per cent). They were less likely than white men to be working in skilled manual occupations, but more likely to be health professionals (doctors, for example: 2.9 per cent compared with 0.7 per cent). The largest occupations for women from ethnic minorities were secretarial occupations (17.2 per cent), personal service occupations (11.5 per cent), other elementary occupations (9.4 per cent) and industrial plant and machine operators (8.9 per cent).

The African Caribbean group

There were marked differences between the African Caribbean ethnic groups in the type of work done. The most common occupations for Black-Caribbean men were other skilled trades (13 per cent), industrial plant and machine operators (12.3 per cent), other elementary occupations (11.7 per cent) and skilled engineering trades (10 per cent); they were under-represented relative to white men across the range of white-collar occupations.

However, the largest occupations for Black-African men were clerical occupations (13.4 per cent), other elementary occupations (13.4 per cent) and corporate managers and administrators (8 per cent). On the other hand, the percentage of health professionals (4.5 per cent) was well above that for white men (0.7 per cent), and other professional occupations were also well represented.

The largest occupations for Black – Other men were protective service occupations (12.3 per cent; this might include US servicemen), clerical occupations (10.1 per cent), corporate managers and administrators (8.7 per cent) and other elementary occupations (8.2 per cent).

For Black-Caribbean women, the largest occupations were clerical occupations (19.6 per cent), personal service occupations (16.2 per cent) and health associate professions (13.5 per cent). The three largest occupations for Black-African women were other elementary occupations (17.9 per cent), health associate professions and clerical occupations (both 14.9 per cent). Black – Other women were even more strongly concentrated in a limited range of occupations: clerical occupations (22.6 per cent), personal service occupations (13 per cent) and secretarial occupations (12.1 per cent).

The Indian and Pakistani ethnic groups

The occupational distribution of Indian and Pakistani men was quite similar. The largest occupations were managers and proprietors in agriculture and services (14.8 and 16 per cent), industrial plant and machine operators (11.7 and 17.1 per cent) and other skilled trades (9.3 and 8.1 per cent). However, 13.3 per cent of Pakistani men were drivers and mobile machinery operators, while among Indian men, 5.4 per cent were health professionals and 4.2 per cent scientists, both percentages well above the average for white men.

In marked contrast, 48.7 per cent of Bangladeshi men were in personal service occupations, the next largest occupation being managers and proprietors in agriculture and services, underlining the dominance of distribution (especially the restaurant trade) on their employment.

Indian and Pakistani women were largely working in four occupations: clerical occupations (18.5 and 13.7 per cent), industrial plant and machine operators (14.9 and 11 per cent), other skilled trades (11.1 and 12.5 per cent) and managers and proprietors in agriculture and services (8.3 and 11.2 per cent). This reflects the relatively high percentage of women from these ethnic groups who were self-employed, employing others. Women from both ethnic groups were also more likely than white women to be health professionals, but less likely to be corporate administrators.

Bangladeshi women largely worked in other skilled trades (19.2 per cent) and clerical occupations (15.1 per cent). However, they were even more likely than white women

(8.2 compared with 5.2 per cent) to be teaching professionals.

The Chinese ethnic group

The concentration of Chinese workers in the distribution sector strongly influenced their occupational specialisation. For both men and women, the largest occupations were personal service occupations (33.3 and 21.5 per cent) and managers and proprietors in agriculture and services (20.5 and 15.3 per cent). However, men were also likely to work as science and engineering professionals (7.3 per cent) and as health professionals (4 per cent). Women were also more likely than white women to be in the professions, but in the health service they tended to work as health associate professionals (11.3 per cent).

Others

Other – Asian men were distinctive in being concentrated in higher status occupations: 14.6 per cent were corporate managers and administrators, 10 per cent were managers and proprietors in agriculture and services, 6.4 per cent were science and engineering professionals and 5.1 per cent health professionals. A further 9.2 per cent were in clerical occupations.

This was also the largest occupation for women from the Other – Asian ethnic group (16.5 per cent), with a further 15.6 per cent in personal service occupations, 12.1 per cent in health associate professions (and the percentage who were health professionals – 3.7 per cent – was well above the figure for white women), but 10.6 per cent were in other elementary occupations.

White-collar occupations also predominated for men from the Other – Other ethnic group, with 11.1 per cent in clerical occupations, 10.4 per cent managers and proprietors in agriculture and services and 9.9 per cent corporate managers and administrators. They were also well represented in the science and engineering, health and teaching professions. In contrast, Other – Other women were predominantly working in clerical (17.9 per cent), secretarial (12.9 per cent and personal service (10.7 per cent), but the percentage working as teaching professionals (7.0 per cent) and health associate professionals (7.9 per cent) was well above the averages for white women (5.2 and 5 per cent, respectively).

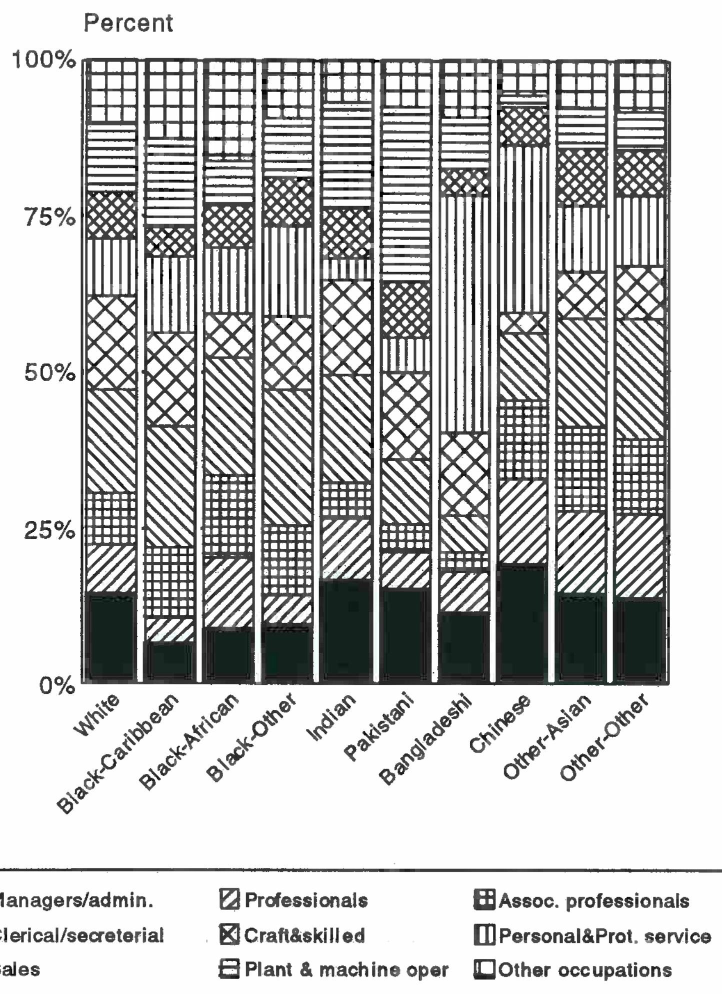


Figure 11: The occupational composition of work for white people and ethnic minorities, 1991

7 Contrasting patterns of unemployment between ethnic groups

The 1991 Census of Population was taken when unemployment was rising again, following a decline in the second half of the 1980s. The Census found that there were 2.49 million unemployed people, of whom 1.7 million were men and 773,700 were women. The overall unemployment rate (the percentage of all people seeking work who were unemployed) was 9.3 per cent, but there were major differences between ethnic groups and between men and women in the incidence of unemployment.

Overall contrasts in unemployment rates

The unemployment rate for white people was 8.8 per cent, but that for ethnic minorities was more than twice as high, at 18.3 per cent. The highest unemployment rates were experienced by Bangladeshis (31.7 per cent) and Pakistanis (28.5 per cent).

However, unemployment rates for African-Caribbean people were not much lower, at 27 per cent for Black-

African people and 22.2 per cent for Black – Other people. The unemployment rates for Black-Caribbean and Other – Other people were close to the average for all ethnic minorities, at 18.9 and 17.7 per cent respectively.

Indian (13.1 per cent) and Other – Asian people (13.4 per cent) had below average unemployment rates for ethnic minorities. Chinese people experienced the lowest unemployment rate of any ethnic minority, at 9.5 per cent.

Male unemployment

The male unemployment rate was 11.2 per cent, with that for white men 10.7 per cent and that for men from ethnic minorities almost twice as high, at 20.3 per cent. The unemployment rate for white women was only 6.3 per cent, but that for women ethnic minorities was more than twice as high, at 15.6 per cent.

Differentials in the male unemployment rate by ethnic group were similar to those for all persons. Bangladeshi men experienced the higher unemployment rate, at 30.9 per cent, but the unemployment rate for Black-African men (28.9 per cent) exceeded that for Pakistani men (28.5 per cent). The unemployment rate for Chinese men (10.5 per cent) was slightly below the white male unemployment rate.

Female unemployment

Differentials in unemployment were much greater for women, ranging from 6.3 for white women to 34.5 per cent for Bangladeshi women. The next highest unemployment rate was for Pakistani women (29.6 per cent). Chinese women experienced the lowest female unemployment rate, at 8.3 per cent, still well above the white female unemployment rate.

In most ethnic groups, women experienced lower unemployment rates than men. However, the unemployment rate for Indian women (12.7 per cent) was only slightly lower than that for men, that for Pakistani women was slightly above the male unemployment rate, while the unemployment rate for Bangladeshi women was 3.6 per cent above that for Bangladeshi men.

The difference in unemployment rates was greatest for Black-Caribbean people, for whom the female unemployment rate was 10.3 per cent lower than the male rate.

Young people

The unemployment rate for 16–24-year-olds was well above that for all economically active persons, at 15.3 per cent. The differential between the female unemployment

rate (12.1 per cent) and the male unemployment rate (18.1 per cent) was even greater than for all economically active people.

The unemployment rate for 16–24-year-olds from ethnic minorities (28.1 per cent) was nearly double that for white people (14.6 per cent). Extremely high unemployment rates were recorded. The highest was the 38.7 per cent of economically active Black-Africans unemployed, with 35.8 per cent of Pakistanis unemployed. Unemployment rates for ethnic groups with relatively low overall rates were also high, including 23.4 per cent for Indians, and 29.4 per cent for both Other – Asians and Other – Others.

The impact of unemployment in the 16 to 24 age group was greatest for African-Caribbean people: 31.1 per cent of Black-Caribbean and 30.6 per cent of Black – Other people were unemployed in 1991. Again, the lowest unemployment rate for ethnic minorities was recorded by the Chinese, at 14.8 per cent, well below that for white young men (17.4 per cent).

Unemployment rates for young men were even higher, rising to a maximum of 41.6 per cent for Black-Africans. Unemployment rates were above 35 per cent for men from all three African Caribbean ethnic groups and for Pakistani men (36.4 per cent). By contrast, the unemployment rate for young Bangladeshi men was relatively low, at 20.5 per cent. The highest unemployment rates for young women were recorded by Bangladeshis (36.2 per cent), Black-Africans (35.9 per cent) and Pakistanis (35.3 per cent). Unemployment rates tended to be higher for ethnic minorities than for white people across the age range.

Unemployment in older groups

In the 25–39 age group, male unemployment rates were 10.2 and 19.1 per cent respectively for white people and ethnic minorities. The corresponding rates for women were 6.1 and 13.6 per cent.

For those aged 40 to 49, male unemployment rates were 7.5 and 13.1 per cent respectively for white people and ethnic minorities. The corresponding rates for women were 4.1 and 10.2 per cent.

Unemployment rates were again higher in the pre-retirement age group, at 10.7 and 22.6 per cent for men from the white ethnic group and ethnic minorities, respectively. Unemployment rates for white women and women from ethnic minorities were 5.5 per cent and 11.1 per cent, respectively.

Unemployment rates were higher for ethnic minorities than white people, across all industries and occupations. Highly qualified people from ethnic minorities experienced higher unemployment rates than similarly qualified white people. White people with post-18 qualifications had an unemployment rate of 3.6 percent, but that for people from ethnic minorities with the same level of qualifications was 8.2 per cent.

People born in Northern Ireland experienced a lower unemployment rate than white people as a whole (3 per cent), while those born in the Irish Republic had an unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent, just below that for Chinese people (5.5 per cent), Black-Caribbeans (5.6 per cent), Indians (5.7 per cent) and Other – Asians (6.1 per cent). Higher unemployment rates were experienced by Black – Others (7.3 per cent) and Bangladeshis (7.9 per cent). The most disadvantaged of the highly qualified were the Black-African, with an unemployment rate of 15.8 per cent, just higher than that for Pakistanis (11.5 per cent).

Clearly, those in possession of higher education qualifications have a much higher chance of employment than those without, but highly qualified Black-Africans suffer an unemployment rate comparable with less qualified people, nearly five times higher than the white unemployment rate.

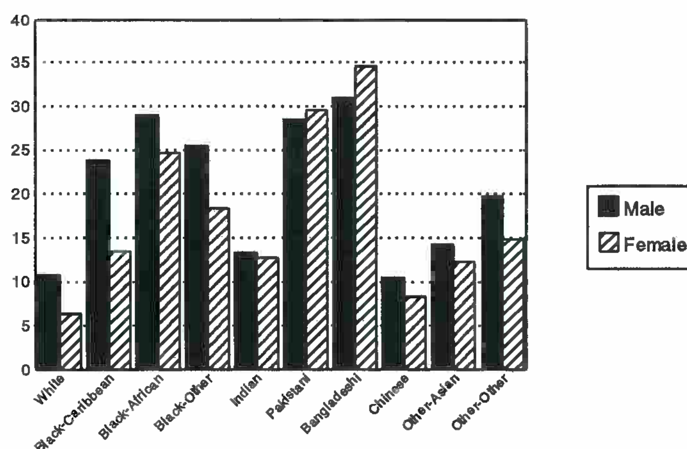


Figure 12: Unemployment rates by ethnic group and gender, 1991

8 Differences in attainment of higher education qualifications between ethnic groups

During the 1980s and 1990s, rates of participation in further and higher education have steadily increased, driven by the expansion of opportunities for education after the age of 16 and the

increasing importance of higher education qualifications for achievement in the labour market. Asian young people displayed higher staying-on rates than both white and African Caribbean young people at the beginning of the 1980s, but the percentage of young people staying in full-time education after the age of 16 has converged across ethnic groups since then. The Census of Population provides information on the number of people with post-18 qualifications, first degrees and higher degrees, and enables the percentage of each age group in full-time education to be calculated.

Rates of participation in education

The percentage of young people staying on in full-time education declined with age, in an uneven way. In the white ethnic group, about three-quarters of 16-year-old males were students, falling to just over 40 per cent of 17-year-olds. The percentage in full-time education then declined steadily until the age of 24, after which the percentage of students reached a very low level. Nearly 80 per cent of 16-year-old white women were students, and the decline in the percentage of women in full-time education was slower than for men.

Those born in Northern Ireland were slightly more likely than all white people to stay on in full-time education, but those born in the Irish Republic tended to leave education relatively early. The percentage of people staying on in full-time education was higher for ethnic minorities as a whole than for white people, throughout the 16 to 29 age range. However, there were marked contrasts in participation between ethnic groups. Black-Caribbean and Black – Other people displayed a similar pattern of staying-on rates by age to white people, but all other ethnic minorities were much more likely to remain in full-time education.

The percentage of people who were full-time students was higher in all three South Asian ethnic groups than for white people, but lower for Bangladeshis than for Indians and Pakistanis. People from the Black-African and Other – Other ethnic groups were also more likely than white people to stay on in full-time education in the 16 to 29 age range. However, the Other – Asian and Chinese ethnic groups were particularly distinctive: nearly all 16-year-olds remained in full-time education, and the percentage of both males and females who were full-time students remained relatively high and well above that for other ethnic groups throughout the 16 to 29 age range.

Qualifications

Just over an eighth of all white people aged 18 and over (13.4 per cent) held a post-school educational qualification in 1991. Ethnic minorities as a whole were slightly better qualified, since 15.4 per cent of those aged 18 and over held such qualifications. Those born in Ireland were also

slightly better qualified than white people as a whole, but this disguised the fact that while 21.7 per cent of those born in Northern Ireland had higher education qualifications, only 12.3 per cent of people born in the Irish Republic had them.

The best-qualified ethnic groups (in which the percentage of people aged 18 and over holding higher education qualifications were highest) were Black-Africans (26.5 per cent), Other – Others (26 per cent), Chinese (25.8 per cent) and Other – Asians (24.4 per cent). While 15 per cent of Indian people and 12.7 per cent of Black – Other people held higher education qualifications, many African Caribbean and South Asian people were less well qualified. The ethnic groups with the lowest percentages holding higher education qualifications were the Bangladeshis (5.2 per cent), Pakistanis (7 per cent) and Black-Caribbeans (9.2 per cent).

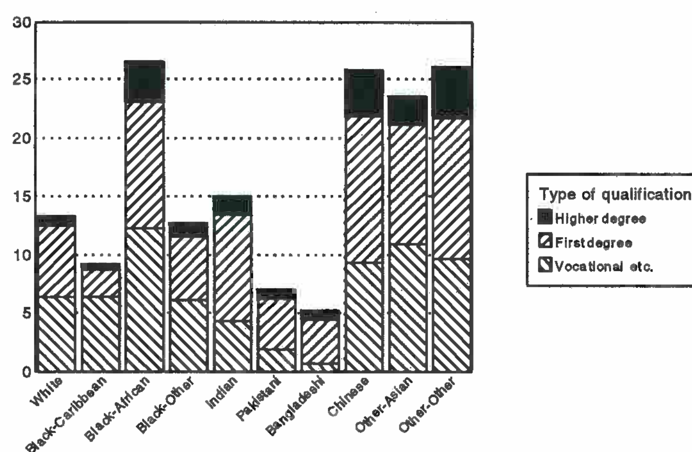


Figure 13: Percentage of each ethnic group with higher education qualifications, 1991

Sources

NEMDA 1991 Census Statistical Papers:

1 Ethnic Minorities in Great Britain: Settlement Patterns, November 1992
2 Ethnic Minorities in Great Britain: Age and gender structure, February 1993
3 Ethnic Minorities in Great Britain: Economic circumstances, March 1993
4 Ethnic Minorities in Great Britain: Housing and family characteristics, April 1993
5 Country of birth: Settlement Patterns, December 1993
6 Black people in Great Britain: Social and economic circumstances, February 1994
7 South Asian people in Great Britain: Social and economic circumstances, November 1994
8 Chinese people and 'Other' ethnic minorities in Great Britain: Social and economic circumstances, December 1994
9 Irish-born people in Great Britain: Settlement patterns and socio-economic circumstances, February 1995
10 Ethnic Minorities in Great Britain: Patterns of population change, 1981–91, October 1995

Part Two

Lessons of the 1991 Census for ethnic classification

Part Two – Lessons of the 1991 Census for ethnic classification

Though there has been considerable publicity about the estimated 2 per cent 'undercount' of the British population, the 1991 Census was broadly successful (especially when compared with the performance of Censuses in many other developed countries). In marked contrast with the abortive attempt to introduce an ethnic group question in the 1981 Census, the ethnic group question proved relatively uncontroversial in 1991, and the Census Validation Survey which followed the Census revealed that it had also proved highly successful, in that 99.2 per cent of respondents had answered the question broadly in the manner expected by the Census Offices.

However, the further analysis of the responses to the ethnic group question revealed that the 1991 Census ethnic group classification did not fully represent the existing complexity of the ethnic composition of Great Britain, or the changing character of the population, as revealed by the emergence of new forms of ethnicity and the growth of new ethnic groups. The experience gained from conducting the 1991 Census can be drawn upon in planning the Census which will take place in the year 2001, while the inadequacies revealed in the results of this latest Census can be used in designing a new ethnic group question which will provide a more comprehensive picture of the changing population.

This section considers the nature of the ethnic group question used by the 1991 Census, the problems encountered with it and the ways in which Census data on ethnic minorities has been used.

1 The history of and rationale for the 1991 Census ethnic group question

Each Census of Population held since 1841 has included a question on the country of birth of each individual and has thus provided information on the number and geographical origins of migrants to Great Britain. Until the late 1940s, most were of European origin or the children of British migrants to the colonies, and were thus not immediately visually distinguishable from the white majority population (even so, there was popular and governmental concern over the possible effects of mass Irish and Jewish migration and over the number of 'aliens' present during times of war). The mass migrations from the New Commonwealth which were at their peak from the late 1950s to the early 1970s involved people who differed in skin colour as well as culture. This provoked considerable official apprehension over the growth of new populations with very different characteristics, and who in turn were facing severe discrimination in terms of access to housing and jobs in addition to their experience of racism.

While the very presence of these ethnic minorities was often regarded by government as a problem, it was felt that assimilation offered a solution, which would be assisted if the rate of growth in their numbers were limited. The government and opponents of New Commonwealth immigration thus had a considerable interest in data on the numbers of immigrants and the growth of the ethnic minority population. The data from the 1951 and 1961 Censuses on country of birth provided a reasonably good indication of the ethnic minority population, since the number of children born to parents from the New Commonwealth was relatively small at that time. However, the data contained inaccuracies, since many of those born in the New Commonwealth were actually white people, coming to Britain as the Commonwealth countries achieved independence, while the number of New Commonwealth people of ethnic origin was

thought to be under-enumerated. By the time of the 1971 Census, it was accepted that country of birth was becoming an inadequate indicator of ethnic group, because of the growing numbers of UK-born people from ethnic minorities. A new question was therefore introduced, on the country of birth of each individual's parents, which was used to estimate of the number of people of 'New Commonwealth ethnic origin' to be about 1.3 million. This definition was still subject to the problem that many people born in the Indian subcontinent were actually white. Hence, in deriving annual estimates of the size of the ethnic minority population, surnames were used to distinguish those of Asian origin, but they were of little use in distinguishing white people born in the Caribbean. The value of these estimates was further limited because 3.2 per cent of the population did not answer the question on parents' country of birth.

It was recognised by the OPCS that the accuracy of this approach would diminish over time as the number of UK-born people from ethnic minorities increased. Moreover, it would not be able to identify those people of New Commonwealth ethnic origin who were born in the UK, whose parents had also been born in the UK. Accordingly, the OPCS began to explore the possibility of including a direct question on ethnic origin in censuses and surveys, initially drawing upon the experience of censuses taken in the USA and in Commonwealth countries.

The White Paper for the 1981 Census of Population stated that there was a need for authoritative and reliable information about the main ethnic minorities, in order to help the government and local authorities carry out their responsibilities under the Race Relations Act, and to aid the development of effective social policies. The Census Offices, which had already been testing alternative designs for an ethnic group question, were directed to determine the reliability and acceptability of such a question. The government would then take a final decision on its inclusion on the basis of their findings and on public reaction to the question.

In the event, none of the questions tested proved likely to be successful in a compulsory Census and the final Test carried out in Haringey in April 1979 encountered considerable opposition, especially from African Caribbean people. This resulted from fears surrounding new nationality legislation being introduced, intensified by a campaign against the Census Test orchestrated by anti-racist groups. The level of response to the test was poor and many respondents either failed to answer the ethnic group question or gave incorrect responses. The OPCS consulted widely with representatives of ethnic minorities over the design of a question on ethnic group and encountered considerable opposition to its inclusion (provoked by fears about how the data might be used) as well as great disagreement over the form of the question. As a result, the government decided against including questions on ethnic group, parents' country of birth, nationality or date of arrival in the 1981 Census. Information on ethnic group from the (voluntary) Labour Force Survey and on country of birth of individuals and household heads from the 1981 Census would be used to indicate the magnitude of the ethnic minority population.

The OPCS estimated that about 90 per cent of the ethnic minority population lived in households whose head had been born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan in 1981, and hence this measure provided a reasonable approximation to the ethnic minority population. On the other hand, this definition still failed to capture households with heads from ethnic minorities who had been born in the UK, whilst including households with white heads born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan. Because of the need for more accurate information, the House of Commons Home Affairs Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration was directed to investigate the merits of including a direct question on ethnic group in the 1991 Census. This took evidence from a range of official, academic and community bodies, amongst

whom opinion was sharply divided. Opponents argued that such a question continued to categorise ethnic minorities in terms of their origins outside Britain, were apprehensive about the possible use of ethnic group data and claimed that surveys could provide adequate data on ethnic disadvantage. However, the Commission for Racial Equality argued strongly that for corrective action to be taken against discrimination, it was necessary to first establish its existence and the extent of the problem, and that the inclusion of an ethnic group question in the Census was vital for this purpose, because it covers the entire population in a reliable and consistent manner.

The Select Committee's final report argued strongly in favour of inclusion, on the grounds that the accurate and comprehensive data yielded by the Census would extend knowledge about the nature of ethnic disadvantage, whilst enabling the planning and delivery of government programmes to combat disadvantage to be more accurate and effective. In its reply, the government directed the Census Offices to carry out a further set of field trials aimed at developing an improved form of question.

A series of tests were carried out during 1985–6, and a proposed form of question presented in 1988 in the White Paper for the 1991 Census. This was similar to that used by the Labour Force Survey (from 1981 onwards) and the General Household Survey (from 1983 onwards). This was revised in the light of comments from the CRE and the desire by African Caribbean community groups for greater detail on Black ethnic groups. A modified question was piloted in the final Census Test conducted in April 1989, which, in contrast to the tests for the previous Census, encountered no significant resistance. Less than 0.5 per cent of households refused to participate in the test because of the inclusion of the ethnic question although 20 per cent of African Caribbean respondents objected to its inclusion. The question was deemed to have been successful, and was adopted for the 1991 Census.

2 Application of the ethnic group question in practice

The 1991 Census form asked the person completing the Census form on behalf of the household (usually the household head) to identify the ethnic group of each person in the household from one of seven pre-coded alternatives – White, Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese – and provided two 'Other' categories, where the standard categories were inappropriate. In those instances where a member of a household was descended from more than one ethnic group, or where none of the categories adequately represented their ethnicity (for Arab or Vietnamese persons, for example), the person completing the form was expected to tick either the 'Black – Other' box or the 'Any other ethnic group' box and describe the ethnic origin of the person in the space provided (the question on the Census form is reproduced in Figure 14). The guidance notes for the question did not state explicitly what the respondent should do if the person's ethnic group was not one of those listed, or if they disagreed with the categories, but it is likely that in most instances the respondent did provide a fuller description under one of the 'Other' boxes, in accordance with the intentions of the Census Offices.

10 Country of birth

Please tick the appropriate box.

If the 'Elsewhere' box is ticked, please write in the present name of the country in which the birthplace is now situated.

England ☐ 1
Scotland ☐ 2
Wales ☐ 3
Northern Ireland ☐ 4
Irish Republic ☐ 5
Elsewhere ☐

If elsewhere, please write in the present name of the country

11 Ethnic group

Please tick the appropriate box.

White ☐ 0
Black-Caribbean ☐ 1
Black-African ☐ 2
Black-Other ☐
please describe

Indian ☐ 3
Pakistani ☐ 4
Bangladeshi ☐ 5
Chinese ☐ 6
Any other ethnic group ☐
please describe

If the person is descended from more than one ethnic or racial group, please tick the group to which the person considers he/she belongs, or tick the 'Any other ethnic group' box and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided.

Figure 14: The 1991 Census ethnic group and country of birth questions

The classification of ethnic groups used in the question adopted by the 1991 Census was based on the concept that ethnic group is 'what people categorise themselves as belonging to in answering the question', rather than being derived from a formal definition of ethnicity. As a result, the categories presented in the question can be seen to be a mixture of racial, national and ethnic groups. The alternative forms of the question devised for use in the 1981 Census had attempted to avoid the use of 'colour' terminology (as it was felt to be unacceptable to place too much emphasis on colour or race distinctions in a compulsory census), using 'European' to describe the white majority and 'West Indian' or 'African' for African Caribbean people. The first ethnic classifications recommended by the CRE were based on similar principles. The advantage of this approach is one of theoretical consistency and equality of treatment, in that all persons are classified in terms of their ultimate geographical origins. However, it was unsuccessful in practice for two reasons. First, many white people had difficulty identifying themselves as having a European origin; this was addressed by replacing 'European' with 'English, Welsh, Scottish or Irish' origin, but this caused problems for people with continental European ancestry. Secondly, many West Indian parents strongly objected to their children being classified according to a geographical origin outside the UK, especially when they had been born in the UK. Users of the CRE classification also found that it did not make it sufficiently clear that discrimination was mainly based on skin colour.

The adoption of the terms 'white' to represent all those with European ancestry and 'black' to represent African Caribbean ancestry was a response to these difficulties. In contrast, the national categories 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi' and 'Chinese' caused few problems for Asians, who much preferred greater specificity of geographical origin to the blanket use of the category 'Asian'. Many Asians also objected to being termed 'black', on the grounds that they did not identify themselves as being black and that the use of such a term to describe people

who experience discrimination on the grounds of colour would identify them as objects of potential discrimination, rather than on the basis of a positive ethnic identity. The 'black' category was subdivided, following consultation with members of the public and bodies representing ethnic minorities, in order to provide more information on people born in the West Indies and Africa, and as a partial solution to the problem of classification of African Caribbean people born in the UK, since the option of including a 'Black British' category had been rejected as being impractical.

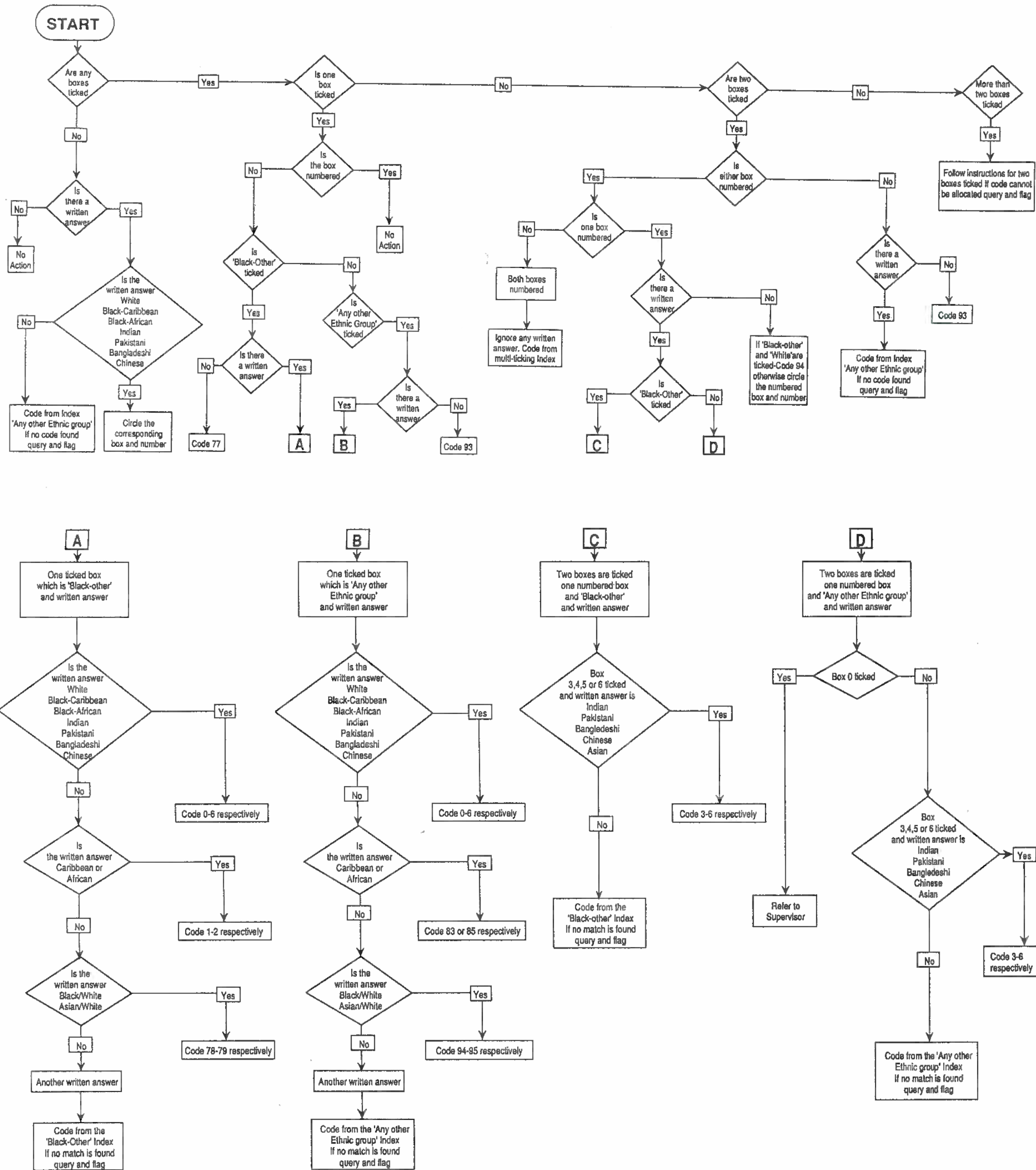
This question performed successfully in the 1989 Census Test, with 89 per cent of respondents providing the answers expected, but with some variation between the 90 per cent of white answers being correct and 82 per cent of those in ethnic groups classified as 'other and not determined' being correct. Overall, 98 per cent of answers consisted of a single tick of one of the main categories. The Census Offices drew up a set of rules for coding the remaining 2 per cent of responses, based on the information provided in the write-in answers (from which 28 common responses were identified). Most of the published output from the Census uses a 10-fold classification, which is constructed from the 7 pre-coded options and the 28 codes devised to represent written answers using the procedure depicted in the flowchart in Figure 15. This procedure allocated written answers to the 7 standard categories, as well as to the three 'Other' categories. For example, any person who wrote in a description of an ethnic origin in Africa south of the Sahara (such as 'Ghanaian') would be reallocated to the Black-African category, while a person describing their origin as 'North African' in the space provided under the Black – Other box would have been allocated to the 'Other – Other' category.

The allocation of the population to these 35 codes is published as Table A of the *1991 Census Ethnic Group and Country of Birth Report.* Using this information, it is possible to identify the main components of the three 'Other' categories (Black – Other, Other – Asian and Other – Other) presented in the Census output. This is presented in Table 1, which details the number of persons falling into the ten ethnic groups and the 35 categories from which they were constructed. This reveals that the 'Other' categories are extremely diverse. The Black – Other category includes people who identified themselves as British, but they are outnumbered by people of mixed parentage (one of whom was Black), while the number of Black people for whom Caribbean or African was not an adequate description (Black Americans, for example) was also substantial. In the Other – Asian ethnic group, there are a large number of Sri Lankans, East African Asians and Indo-Caribbeans, but the largest component of the ethnic group is 'Other Asians', which refers to people from South-East Asia. The Other – Other group is even more diverse, including North Africans, Arabs and Iranians (unfortunately, grouped into one category in the 35-fold classification), people of mixed Asian and white ethnic origin, smaller ethnic groups and unclassifiable answers to the question.

The Census Validation Survey was undertaken in June and July 1991 in order to check the accuracy of the data collected by the Census. Around 6,000 households were contacted and their responses to the Census checked in an interview with the form-filler for the household. This found that while only 0.8 per cent of responses to the ethnic group question were 'incorrect' in terms of the classification, the level of error was 13.2 per cent for ethnic minority-headed households. The main source of error lay in the 'Other' and 'Black' categories. Around a fifth of those for whom the Chinese, Other – Asian or Other ethnic group boxes had been ticked were described to the CVS interviewer as white (9.6 per cent) or Black (11.3 per cent), while of those for whom one of the 'Black' categories had been ticked, 8.8 per cent were described in a manner which the CVS interviewer allocated to the 'Chinese and Other' category. Though the sample was too small for detailed information on the overlap between individual ethnic groups

to be published, it is likely that much of the misallocation of people to ethnic groups arose from confusion as to how people with parents from different ethnic groups or with more complex 'mixed' ethnic origin should be classified, while the use of the term 'Black' exclusively for African Caribbean people may also have caused confusion for some people.

The processing of Census returns was also designed to take account of non-completion of forms and the failure to complete all questions on the form. This had been the main source of under-enumeration in the 1981 Census (accounting for 1.8 per cent of the 2.3 per cent undercount in the results for that Census) and thus a set of procedures to impute missing data (in addition to encouraging people who were absent on census night to return their census forms upon their return) were devised by the Census Offices for the 1991 Census of Population. These procedures were used to estimate invalid or missing items for 1.2 per cent of Census forms. Where a household was missing, its characteristics were imputed by copying those of the geographically nearest household which returned a form which had the same basic characteristics (assessed by the enumerator). In those cases where a form was returned but the ethnic group of a household member was missing, it was inferred from their age if the missing person was the first person in the household and for other household members from their age plus the ethnic group of the first household member. Overall, the characteristics of 869,100 persons were imputed, 114,100 of whom were from ethnic minorities (3.8 per cent of all persons from ethnic minorities). In the London Boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hackney, over 10 per cent of the ethnic minority population represented people whose ethnic group had been imputed. In the major cities of Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool and Leeds, more than 5 per cent of the total ethnic minority population was represented by people whose ethnic group had been imputed.



Source: OPCS, 1991 Census, Ethnic Group Flowchart and Index (internal document)

Figure 15: Flowchart for coding responses to the 1991 Census ethnic group question

Table 1: The ethnic composition of Great Britain in 1991, and the relationship of answers to the ethnic group question with ethnic group data

Ethnic group	Population	% of GB	Main ethnic group	No.	Black-Other (write in)	No.	Any other ethnic group (write in)	No.
White	51873794	94.5	White	51810555			Irish	457
							Greek (inc. Cypriot)	17982
							Turkish (inc. Cypriot)	18876
							Other European	22148
							Mixed White	3776
Ethnic minorities	*3015051*	*5.5*						
African Caribbean	*890727*	*1.6*						
Black-Caribbean	499964	0.9	Black-Caribbean	493339	Caribbean Island	3093	Caribbean Island	3532
Black-African	212362	0.4	Black-African	208110	Other African countries	927	Other African countries	3325
Black-Other	178401	0.3			British	58106		
					Other answers	44940		
					Mixed Black/White	24687		
					Other Mixed	50668		
South Asian	*1479645*	*2.7*						
Indian	840255	1.5	Indian	840255				
Pakistani	476555	0.9	Pakistani	476555				
Bangladeshi	162835	0.3	Bangladeshi	162835				
Chinese & Other	*644678*	*1.2*						
Chinese	156938	0.3	Chinese	156938				
Other-Asian	197534	0.4			E. African/Indo-Caribbean	1271	E. African/Indo-Caribbean	6110
					Indian sub-continent(nes)	4005	Indian sub-continent(nes)	41333
					Other Asian	24854	Other Asian	119961
Other-Other	290206	0.5			N African/Arab/Iranian	6471	British ethnic minority	16170
					Mixed Asian/White	69	British-no eth min. indic.	13971
							N African/Arab/Iranian	58720
							Other answers	41725
							Mixed Black/White	29882
							Mixed Asian/White	61805
							Other mixed	61393
Entire population	54888844	100.0						

Source: 1991 Census Country of Birth and Ethnic Group report (Table A)

3 Benefits of the 1991 Census data

The great value of the 1991 Census was that it provided the first comprehensive picture of the ethnic composition of Great Britain, covering all parts of England, Wales and Scotland, and representing nearly all the population. While previous Censuses had provided an approximate indication of the ethnic minority population in a locality, for the first time it represented the ethnic minorities in terms of a coding scheme where individuals had allocated *themselves* to ethnic groups, rather than being retrospectively (and possibly inaccurately) classified as being of 'New Commonwealth' ethnic origin, on the basis of the country in which they or their parents had been born. Moreover, the Census provided for the first time information on the ethnic group of persons born in the United Kingdom, demonstrating that for some ethnic minorities, most of their members had been born in the UK by 1991.

Certainly, much of this information was already available at the national scale from the results of the annual Labour Force and General Household Surveys conducted by the OPCS and from the Policy Studies Institute's periodic surveys of ethnic minorities. Indeed, opponents of the introduction of an ethnic group question to the Census had strongly argued that it was unnecessary, because such surveys could provide all the information needed on patterns of disadvantage by ethnic group. The surveys mentioned above have undoubtedly provided valuable quantitative evidence on the degree of labour market and housing market disadvantage faced by ethnic minorities, while surveys certainly play a valuable role in obtaining more detailed information about the factors underlying the observed differences in (say) unemployment rates between ethnic groups.

However, surveys have two major drawbacks. First, surveys which focus upon ethnic minorities (such as the PSI survey) cannot yield estimates of the total number of people from ethnic minorities in a particular condition such as unemployment. Moreover, the sampling strategy adopted means that their results cannot be regarded as representative of the entire minority population, since these surveys tend to focus upon areas in which ethnic minorities are a relatively large percentage of the population and select households from ethnic minorities living in those neighbourhoods. Secondly, those surveys which aim to yield information representative of the entire population, which can be grossed up to provide population estimates (the prime example of which is the Labour Force Survey), only cover a very small percentage of the population (about 0.25 per cent of all households in the case of the LFS). Since only 5.5 per cent of the British population was from ethnic minorities in 1991, the sample sizes upon which estimates for ethnic minorities are based are very small. With such small sample sizes, the results obtained contain a relatively large degree of uncertainty, and variations in the sampling strategy from year to year have a substantial influence on the results obtained. During the 1980s, the Labour Force Survey adopted a spatially stratified sampling procedure, with fieldwork in selected local authority districts; this meant that the national estimates of the number of people from particular ethnic groups fluctuated from year to year as districts in which these ethnic groups were either under- or over-represented were brought into or removed from the survey.

Census data has the drawback of being quite limited in terms of the detail it provides on the population, but it has the great benefit of covering all parts of the country at a very detailed geographical scale. While the Labour Force Survey could not provide reliable information for any but the most populous regions within Britain, Census data makes it possible to study the demographic composition of individual ethnic groups within a city or to identify the clustering of particular types of people from ethnic minorities in towns in rural areas. This has particular

importance for planning and marketing services in the private and public sectors, as shown below. A further benefit of the 1991 Census is the fact that anonymised individual data for a 2 per cent sample of individuals and a 1 per cent sample of households was made available for further analysis. This has enabled more detailed information on ethnic minorities to be derived than is available in the standard Census outputs and has also enabled more sophisticated multivariate statistical analyses to be undertaken.

4 How 1991 Census data is used in ethnic monitoring

The 1991 Census provided the first definitive benchmark data on the ethnic composition of the population. With this, it became possible for the first time for organisations to obtain accurate knowledge of the ethnic composition of their clients or of the pool of potential employees. The CRE has always encouraged employers and service providers to collect information on the ethnic group of employees and the people they serve, on the grounds that effective ethnic record-keeping is necessary in order to identify the existence of discriminatory practices and to enable corrective action to be taken.

For ethnic monitoring policies to be implemented, it must be possible to compare the ethnic composition of an organisation's employees or clients with that of the population from which they are drawn. The 1991 Census provided encouragement for the extension of ethnic monitoring for two reasons:

- The 1991 Census ethnic group question provided a ready-made solution to the problem of the choice of a classification of ethnic groups, which could be justified on the grounds that it represented an 'official' ethnic group classification, which was also widely accepted, and supported by the CRE
- The 1991 Census data provided a reliable measure of the ethnic composition of the population, which could be incorporated into ethnic monitoring systems.

The 1991 Census ethnic group classification has been widely adopted by employers, providers of health and social services and higher education establishments for use in ethnic monitoring questionnaires. Other similar uses of 1991 Census data include the following:

- Employers have compared the ethnic composition of economically active people resident in their localities with the ethnic breakdown of their workers, in order to identify whether particular ethnic groups are under-represented
- The same approach has been applied to particular sub-groups of the economically active, for example highly qualified people or young people
- Family Health Service Authorities monitor the ethnic composition of staff and in-patients and analyse the ethnic composition of different age groups within the population
- Local education authorities collect information on the ethnic group (and home languages) of school children, and Census data can help in planning the provision of services under Section 11 or Single Regeneration Budget funding
- Census data has been used to measure the extent to which ethnic minorities are over-represented amongst prisoners and amongst those brought to trial
- Data on the ethnic composition of people of prime working age has been used to identify whether the ethnic composition of magistrates is fair
- Higher educational establishments have compared the ethnic composition of students starting higher education with that of young people in the area served by the institution

- Housing Associations have compared the ethnic composition of tenants with that of the population of the localities in which their properties are located
- Local authorities have compared the ethnic group profile of users of particular services with the ethnic composition of the population
- Firms seeking markets for products amongst ethnic minorities have used Census data to identify areas in which such ethnic groups are most common and in which to concentrate marketing.

5 Main problems for the classification of ethnic groups revealed by the 1991 Census

5.1 Under-enumeration

The most serious problem encountered by the 1991 Census was the level of undercount of the population, and the fact that this was much more serious for particular age groups, for certain types of area and for ethnic minorities. Though the degree of undercount was no more serious than that encountered in 1981, publicity about it has reduced the level of public confidence both in the Census as a whole and in analyses derived from Census data. The main reasons for the undercount were:

- difficulties of enumeration in areas of high multi-occupancy of dwellings and with a high proportion of persons living alone
- the tendency of parents not to record new-born infants
- the failure to record some of the institutional population at their usual place of residence
- avoidance of the Census because of the (mistaken) belief that it was linked with collection of the Poll Tax.

The Census enumerated 54.8 million people in Great Britain (after imputation of 1.5 per cent of the population living in households which were wholly absent on Census night), but the actual population was estimated to be 56.1 million, 2.2 per cent larger. The undercount was not distributed evenly across the population, being much greater for males (3 per cent) than females (1 per cent), while within the male population the degree of undercount was greatest for 20–29-year-olds (10 per cent) but negligible for men over the age of 45. For females, the greatest degree of undercount was experienced by those aged 85 and over (6 per cent), while young children of both sexes were also undercounted (by 3 per cent). The undercount also varied geographically, being greatest in Inner London and the other major cities of England, where the Census failed to enumerate 4 per cent of the population.

The degree of under-enumeration by ethnic group could not be directly measured, since there was no reliable alternative estimate of the ethnic composition of the population against which to compare the Census. However, it is possible to estimate the degree of undercount from the geographical distribution and age and sex composition of each ethnic group. The estimated degree of under-enumeration was greater for ethnic minorities as a whole (at 3 per cent) than for white people, and was even higher for the Black – Other (4 per cent) and Black-African (5 per cent) ethnic groups. This was repeated across the age range, with the estimated undercount of 25–29-year-old men in the Black-African, Black-Caribbean and Bangladeshi ethnic groups being 17 per cent, 16 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, compared to 10 per cent for the white ethnic group. The under-enumeration of ethnic minorities in larger cities and inner-city areas was also estimated to be more severe than for white people.

5.2 Treatment of mixed ethnic groups

The 1991 Census ethnic group classification differed substantially from that used in the Labour Force Survey in its treatment of people of 'mixed' ethnic origin and those from 'other' ethnic groups. Clearly, any question must strike a balance between providing a useful degree of detail and demanding so much information as to reduce the degree of response. In the Labour Force Survey, ten options for ethnic group were provided, one of which was 'mixed' and one 'other', with provision for multiple answers to the question. The Census allocated persons whose parents were from different ethnic groups or whose parents were themselves of 'mixed' ethnic origin to the Black – Other category if one or more parent was from an African Caribbean ethnic group, or to the Other – Other category if one or more parents were from an Asian ethnic group. Unfortunately, the grouping of such people with smaller ethnic groups and other types of ethnic identity means that data on the growing population of mixed ethnic origin is lost, except for total numbers at the scale of local authority districts, counties, standard regions and countries.

5.3 Classification of smaller and newer ethnic groups

A related problem is the fact that numerically smaller ethnic groups and those which have been present in the UK for a shorter length of time are not represented by the Census. Many of these ethnic groups do not even appear in the 35-fold classification of ethnic groups, being simply allocated to larger aggregates. For example, the 'Other – Asian' ethnic group contains within it a category 'Other Asian' in the 35-fold classification covering ethnic groups such as the Vietnamese, Malays, Filipinos and Japanese. The Census cannot therefore yield any data on many important refugee groups such as Somalis or Kurds and 'new' ethnic groups which have come to Great Britain as a consequence of the changing nature of international economic relationships (managers of Japanese and Korean manufacturing plants, for example). The adoption of the Census ethnic group classification by the Labour Force Survey from April 1992 onwards also means that information on the Arab ethnic group (which formerly appeared in the LFS classification) is no longer available, since they are aggregated together with North Africans and Iranians. All three are very distinctive ethnic groups, and may be locally significant (jointly or individually) due to the presence of higher education establishments or port activities.

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Part Three

Proposals for Ethnic Group Data for the 2001 Census

Part Three – Proposals for Ethnic Group Data for the 2001 Census

Although the 1991 Census represented a great advance in the availability of information on the ethnic composition of the population of Great Britain, the problems highlighted in the previous section demonstrate that there are improvements which can be made for the next population Census. The ethnic composition of Great Britain is continually evolving owing to changing patterns of international migration, the increase in the number of UK-born people from ethnic minorities, the increasing numbers of people whose parents come from different ethnic groups, and shifts in ethnic identification over time.

The design of the ethnic group question for 2001 must take into account the need to address the problems encountered in 1991 and the need to remain relevant as the structure of the population changes and yet remain comparable with the data collected in 1991. This section highlights areas for improvement and suggests changes to the ethnic group question. Although a ready-made solution cannot be offered owing to the complexity of the problem of identifying ethnic groups adequately, some ten areas of improvement are identified. There is a need for:

- more appropriate treatment of the ethnic identity of people from ethnic minorities born in the UK
- a more detailed classification of people of 'mixed' parentage
- greater detail on smaller ethnic minorities such as the Vietnamese
- recognition of 'new' ethnic groups resident in Great Britain
- adoption of an 'Irish' category and ways of dealing with white European ethnic groups
- greater regional detail relating to the Indian sub-continent
- questions to be included on religion and language use
- improved processing of Census data in order to increase its value
- maintenance of comparability with the 1991 Census
- a strategy to improve the degree of response to the ethnic group question.

1 More appropriate treatment of the ethnic identity of people from ethnic minorities born in the UK

The Commission for Racial Equality has proposed the adoption of a 'Black British' category for the next Census. This would cater for the wish of many African Caribbean people born in the UK to identify themselves as such and the desire of many parents born in the West Indies not to label their children according to a geographical origin outside the UK. The Home Affairs Sub-Committee of the House of Commons had already suggested this option in its 1983 report and the Census Offices considered the adoption of both the 'Black British' and 'British Asian' (including South, South-East and East Asians) categories during the planning of the 1991 Census question. They concluded, however, that the inclusion of such a category would reduce the reliability of answers to the ethnic group question owing to confusion between country of birth and nationality. Some people born overseas but regarding themselves as 'British' owing to their nationality status might describe themselves as 'Black British' or 'British Asian', while some UK-born people from ethnic minorities might prefer to identify with the national origins of their ethnic group (Black-African or Pakistani, for example). In the view of the Census Offices, the result of the ethnic group question would fail to yield reliable results for any of the individual Black or Asian ethnic groups, so that the data would have to be aggregated to provide

totals for all Blacks and Asians. The Census Offices thus argued that if this option were included, the ethnic group question would become merely a 'colour' question and the value of the data yielded would be diminished.

Nevertheless, the results of the 1991 Census clearly indicate that a substantial section of the African Caribbean population would welcome the opportunity to identify themselves as Black British – and had attempted to do so in 1991. The question used in 2001 must therefore recognise this desire but, in allowing people to express their identity as Black or Asian British, it must avoid confusion with the nationality of individuals. Since the term 'Black British' is quite well established, the problem is less severe for Black people than for Asian people, for whom the use of a single category such as 'British Asian' would involve the loss of information on the numbers of people from individual Asian ethnic groups choosing this option. Thus it would not be possible to 're-aggregate' ethnic groups to produce totals for the numbers of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese people for comparison with the 1991 Census and other data sets using the 1991 classification; nor would it be possible to calculate the percentage of each which regarded themselves as 'British Asian'. An alternative (suggested by the London Research Network on Race and Ethnicity) might be to adopt a 'two-tier' question. In this scheme, respondents would first be asked to identify themselves according to a broad division into 'White', 'Black', 'Asian' or 'Other' and then to give further details of origin within these categories. Within these categories, one option would be 'British' but this again could only be relied upon to yield reliable information on the total numbers in each of the four broad ethnic categories.

Clearly, there is no simple solution to this problem. The best compromise might be to add a 'Black British' option to the 'Black – Caribbean' and 'Black – African' categories, but this would not enable British Asian people to express their identity in the same way.

2 More detailed classification of people of 'mixed' parentage

Another problem is posed by the desire to represent the ethnicity of people whose parents are from different ethnic groups, or other types of 'mixed' ethnic origins. In the 1991 Census, such people were allocated to the 'Black – Other' or 'Other – Other' categories and their detailed heritage was lost within a diverse amalgam of ethnic identities. If the same approach to ethnic classification is maintained, the size of the 'Other' categories will increase over time as a result of the growing incidence of partnerships between people from different ethnic groups, particularly among people born in the UK. The information yielded by these groupings will thus be of limited value.

The most important purpose for including a question on ethnic group in the Census is to enable identification of the extent of ethnic disadvantage. People with 'mixed' ethnic origins may be subject to discrimination even though they do not regard themselves as members of an ethnic minority. Moreover, people of mixed ethnic groups in cities with a long established ethnic minority population – Liverpool and Cardiff, for example – have long suffered racial discrimination and are often clearly identified (sometimes as 'half-castes') by the host community. As the ethnic composition of the population and the nature of ethnic identification changes over time, it is necessary for the Census to be able to identify changing types of disadvantage affecting people whose heritage is of more than one ethnic group.

There is thus a strong case for the establishment of data on people of mixed race in the 2001 Census. In order to generate an accurate picture of the ethnic composition of the population and to capture changing ethnic identities, it is important that individuals are able to categorise themselves on the Census ethnic group question in accordance with their own perception of their ethnicity, rather than forcing them to choose an inappropriate ethnic grouping.

In order to design an appropriate form of question, the amount of detail required must also be decided. Is the main area of interest the fact that a person is of 'mixed' ethnic origin or is there a legitimate interest in the diversity of ethnic mixing? If the latter, what level of detail is sufficient? In the USA, some people of 'multiracial' origin want the option of expressing the full complexity of their ancestry in the Census, rather than the current option which directs them to choose 'the single category which most closely reflects the individual's recognition in his or her community'. This could lead to an ethnic group question with an additional 'mixed' or 'multiracial' category under which people of mixed ethnic origin could 'tick all categories which apply' from a list of broad ethnic origins such as White, Black, South Asian and South-East Asian. Such an option might, however, be difficult to explain in a limited space and lead to the list – and hence the Census form – being increased in length and complexity. The simplest solution might be the provision of a space in which respondents could put details of their ethnic background, but this would inevitably increase the cost of processing Census forms.

3 Greater detail on smaller ethnic minorities such as the Vietnamese

There are a number of smaller ethnic groups resident in Great Britain which, although they are currently ignored in ethnic group classifications, have special needs. Some (Vietnamese, for example, and Sri Lankans or Somalis) have special needs resulting from their refugee status, whilst others such as Cypriots may be prominent in certain localities. Some of these groups can be identified from data on country of birth but others (Kurds, for example) are distinct ethnic groups subject to persecution within the country of their birth; it is therefore necessary to identify their ethnic group category separately from their national origin. Some refugee groups such as the Vietnamese have been present in Britain for many years but still suffer disadvantage, and Census data which could quantify the problems faced in different localities by migrants or their descendants would be of great benefit both in helping to design policies to improve their situation and in monitoring the success of such policies.

The Census question might be designed so as to include a tick-list of every possible ethnic group, but this is clearly impractical because the increased size of the Census form would have a deterrent effect on response not only to the ethnic group question but possibly to the Census as a whole. A better solution would be to provide space in which ethnic groups could provide details of their origin, perhaps in an expanded 'Other' section. Guidance notes should also be provided, using a phrase such as 'If none of the categories adequately represents your ethnic group, please describe it in the space provided'. As much detail as possible should be preserved in processing the data recorded in these responses.

4 Recognition of 'new' ethnic groups resident in Great Britain

This area is closely related the question above. In recent years, changing economic and political relations between countries and improvements in the ease of international travel have led to

migrants arriving from an increasing number of countries across the world. Inward economic investment, for example, has been encouraged by the government and led to the establishment of Far Eastern manufacturing plants and financial institutions, to some extent staffed by foreign nationals. The number of Japanese and other South-East Asian people living in Britain has increased greatly in recent years. Recruitment of foreign students by higher education institutions has also brought people to Britain from a range of 'new' ethnic groups. Other factors have been the closer integration of the UK in the European Union and a greater mobility of the work force and the recruitment of domestic staff from countries such as the Philippines. Finally, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe has increased the number of potential migrants from that region.

Some of these 'new' ethnic groups may be subject to economic and social disadvantage and likely to settle in Britain permanently whilst others may be fairly privileged (economically at least) and their stay in Britain be short term. Their presence generates a need for information on their numbers and characteristics, both for providers of education and social services and private sector entrepreneurs who might wish to market products tailored to their needs. The solution suggested above, of providing space in which respondents could add details of their ethnic group, would be appropriate to these groups also.

5 Adoption of an 'Irish' category and ways of dealing with white European ethnic groups

The 1991 Census ethnic group question in effect identifies the total number of people from 'visible' minorities and divides this total into a limited number of categories, since it fails to acknowledge the existence of ethnic groups among the majority white population. This approach was adopted as a result of difficulties encountered by the OPCS in 1981 in obtaining an acceptable level of response from white people to questions which specified different ethnic groups.

In 1991, the main white ethnic group which objected to this approach was the Irish, with some community groups orchestrating a campaign for people to enter 'Irish' in the space provided for 'Any other ethnic group'. A total of around 11,000 people (9,900 of them living in Greater London) wrote in 'Irish' and did not tick the 'White' box. A further 20,000 in Greater London ticked the 'White' box in addition to writing in 'Irish' but were then lost in the Census processing since they were allocated to the white ethnic group. A total of 837,500 people resident in Britain in 1991 had been born in Ireland, which indicates that a very small percentage of Irish-born people (some 2.3 per cent in Greater London) positively identified themselves as being Irish. It should be noted, however, that nearly 4,000 people in Greater London who identified themselves as being Irish without ticking the 'White' box, had not been born in Ireland. This indicates some level of demand among British-born people of Irish ancestry to be able to describe themselves as Irish.

The compromise solution adopted in the processing of the 1991 Census was to add an extra column for persons born in Ireland to most of the tables which contained an ethnic group dimension. There are two objections to this procedure: firstly, it excludes those of Irish ethnicity born in Great Britain, while including some Irish-born people who do not regard themselves as Irish. Secondly, it obscures the distinction between people born in Northern Ireland and those

born in the Irish Republic, and may thus be offensive to those Northern Irish who regard themselves as British rather than Irish.

Clearly, since there is a growing awareness of discrimination against the Irish, there is a strong case for inclusion of 'Irish' as an additional category in the ethnic group question. Since only a small percentage of Irish-born people (but perhaps a larger percentage of those born in Great Britain of Irish-born parents) is not white, the category 'Irish' could be included as a sub-group of white people. Irish people who are not white might be included by a form of words inviting them to choose the ethnic group which applied to them, as well as the Irish category.
In addition to the Irish, there are a number of other white ethnic groups who have sought recognition by the Census. One example is the Cypriot community, prominent in certain areas (north London is one), which suffers a degree of social and economic disadvantage which has prompted additional action by some local authorities. Both the community itself and these local authorities would greatly benefit from Census data in planning services for Greek and Turkish Cypriot people. Other Mediterranean white ethnic groups (Spanish and Portuguese workers in catering and other service industries, for example) suffer disadvantage from industrial segregation and lack of linguistic support, and may therefore be regarded as worthy of inclusion. It may also be argued that other continental European white ethnic groups should be included, in order that the freedom of movement within the European Union can be monitored. Italians and Poles were included in the ethnic group question used by the 1979 Labour Force Survey, and although the number of first-generation migrants is diminishing as older people die, the results of this survey indicated that a substantial number of UK-born people would identify themselves with these ethnic groups if given the opportunity. Finally, the British white ethnic groups may argue for inclusion, since many people born outside the country of birth of their parents identify with their parents' ethnic group rather than with the nation in which they were themselves born. This information could be of particular value in measuring the changing ethnic character of sparsely populated rural areas in Wales and Scotland and enable quantification of the impact of English 'white settlers' on such remote areas.

Clearly, there is potential for a great increase in the complexity of the ethnic group question if it is to represent white ethnicity comprehensively. Unfortunately, the evidence of the tests carried out by the OPCS suggests that increasing the number of potential categories makes the question more difficult to complete for the bulk of the population and hence diminishes the value of the information it yields.

6 Greater regional detail relating to the Indian sub-continent

Another possible demand for information from the 2001 Census is for South Asian people to be able to specify their regional origin in greater detail. The main reason for including such a question would be to obtain more specific information on the culture of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi people living in a particular area of Britain. This would enable health and education services (amongst others) to be more sensitive towards these groups.

This demand could be met by adding sub-categories to the boxes for those of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin. However, the main argument against collecting such information is that it would place too much emphasis on the overseas origins of these ethnic groups and only be relevant for those who had migrated to the UK. It might therefore be preferable to ask a direct question on language use instead – while taking into account the provisos listed below.

7 Questions to be included on religion and language use

There is a substantial demand for information on both these topics from a wide variety of people, ranging from academic researchers though community groups and journalists to firms in the private sector. There is a legitimate need to know the distribution of speakers of languages other than English in order to plan education and health services more effectively. The same applies to religion, particularly Islam. There is increasing evidence of the economic disadvantage of Muslim people relative to other South Asian people and also a perception of increasing discrimination against Muslims. A Census question would yield quantitative information on an emerging dimension of disadvantage.

The current Census Act does not permit the collection of data on religion in Great Britain and would thus have to be amended. A religion question has, however, been included successfully in the Northern Ireland Census for many years. In 1991, it asked respondents to 'state the Religion, Religious Denomination or Body to which the person belongs' and respondents were invited to provide as much detail as possible. In the OPCS field trials of the ethnic group question carried out in 1985–6, only South Asians were invited to specify their religion and these groups welcomed the opportunity to identify themselves by religion. Ideally, all ethnic groups should have the opportunity to do the same by adding details in a space provided. Jews may present an anomaly here, however, choosing to be identified as an ethnic group rather than a religious one.

The collection of information on language is more difficult, since the simple enumeration of languages spoken is of limited value. Any question on language use would have to indicate the language in which the respondent was most comfortable, together with their proficiency in English. A Census question could include a list of the most common languages plus a space for others to be added, but in order for the information to provide sufficiently detailed results, it is likely to be over-complex.

8 Improved processing of Census data in order to increase its value

This section has presented the arguments in favour of including a number of new categories in the ethnic group question and some entirely new questions in the 2001 Census. All run the risk of increasing the complexity of the Census form, and hence the level of non-response, which would cause a reduction in its value and impair its comparability with the 1991 Census.

An alternative approach to providing some of the additional information suggested is to alter the method of Census processing to derive new variables from existing Census questions, and to introduce greater flexibility in the coding of individual variables. Examples include the following:

- An indicator of the number of people from white ethnic groups corresponding to a particular national origin (the Irish, for example) could be derived from the question on country of birth. The total for each origin would be defined as the number of people born in that country plus children (but not step-children) born in the UK but living in a household whose head had been born in that country.

- The ethnic group data could be made more useful by preserving greater detail of the descriptions of ethnic origin provided in the 'Black – Other' and 'Any other ethnic group' sections of the question. For example, at present, the South-East Asian and Middle Eastern/north African ethnic groups are not identifiable as they are simply allocated to 'catch-all' codes from the 35-fold coding system as the ethnic group is processed. If provision was made for a much larger number of basic ethnic groupings, it would be possible to retrieve data for many ethnic groups without adding new categories to the Census question. While the drawback in this approach would be the increased time required for coding the question, this might be reduced by computer-assisted coding.

- The number of individual countries of birth coded in the Census should be increased in order to take into account the increasing diversity of national origins of people resident in Great Britain. Ideally, it should be possible to identify each country which existed at the time of the Census. The argument against this is the increased time (and therefore cost) of allocating a response to a much greater number of alternative codes. However, this might be addressed by simply entering the entire name of a country (or an abbreviation) and using software to allocate a code. The costs of alternative approaches could be assessed through empirical trials.

- If greater detail about ethnic and national origins is preserved in the Census data then it should be possible to devise a system for producing tables of data for smaller ethnic groups in those localities in which they are concentrated – Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot people living in north London, for example. It has also been suggested that supplementary questions specific to the needs of ethnic minorities (such as language and religion) could be added to the Census in areas of larger ethnic minority populations.

9 Maintenance of comparability with the 1991 Census

With data on ethnic groups currently existing for only one Census year, it is not possible to calculate change in the ethnic minority population over time. Analysis of the 1991 data has been hampered by the inability to place it within the context of longer-term patterns of change. It is therefore *vital* that analysis of change between 1991 and 2001 can be made. The ethnic group question for 2001 must be designed in such a way that ethnic groups comparable to 1991 can be identified. The seven basic ethnic categories thus need to be retained, with additional details requested in order to provide a more detailed breakdown of the ethnic groups formerly allocated to the three 'Other' categories.

There is clearly a conflict between the desire for more information and the desire to maintain comparability between Censuses. There will be great interest in patterns and rates of population change by ethnic group between 1991 and 2001, thus options should not be added to the ethnic group question which would affect its compatibility with the 1991 Census.

In reality, the likelihood is that the Census Offices will aim to make as few alterations as possible to the 1991 ethnic group question. The process of consultation on the design of the question in 2001 began in late 1995 and field trials will take place during 1996 and 1997; this means that there is little time available for consideration of all the options suggested here. The outcome of the field trials will themselves guide changes in the design of the question, and if the 'Other' categories become very large, methods of splitting them may be considered.

10 A strategy to improve the degree of response to the ethnic group question

The usefulness of the Census and other large-scale surveys has been limited by under-enumeration of the population, especially young men. This undercount tends to be greatest for African Caribbean young men in particular. In addition to the factors responsible for under-enumeration mentioned earlier, feelings of distrust towards the motives of those collecting information and a view that the exercise is irrelevant may also reduce the level of co-operation with the Census.

In order to increase the level of response to the Census in these sections of the population, the Census Office should take positive action to demonstrate the value of Census data in enabling individual groups to argue their case for a larger share of public-sector resources, while illustrating their potential as a source of skills and enterprise. Another positive use of Census data is to enable members of individual ethnic groups to obtain a more comprehensive picture of their living conditions and the problems and opportunities they face.

The US Bureau of the Census has long experience in running campaigns to encourage ethnic minorities such as Native Americans to co-operate with the Census and uses posters and other materials to do so. Co-operation is also encouraged by the way the Bureau presents its results. The raw data is available cheaply for analysis by third parties (including minority ethnic groups) whilst a summary of the results for each ethnic group is made available in the form of a series of booklets entitled *We the people*. These booklets are highly readable and use the first person plural rather than the third person. The Office for National Statistics could certainly adopt some of these approaches for use in Great Britain. Greater effort should also be devoted to making Census forms available in minority languages and to raising awareness of the Census amongst those ethnic groups where a high percentage have limited language skills in English.

11 Conclusion

The Census Offices are already planning the 2001 Census and research for the ethnic group question has already begun. There will be a Census Test in 1997 and a final Test in 1999. The decisions on questions to include in the Census will be made following the 1997 Test and a strong case will have to be made for the inclusion of each question. The criteria for inclusion are that there must be no alternative source of information, the information must be needed at a local scale for the whole of Britain, the question must be acceptable to the public, yield reliable results and be comparable with the results of previous Censuses. Questions which would be hard to code should be avoided and the benefits of asking the question should outweigh the costs.

It is therefore unlikely that all the additions and suggestions included here will be incorporated into the ethnic group question in the 2001 Census. The clear priorities are to maintain comparability with the 1991 Census whilst improving the information yielded by the question. Meanwhile, the Census Office plans to increase automated processing of the next Census and this may permit additional information to be derived.

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