



Are we becoming more or less ethnically-divided?

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Citation for published version (APA):

Li, Y., & Heath, A. (2015). *Are we becoming more or less ethnically-divided?* (Centre for Social Investigation). University of Oxford .

Citing this paper

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CSI 10: Are we becoming more or less ethnically-divided?

Summary

- There are large differences between ethnic minorities in their risks of poverty, with people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi background having around three times the risk of being in poverty as the white British.
- People of Pakistani and Bangladeshi background are also more likely to have a limiting long-term illness or disability and to live in more crowded conditions
- Minorities have made considerable progress across the generations. Many of the first-generation adult migrants had considerable difficulties reading, speaking, writing or listening to English but these difficulties have almost completely disappeared among the second generation who received all their education in Britain.
- Minorities have also made both generational and overtime improvement in their educational and occupational attainments. This holds as true for people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds as it does for people with black African or black Caribbean backgrounds.
- The progress which minorities have made in learning English and obtaining educational qualifications has not been matched when it comes to getting a job. They continue to have higher risks of unemployment in the second generation. Continued racial discrimination in the labour market against second-generation black people and people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi background cannot be ruled out as a significant part of the explanation for their continuing disadvantage.

How do things look now?

How are we doing as a society when it comes to ethnic equality? Historically many came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s as labour migrants to work in relatively low-skilled occupations. These pioneers tended to be concentrated in deprived residential areas and to have higher risks of unemployment as a result of discrimination in the labour market. This briefing note provides an overview of the changing situation of ethnic minorities. We ask whether the gaps are closing over time, or between generations.

Britain has become increasingly diverse over the last seventy years since the Second World War. It has been estimated that ethnic minorities have grown from 2.9% of the population of Great Britain in 1951 to 14% in 2011. The largest groups identified in official statistics are those of Indian, Pakistani, black African and black Caribbean background, although there is also a large and increasingly diverse 'other white' population (many from other EU countries) and a fast -growing population of mixed background. About one-third of the ethnic minority population (although this varies between minorities) was born in the UK, and so the ethnic minority population should not be equated with the foreign-born population.

Measurement issues

Measures of people's ethnic background were introduced in the 1991 Census and have been regularly included since then in official and many academic surveys. However, the official classification was changed for the 2001 census and again for 2011. There are therefore some issues of comparability over time. Prior to 1991, estimates can only be made using information on parents' and respondent's country of birth.

Since the number of ethnic minority respondents in most surveys is relatively small, it is often necessary to combine categories or to combine surveys in order to have confidence in the estimates. We mainly focus therefore on the larger groups such as black Caribbean, black African, Indian, Chinese, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and mixed background. People of Gypsy/Roma or Traveller background are also highly disadvantaged but we are unable to provide a full coverage of these groups because of sample sizes. Moreover, for analyses over time we have to combine groups because of sample-size considerations. We should also note that some of the 'official' categories such as black African are highly heterogeneous, and involve rather different mixes of people over time, and so we cannot always be sure that we are comparing like with like.

Our data sources are the UK Longitudinal Household Survey (UKLHS, also called Understanding Society or USoc), the General Household Survey (GHS), and the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for UK (fig 4) or GB (fig 5).

The situation today

We begin with a snapshot of the differences between the situations of the main ethnic minority groups in Britain today. There is in fact considerable variation. Some minorities such as those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi background are relatively deprived compared with the white British majority group, although other groups such as those with Indian or Chinese origins have largely closed the gap. Rates of poverty, for example, are much higher among the former two groups – 57% for people of Pakistani and 46% for people of Bangladeshi background - compared with 16% for the white British in 2009-11. The risks of poverty are lower for the other groups, but even so the black Caribbean, black African and Indian groups all have significantly higher rates of poverty than the white British. These high rates of poverty partly reflect the low-level occupations which many

minorities occupy, their high rates of unemployment (or economic inactivity among the women), their low earnings and personal incomes (as also shown in Figure 1), and also relatively large numbers of children, as shown below.

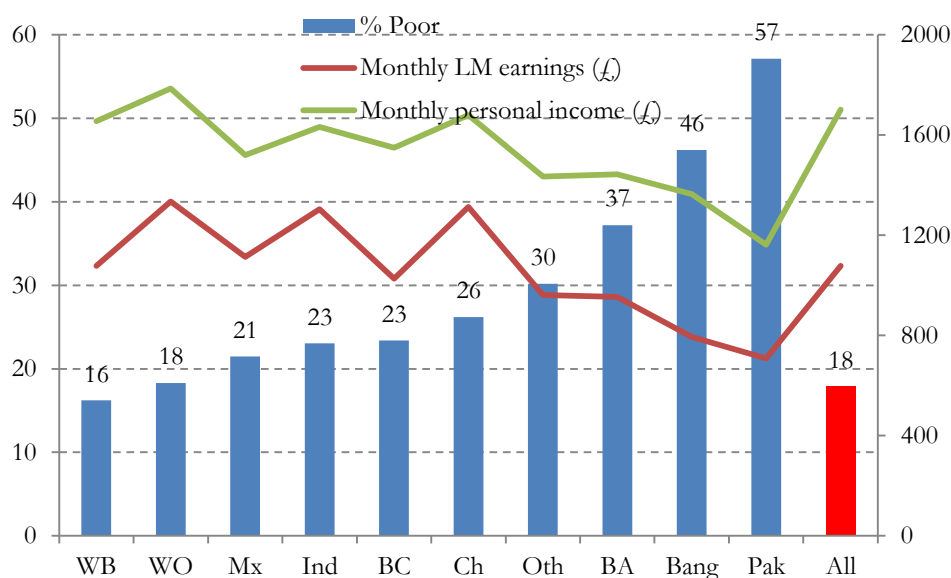


Fig 1: Risks of poverty are much greater among people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi background
Relative poverty, measured as in briefing paper CSI 2. Source: UKLHS 2009-11

This pattern of ethnic inequality is mirrored in many other domains. The Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities are also much more likely to be living in overcrowded housing due to their larger household size, and to have markedly poorer health as measured by self-reported long-standing illness or disability than among the white British, the gap being even greater at older ages. This is clearly shown in Figure 2. We also find that these

minorities have lower social capital, as measured by membership of voluntary organizations, volunteering and trust in others (see briefing note CSI 8) and lower life satisfaction (CSI 3).

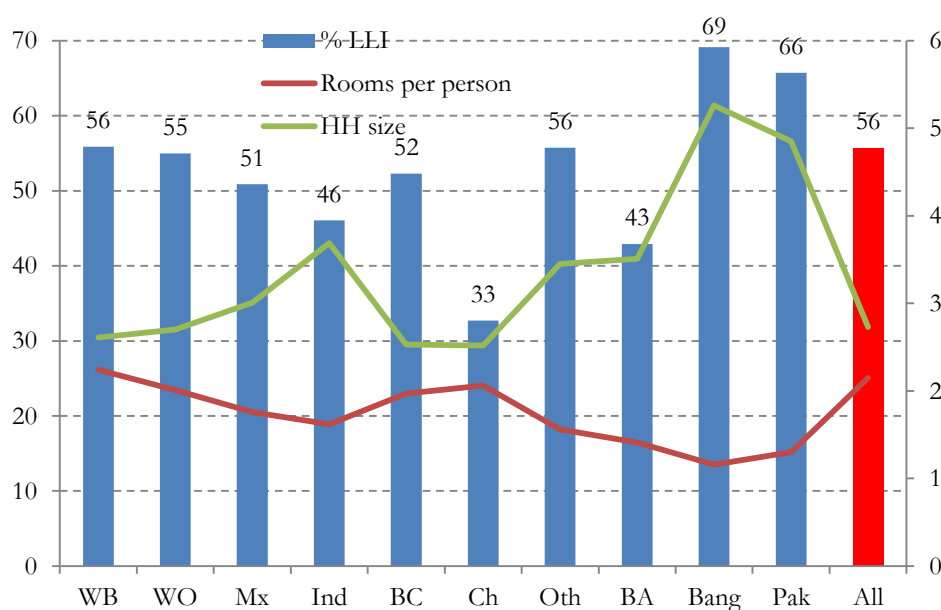
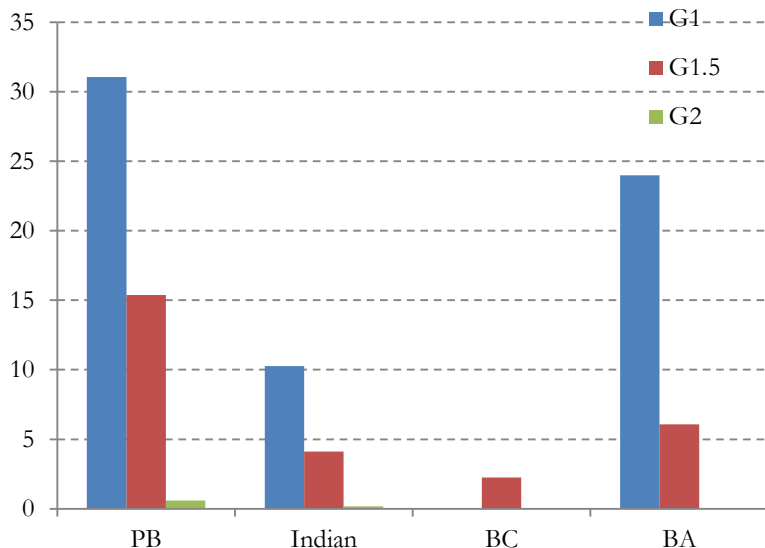


Fig 2: People of Pakistani and Bangladeshi background have poorer health and live in more crowded conditions
Health refers to self-reported limiting long-standing illness or disability (LLI) among those aged 55+ (UKLHS waves 1-3).

Do we find evidence of generational progress?

In the case of ethnic minorities, progress can take place across generations as well as overtime. For example, many migrants will come to Britain with little fluency in English but we would expect the second generation – people educated in Britain – to have achieved fluency. We code visible ethnic minorities who were born in the UK or who arrived by the age of 5 as second generation in the understanding that they will have received all their education in the UK; those who were born abroad and arrived between ages 6-17 as 1.5th generation and the adult migrants who were born abroad and arrived in the UK at age 18+ as first generation. As can be seen in Figure 3, there is clear improvement over the generations in terms of fluency in English for three of our four



main ethnic minority groups (the black Caribbeans being the exception since they did not have difficulties even in the 1st generation). Thus over 30% of the 1st generation (adult migrants) from Pakistan and Bangladeshi had difficulties with English, but difficulties have almost entirely vanished in the second generation.

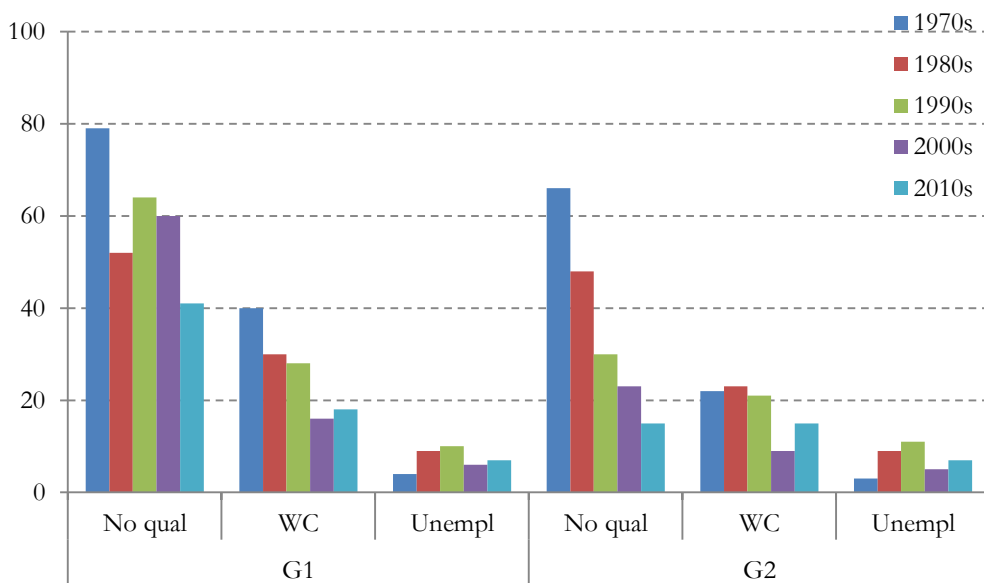
Figure 3: Difficulties reading, speaking, writing or listening to English have almost disappeared by the second generation

Source: respondents aged 25-49, UKLHS

We can also examine generational changes over historical time. We focus on the differences between the first and the second generation, as defined above, in the five decades since the early 1970s. Figure 4 shows the overall picture among minorities aged 25-49 in each decade.

Figure 4: Minority progress overtime and generations except for unemployment

G1: foreign-born and arrived in the UK at age 18+; G2: UK born or arriving by age 5. Source: GHS (1972-2005)/LFS (1983-2013).



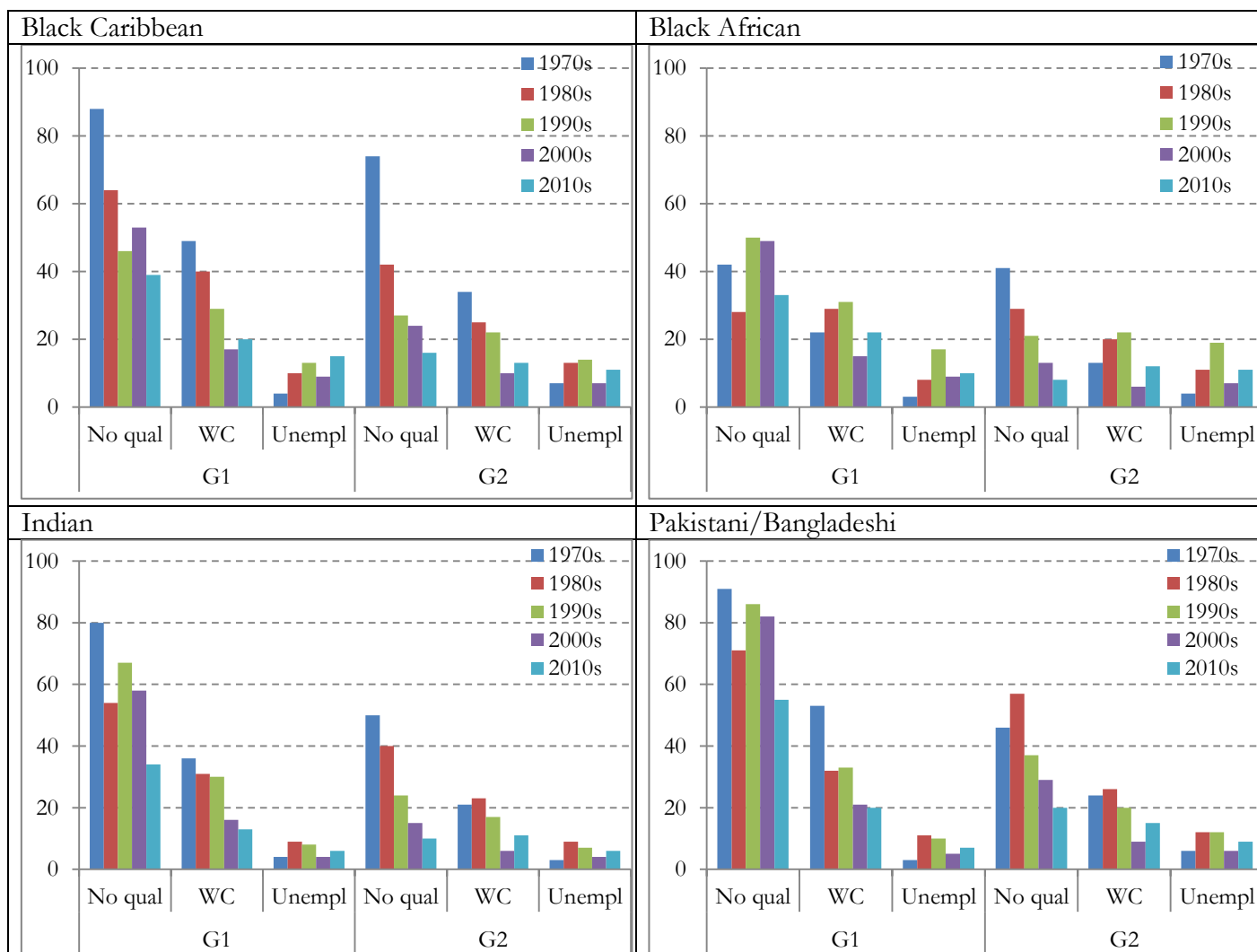
Overall, there is clear evidence of both generational and overtime improvement in educational and occupational attainment. But there is no sign of either generational or over-time improvement in their risks of unemployment.

Does this pattern differ between our four main groups?

Figure 5 shows that Indians made great strides both over time and across generations in education and occupation, followed by black Caribbeans and Pakistanis/ Bangladeshis. Large numbers of black Africans in the

earlier period came as students and then stayed. In the 1990s and the 2000s, many came as asylum seekers and refugees with poorer education than the earlier pioneers. Still the overall educational level of black Africans was typically better than that of the other three groups and so there was in a sense less room for improvement.

Figure 5: All four main ethnic minority groups have made substantial progress over time and across generations – except in the case of unemployment



Overall, we find, for all the main minority groups alike, evidence of major generational progress with respect to fluency in English and in educational attainment. There is some evidence of gains in occupational attainment. But there is much less evidence of generational progress in avoiding unemployment. The progress which minorities have made in learning English and obtaining educational qualifications has not been matched when it comes to getting a job. Continued racial discrimination in the labour market against second-generation black people and people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi background cannot be ruled out as a significant part of the explanation for their continuing disadvantage.

Acknowledgements: This briefing note was prepared by Yaojun Li and Anthony Heath.

Publication date: March 2015