



technology, children, schools and families

Ethnicity and Social Organisation: Changes and Challenges

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Summary

With the overall British population rapidly ageing, there is a growing realization of the important role that both first and second generation ethnic minorities can play in demographic change. A great deal, however, depends upon the integration of the minority members and the reaching of parity between ethnic groups. The present paper offers some insight on the ongoing changes within Britain's ethnic groups and the challenges that might be faced by them in a future of rapid demographic transitions.

Keywords: ethnicity, society, community, demography, population, migration, ageing, employment, family

Introduction

In the last few decades, the population of Britain has experienced a steady increase which can be attributed primarily to net migration and the declining number of deaths rather than a rising number of births (Office for National Statistics, 2008). With the UK facing a future of the ageing structure shifting to the right, questions naturally rise about the organization of society, the provision of social services and the adjustment of the labour force. Amongst those, the possible role of ethnicity in mitigating the negative effects of the demographic change occupies a primary focus.

Several indications exist how ethnic minority groups may have a beneficial effect upon Britain's ageing population. First, minorities frequently have a larger number of dependent children in the household than the UK-born White (Office for National Statistics, 2008). Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that the delaying of family formation and childbirth characteristic of White British households would affect Asian migrant or Asian British households in the same magnitude (Modood et al, 1997). In this way, it could be expected that the importance of ethnic households for the correction of the downward trends in the number of births would become more pronounced in the future.

Next, the overall ageing of the British population would continue to create job vacancies in all sectors and especially in low-skilled manual work. Unlike skilled work in which the impact of the demographic change can be softened by adult and life-long training schemes and longevity of the employees, unskilled and low-skilled work, with its dependence upon physical conditions, is bound to receive a hard blow. It could be argued that low-skilled jobs would become more and more mechanized, or disappear in certain industries, yet recent research shows that complete substitution of manual labour is hard to envisage in the next 40 years (Handel, 2003). Furthermore, in sectors such as health and social services shortages of skilled labour are felt even now and these vacancies are primarily filled by immigrants. For example, according to the Learning and Skills Council, 679,000 vacancies in health and social work, business services, hotels, catering, and construction were available in 2003 (Selective Admission: Making Migration Work, 2004).

These prospects bring to the forefront the issues of the integration and the successful incorporation of ethnic minority groups – both first and second generation ones. This paper will examine the progress achieved in this direction, as well as commenting on undergoing and possible future changes in the organization of ethnic groups in Britain. This paper will also strive to convey the need for long-term programmes to resolve the gaps between ethnic minorities and UK-born Whites.

The first half of the paper will present the laws governing the processes of immigration and naturalization and will dwell on some characteristic patterns in family structure and labour market performance of the ethnic minority groups in Britain. It will show that segregation continues to operate and that despite the existence of extensive anti-discrimination legislation the labour market performance of the majority and minority groups is still quite divergent even for second generation minority members educated in Britain.

The second half of this paper (sections *Social Resources and Host Country Institutions*, and the *Europeanisation of the Migration Waves*) will introduce new evidence of the differentiating availability of social resources on the part of ethnic minority groups and their impact upon their labour market trajectories. The role of host country institutions in facilitating minority members and securing their incorporation will also be discussed and possible future developments will be outlined. In addition, some new research on the latest migration flows – the increasing share of White migrants in the post-1990s migration waves – and the change in societal perceptions and attitudes will be discussed. Finally, some predictions for the future of British minority groups and their labour market inclusion will be offered. Thus, the present paper will give some insight into the ongoing changes within Britain's ethnic groups and the challenges that might be faced by them in a future of rapid demographic transitions.

Ethnicity² in Britain

According to the 2001 Census, the majority of the UK population were White (92%). The remaining 4.6 million people belonged to different ethnic groups. Amongst those, Indians were the largest community followed by Pakistanis, people of Mixed Ethnicity, Black Caribbeans, Black Africans and Bangladeshis. Around half of the non-White population were Asians of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin (Office for National Statistics, 2008).

Table 1

Population of the United Kingdom: by ethnic group, April 2001

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008

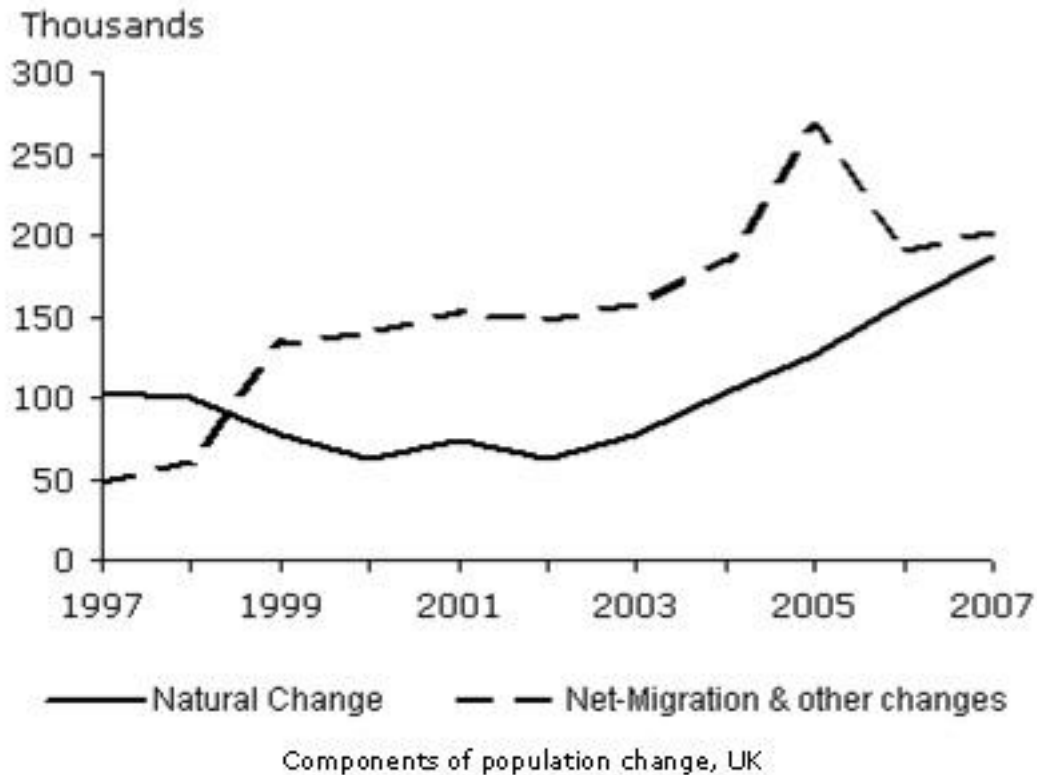
	Total population		Non-White Population
	Numbers	%	%
White	54,153,898	92.1	-
Mixed Ethnicity	677,117	1.2	14.6
Indian	1,053,411	1.8	22.7
Pakistani	747,285	1.3	16.1
Bangladeshi	283,063	0.5	6.1
Other Asian	247,664	0.4	5.3
All Asian or Asian British	2,331,423	4.0	50.3
Black Caribbean	565,876	1.0	12.2
Black African	485,277	0.8	10.5
Black Other	97,585	0.2	2.1
All Black or Black British	1,148,738	2.0	24.8
Chinese	247,403	0.4	5.3
Other ethnic groups	230,615	0.4	5.0
All minority ethnic population	4,635,296	7.9	100
All population	58,789,194	100	

The ethnic composition of Britain thus reflects the strong links between Britain and its former colonies and areas of influence and interest, nowadays known as the British Commonwealth – New Commonwealth and Old Commonwealth countries³ inclusive.

Immigration and naturalisation laws

One of the main reasons for the population growth in Britain as already stated is net migration. In mid-2007, the population of the United Kingdom was estimated to be 60,975,000 (Office for National Statistics, 2008). In comparison with 2006, an increase of 388,000 was witnessed which equalled approximately 1,000 people a day. Net migration rather than natural change is responsible for this boom in population growth. For example, in 2002 net migration accounted for more than 70% of the total population change (Office for National Statistics, 2008). Therefore, it is of great importance to understand the operation of the immigration system and its supply and demand sides.

Graph 1
Comparison between the shares of Natural Change and Net Migration
in the UK Population Change



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008.

The main routes of migration to Britain are labour migration, family reunion and asylum. Control over the flow of labour migrants to the UK has been primarily exercised through the Work Permit System. Work permits were first introduced in 1919 to restrict the entry of Non-Commonwealth migrants, but with the enactment of the 1971 Immigration Act they became obligatory for all foreign workers from outside the European Economic Community. The latter act was aimed at curbing the increasing number of Black and Asian Commonwealth migrants. The system has undergone continuous change in the Acts⁴ following the 1971 Immigration Act to meet the shortages of labour in certain sectors such as hospitality and food processing, and has become increasingly orientated towards the facilitation of the entry of highly-skilled migrants.

The current Managed Migration policies of the British Government are best reflected in the [Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, 2002](#). For example, apart from the main work permit scheme for skilled migrants, the Highly Skilled Migrants Programme (HSMP) was introduced in 2002 which allows workers to move to the UK without having prior job offers. Low-skilled and semi-skilled workers have been managed by the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Scheme (SAWS); the au-pair scheme, officially a cultural exchange scheme rather than a labour immigration programme; the domestic worker scheme for domestic workers who travel to the UK with their employers, and the Sector Based Scheme⁵ (SBS) which allows UK employers to recruit a limited number of workers to fill vacancies in particular sectors (Ruhs, 2006). All work permit holders are invited to apply for an indefinite period of settlement in the UK after five years. Self-employed entrepreneurs have not been under the obligation to apply for a work permit. Control has certainly tightened over family migration as well. The 1971 Immigration Act put severe restrictions upon family reunification and chain migration. Different regulations⁶ have also been implemented to lower the number of other dependents, and to limit family migration only to spouses and children (Berkeley et al, 2005).

In contrast, the number of asylum seekers in the UK started growing in the 1990s. The trend holds for the rest of Northern Europe with a high number of asylum seekers settling in Germany and the Netherlands as well. A further increase was witnessed between 1999 and 2002, and in 2002 the number of asylum seekers in Britain peaked to 84,100 (Home Office Research and Statistics Department, 2007). Subsequently, there has been a decrease in the number of asylum seekers due to the stricter regulations of the 2002 [Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act. Unlike labour migrants, asylum seekers benefit from facilitated access to state-provided support and accommodation, and there are no restrictions on their period of stay \(Gardner, 2006\).](#) On the whole, British governments have moved over the years towards the imposition of more severe restrictions upon all channels of migration. A period of 'leniency' has always been followed by a period of tightening of the rules: consider the great number of refugee applications in 2000–2001 and consequential introduction of new restrictions upon refugee entry in 2002. At the same time, no real drop in the number of incoming migrants has been witnessed (Heath and Cheung, 2007), as vacancies within the economy clearly exist and hence the demand remains for migrant labour. That the idea of the integration of migrants is becoming more and more part of the political discourse is evident in the change of legislation to facilitate highly-skilled migrants or migrants who have received British education and have higher awareness of British culture (and in this way will constitute an easily assimilated pool of labour 20 years from now). In contrast, restrictions have been imposed upon low-skilled labour migrants with the introduction of sector-based quotas and the seasonal workers scheme although these vacancies continue to constitute the primary pull of migrants to the UK (Ruhs, 2006). Many of the latter vacancies are advertised as only permanent openings. The question of how many of the migrants move to another job after the expiration of their contract or reside illegally in the UK, however, remains unanswered. This is an issue of great speculation. After the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and the underestimation of the migration flows from the new EU10 countries, the British media has become more and more focused on migration and problems associated with housing shortages, labour market competition and crime, although the link between the latter and international migration has been only spurious (The Guardian, 2008). Thus, fluctuations in public opinion are likely to arise in the future as well and will depend very much on the group size, level of visibility and integration of the migrants, especially during times of harsh economic conditions. We could assume that in the next 40 to 60 years the understanding of other cultures and increased opportunities for mobility will facilitate the integration of migrants. Yet, the visibility of ethnic groups will not necessarily disappear and if shortages of labour continue to dominate in unskilled and low-skilled jobs, the migrants filling them will not necessarily be drawn from the upper tail of the skill distribution in their countries of origin. This issue will be discussed in greater length in the second section of this paper.

Naturalization

With the 1981 Naturalization Act in operation, children of immigrants born in Britain are no longer automatically British citizens unless their parents are British citizens. Immigrants who have resided in the UK for more than six years can apply for naturalization (only three years should be spent in the UK before application if the applicant's spouse is a UK citizen).

Ethnic minority households

The Census showed that three quarters (74% per cent) of Bangladeshi households followed by 66% of Pakistani and 50% of Indian households contained at least one dependent child. In comparison, the proportion for British-born White households was 28% (Office for National Statistics, 2008).

Overall, Asian households registered the highest proportion of married couples under pension age as well as the largest proportion of more than one family with dependent children living together. Only 2% of all household in Britain could be classified in that category, whereas the percentage amongst Bangladeshis was 17%.

The level of segregation amongst the ethnic minority communities in Britain is certainly highest amongst South Asians (Modood et al, 1997) and it has been associated with the existence of cultural, linguistic, religious and aspirational differences from the mainstream institutions on the part of South Asians (Simpson, 2004). Self-segregation, however, seems a myth as Census data showed that the growing number of South Asians in certain areas can be attributed to natural growth and not to movement of South Asian residents towards areas of South Asian concentration (Simpson, 2004). Nevertheless, the issue of segregation will always present a problem since, among other reasons, the increasing concentration of minority members in certain areas can put severe constraints upon housing and the provision of social services; and thus further tilt the equality in services, resources and employment between the majority and the minorities.

Labour market performance

An important aspect and evidence for the successful integration of ethnic minority groups is parity in terms of wage and work opportunities between the minorities and the native majority. The demographic changes in the British population and the need for younger workers are likely to further push towards the closing of the existing gaps. Whether that happens easily, however, is a totally different question. In this section, the progress made in the last few decades within the enactment of stringent anti-discrimination laws will be overviewed and some areas of major concern will be highlighted.

It is generally believed that in comparison with the 1960s the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s were characterized by convergence of the economic profiles of the ethnic minority groups and the White British workforce (Ignaski and Payne, 1996). The immigrants' labour market performance seemed to improve perhaps with the acquisition of human capital (Fielding, 1995); the arrival of better qualified migrants drawn from the upper tail distribution of the human capital in their home countries (Bell, 1997); the introduction of a series of anti-discrimination laws, and/or simply the nature of the labour market which registered economic expansion (Bell, 1997). Some researchers question, however, these optimistic findings (Modood et al, 1997), arguing that they were based on aggregate data that did not distinguish between first and second generation minority members and consecutively overstated the declining trend in ethnic minority disadvantage. This is to say that ethnic minorities in the 1980s and early 1990s compared to the 1960s might have been taking better jobs, but they were still doing so to a lesser extent than White people with the same qualifications (Modood et al, 1997).

Even if there was a positive trend in the economic profile of minority groups in Britain in the 1980s, it has certainly reversed by the mid-1990s. The findings of the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities carried out in 1994 showed that Caribbeans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis suffered substantial employment and earnings disadvantages with almost two-thirds of male respondents from these groups concentrated into manual jobs. In comparison half of the Indians, and two thirds of Chinese men were in non-manual work (Modood et al, 1997). The good representation of Chinese and South Asians, particularly Indians, in professional, managerial and

employers position at the time (the 1990s) has been largely attributed to the high rate of self-employment amongst these groups (Clark and Drinkwater, 1998).

Whether integration works very much depends on the performance of second generation minority members in the labour market. The offspring raised in the host country are assumed to be doing better than their parents and to have reached parity with Whites (Chiswick, 1978). Various studies distinguish between the two generations and explore this assumption with British survey data. Simpson et al (2006), comparing the 1991 and 2001 Censuses, found that the net disadvantage of ethnic minorities in the labour market has become greater for men born in the UK. For example, unemployment amongst unqualified men in their thirties was 16% for Pakistanis born overseas, a little more than the unemployment for unqualified White males, but for Pakistanis born in the United Kingdom, it was 25%. Heath and Cheung (2006) using a cumulated sample of the General Household Survey 1979-1999 and 1992-1997 LFS datasets also reached the conclusion that in terms of avoiding unemployment, the ethnic disadvantage was stronger in the second generation rather than the first one. In their study, the disadvantage was highest for Black Caribbeans and Pakistanis. On the other hand, in terms of accessing professional and managerial positions, the ethnic disadvantage was sharply reduced in the second generation and in the case of Black Caribbeans and Indians it became insignificant (Leslie et al, 1998; Heath and Cheung, 2006).

Unfortunately due to data limitations, few studies simultaneously offer control for educational attainment and knowledge of English. An exception is an article by Dustmann and Fabbri (2000)⁷ who found that English fluency reduced the likelihood of unemployment and the earnings differentials between ethnic minorities and Whites. It is nevertheless hard to believe that lack of language proficiency can solely explain the aforementioned patterns of disadvantage as Caribbean migrants arrive with a good knowledge of English (Heath and Yu, 2005), and second generation respondents have been educated in the British system. In the study by Berthoud (2000), the members of the African minority group stayed longer in education than the respective UK-born White and Black Caribbean groups; however, their unemployment and earnings prospects were similar to those of Black Caribbeans.

One of the explanations most commonly associated with the existence of the divide described above is discrimination.

Several steps have been undertaken since the 1950s to establish equal treatment of all ethnic groups in the British labour market. First, the 1965 Race Relations Act banned ethnic discrimination at public places and was followed by the 1968 Race Relations Act which ensured that it was unlawful to discriminate on grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origins in recruitment and terms and conditions of employment (Layton-Henry, 1984). This definition of discrimination was extended in the 1976 Race Relations Act to cover forms of implicit discrimination in which there is absence of deliberate intention to discriminate but employers' practices still put certain ethnic groups at disadvantage (Heath and Yu, 2005). More recently, the Race Relations Act 2000 was instituted to maintain the provisions of the previous act and to encourage public authorities to fight discrimination. Nevertheless, as will be highlighted, field experiments and attitudinal studies indicate that both indirect and direct discrimination continues to shape the labour market outcomes of minority members in Britain.

The Home Office Citizenship Survey, for example, has registered a steady increase in the perception of prejudice and discrimination in the British society from 2003 to 2005 (Home Office Citizenship Survey, 2003, 2005). Arguably, however, the White British population does not exhibit higher levels of prejudice towards a particular Commonwealth group. Waters (1999), comparing the US and the UK, claimed that to be '*black*' in Britain entails that the person is simply '*non-white*' and there is no ethnic hierarchy as observed in the US. However, the evidence in favour of the reduction of the racial distinctions to '*whites*' versus '*non-whites*' in the British case is not exemplary strong. The field experiments conducted in the UK on which we can rely for some insight into the operation of discrimination in the hiring process are outdated and have some serious flaws. The majority of them do not distinguish between the different ethnic minority communities, often grouping West Indian and Asian testers under the term of

'black applicants' or 'coloured' applicants (Firth, 1981). Consider the generality of the evidence provided by the 1966 Political and Economic Planning (PEP) study which found that when comparing 'coloured' applicants (presumably Black Caribbeans, Indians or Pakistanis) and White migrant applicants, the latter experienced much less disadvantage (Daniel, 1968). Jowell and Prescott-Clarke (1970) obtained similar results for white-collar jobs. More recently, Hoque and Noon (1999) claimed that there is little discrimination against Asians in big companies but most of their fake applicants had Hindu-sounding names implying that they belonged to the Indian minority group which renders the extension of Hoque and Noon's results to the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities impossible. It is true that those studies distinguishing between Black Caribbeans and Asians usually have registered the same level of prejudice against both groups (Brown and Gay, 1994) or a slightly higher level of prejudice against Black Caribbeans (McIntosh and Smith, 1974). Yet, better up-to-date data⁸ is needed with detailed ethnic groupings, as so far the conclusion that British-born Whites do not discriminate against a specific migrant group relies on a data that does not make a very clear initial distinction between the minority groups in Britain.

Attitudinal studies and self-reported feelings of discrimination perhaps do not provide as good systematic evidence of discrimination in the employment process as field experiments but they can attest to existent prejudices. In the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, Bangladeshis and Asians reported lower feelings of discrimination, while members of the Black group especially Black Caribbeans had higher levels of self-reported discrimination: over a quarter of the Caribbeans believed that they had been refused a job on racial grounds (Modood et al, 1997). Since there is a direct negative correlation between feelings of discrimination and trust in institutions (Home Office Citizenship Survey, 2005) and for Black Caribbeans the levels of the latter are usually low (Berthoud, 2000), it is still unclear whether these statistics reflect the true levels of discrimination in the host country or simply perceptions and beliefs of it.

Clearly, over the last few decades, despite the development of extensive anti-discrimination legislation, the ethnic minority groups have been exposed to labour market penalties, and parity with native Whites has not been achieved. Moreover, there are some serious gaps in our knowledge of discrimination in the British labour market that must be filled before any specific strategies for the labour market integration of minority groups are adopted. Indeed, a close monitoring of the level of discrimination will be in order if a more homogenous and equal labour market is to be uncovered in the next 20 years.

The next section of this paper will dwell in detail on new research which tries to throw light on ethnic penalties¹⁰ and possible future developments that may present yet another range of challenges to the ethnic organization of the British society.

Social resources and host country institutions

The second half of this paper focuses on some new research pointing out to the challenges in resolving the gap between UK-born Whites and minority members, and the steps that can be undertaken to ensure the achievement of parity. Researchers believe that overt discrimination¹⁰ may not be the only reason for the penalized position of minority groups in Britain. Ethnic minority members might simply lack the resources and the social networks to gain profitable information about vacancies and obtain those (Peterson et al, 2000). Therefore, before examining the issue of whether an employer hires an individual of ethnic minority origin and on what terms, attention should be paid to the question of whether the ethnic minority member has even heard about the job due to his/her limited social resources.

In my doctoral research which uses the job search behaviour of ethnic minority members in Britain as a proxy for the social resources¹¹ available to them, I find that there is a distinct divide between the members of the Black group and South Asians in the use of social ties which is more pronounced in the first generation than in the second. South

Asians rely more on social ties, all things considered. Nevertheless, the indication that when social ties have been used in the second generation, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are more unlikely to exit unemployment than British-born Whites and members of the Black group; and that South Asian minorities are less successful in reaching the highest occupational positions through social ties compared to British-born Whites suggests that the ties of groups with assumed high levels of bonding capital¹³ are weak and not strong enough to facilitate the gaining of employment.

On the other hand, state employment agencies are a technique very popular among ethnic minorities – even amongst those with a characteristically low possession of English (such as Pakistanis and Bangladeshis). State employment agencies indeed are institutions designed to cater primarily for the needs of the unemployed, and to offer help and advice; however, they are also likely to provide low-skilled to medium level jobs. The fact that many of the minority groups with control for education continue to rely on them and exit unemployment successfully may indicate that minorities value the reliability of state employment agencies, the quickness with which jobs are offered (including jobs in the public sector), and the strict operation of the government's non-discrimination laws compared to the general labour market climate; and favour these factors over high remuneration.

In fact, it is in this heightened use of state employment agencies with control for benefit claiming that the government policies of the incorporation of ethnic minority members register a clear success. State employment agencies seem to have a particular understanding of the different needs of ethnic groups. To maintain a contact with Pakistani and Bangladeshi job seekers, for example, Career Offices offered the flexibility of written applications to them (Johnson and Fidler, 2005). Minority members registered with state employment agencies enjoy the beneficial effect of a number of minority orientated government policies (Tackey et al, 2006) – eg finding the applicants jobs within the local area, raising awareness about available facilities in the neighbourhood (crèches and day care), and encouraging desegregation by assisting minority members in their application for jobs in other geographical areas. The latter strategy is certainly less successful with impersonal intermediaries such as newspaper advertisements which are rarely consulted by minority members even in the second generation, as my research shows.

Undoubtedly, the policies channelled by state employment agencies are indicative of the government's commitment to the integration of minority groups and the acknowledgement of the importance of providing information and resources to minorities. Yet, there are many ways for improvement in the future. State employment agencies usually offer primarily semi-skilled and unskilled jobs, and a few professional positions in the public sector (Tackey et al, 2006). As the current legislation stands, employers have to advertise their vacancies without discriminating on the basis of gender, age or ethnicity, but the medium of magazines and newspaper advertisements, as my research suggests, is not enough to reach the potential ethnic minority applicants successfully. In fact, minorities frequently prefer to have a mediator (Tackey et al, 2006) in their contact with employers, perhaps due to fears of discrimination (which holds in the second generation as well) or simply lack of knowledge about the operation of the host labour market (Friedberg, 2000). Even with the globalization of the world's labour markets, it is unlikely that the need for consulting agencies and seeking assistance will totally disappear.

Both state and private employment agencies can take up this role. So far, however, private employment agencies – a possible alternative source of information and help for highly-skilled individuals – have not entirely acted as the agent through which professional placements can be secured. Private employment agencies are indeed crucial in the recruitment of migrant work but they are also frequently involved with the placement of the migrants in low-skilled sector-based vacancies such as Social services or Transport and Communications (Ruhs, 2006). In some cases, private employment agencies have been involved in complex schemes of perpetuating irregular migration by offering migrants jobs as sub-contractors for food and packaging companies (The Guardian, 2005). More objective research on these issues is, of course, needed; yet,

state employment agencies seem the only host country institutions that strictly operate by the government policies and laws.

Europeanisation of the migrant waves

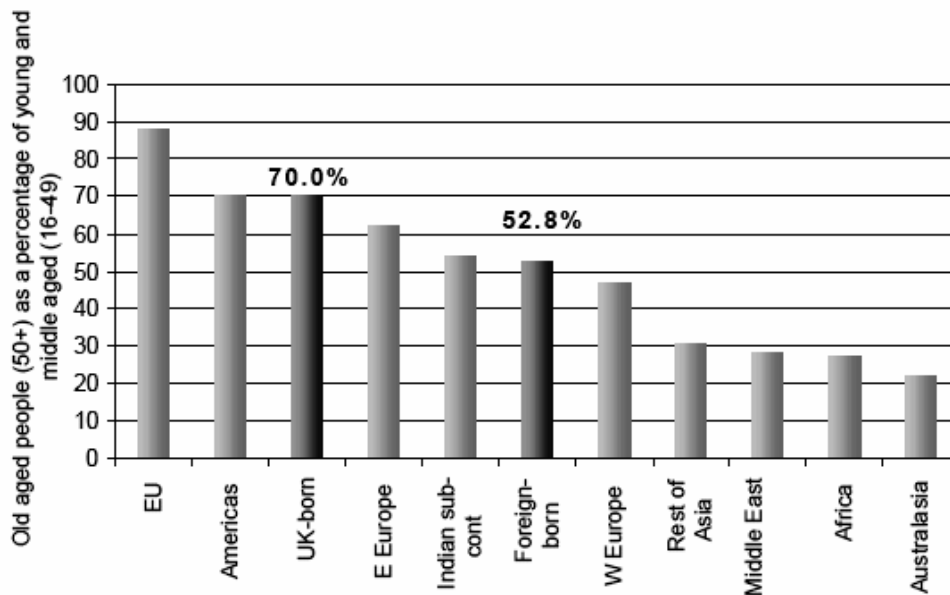
British immigration policy in the last 20 years has been orientated towards the 'Europeanisation' of labour recruitment, and of creating a more coherent labour market in which migrants blend more easily, although the dependence upon Commonwealth labour has continued particularly in health and education (Sales, 2007). The attempts at 'Europeanisation' peaked with the decision to grant free labour access to the new accession countries in 2004. In the context of the ageing British population, this strategy seems to ensure the presence of European migrants that are likely to adapt more easily to the British culture and labour market. However, public opinion has not been very relaxed towards these new migrants and many fluctuations within the government policy have also been witnessed.

White migrants have always been considered non-'visible'. Since up to the 1990s they were primarily skilled migrants from EU-15 and Old Commonwealth countries or Irish, they were often also described as less 'problematic' (Sales, 2007). This rhetoric, and the fact that even in the 1990s Commonwealth migrants still dominated the migration waves, masked the important changes under way in British society. For example, the share of Old and New Commonwealth migrants diminished greatly from 30% and 32% of the migrants in 1971 to 17% and 20% of the migrants in 2002 (Berkeley et al, 2005). On the other hand, the proportion of Eastern European and Middle Eastern migrants has steadily increased. The latter trend went unnoticed by the general public for quite awhile as in 2001 the number of Eastern Europeans living in Britain was relatively low - fewer than 100,000 or roughly 3% of the population (Office for National Statistics, 2008). Consecutively, in the 2001 British Attitudes Survey, Commonwealth migrants were still recognized as the most visible group of migrants and the reported levels of indirect discrimination were higher against New Commonwealth migrants than against migrants from other European countries (Rothon and Heath, 2003).

Attitudes of the British White majority certainly started to change with the enlargement of the European Union. After 2004, Britain experienced an unprecedented boom of European migrants. Only between May 2004 and March 2005, there were 176,000 applications to the New Worker registrations scheme; 56% of them were by Polish workers and 15% by Lithuanians (Accession Monitoring Report, 2004-2006). Moreover, prior to the enlargement, Central and Eastern Europeans in Britain were regarded primarily as temporary workers whose number was too small to be discussed in the debate over the incorporation of the permanently settling foreign-born. The change in figures and the dramatic increase in group size questioned the lack of 'visibility' of European White migrants. The concern about underestimating the number of foreigners has led even The Office for National Statistics to set up an Inter-Departmental Task Force on Migration Statistics. In this way, the enlargement of the EU drew attention to the fact that from the 1990s onwards the number of Other Whites in the UK has been constantly rising; however, their labour market performance has also become increasingly divergent (Berkeley et al, 2005; Haque, 2002; Ruhs, 2006) which questions the Europeanisation as a strategy aimed at the consolidation of the British labour market in the years to come.

The 'Europeanisation' of the migration waves did not quite meet the expectations in respect to age structures as well. The age profile of the coming Eastern and Central European migrants is one of a large pensioner dependency rate (Haque, 2002); which can be deemed as a sign of increased chances of return migration but is not particularly likely to assist in the correction of Britain's ageing population.

Graph 2
Old Age Dependency Rate



Source: Haque, 2002

In terms of labour market performance, my research (Demireva, forthcoming) based on combined 1998-2005 LFS datasets shows that Central and Eastern Europeans are concentrated in skilled manual and low-skilled work. Both groups, however, experience high levels of penalization in terms of their participation rates. In terms of access to Professional positions, the disadvantage of Eastern Europeans disappears after control for education; but EU10 migrants remain continuously penalized. Perhaps, this could be explained with the fall of work permits for EU10 migrants. Under the operation of the Work Permit Scheme, a small proportion of highly qualified migrants are recruited for professional jobs and the rest are recruited for low-paid sector-based or seasonal work. Thus, a pre-selection of the quality level of migrants exists, which translates into a lower disadvantage as to salariat jobs of the work permit holders but over-representation of skilled workers into unqualified positions with little opportunity for social mobility as there are no Intermediate vacancies.

How can the disadvantage of permit-exempted migrants be stronger? According to data from the Accession Monitoring Report of the Home Office for 2004-2006, most EU10 migrants are employed in relatively low-skilled seasonal jobs with great turnover (Accession Monitoring Report, 2004-2006). If indeed EU10 migrants perceive their stay as temporary they might be reluctant to invest in host country specific capital and prefer short-term work with quick returns using the labour market in their home countries as 'a primary frame of reference' (Piore, 1979). More research is, of course, needed on this topic and a comparison of the performance of Central and Eastern European migrants before and after accession to the EU can be very interesting and important for the understanding of the work permit policies and their influence in the labour market.

In addition, special attention should be paid to self-employment. Both men and women from EU10 countries, Eastern Europe, Old Commonwealth and Old migrants have greater odds than UK-born Whites to be self-employed rather than have an unqualified job with control for individual characteristics (Demireva, forthcoming). Interestingly, New Commonwealth men and migrants from Hong Kong, China and Japan, who are traditionally associated with self-employment amongst the older migrant cohorts, have lower odds of being independent entrepreneurs than UK-born Whites¹³. Perhaps, this is a result of a saturation effect for Commonwealth and Chinese entrepreneurs in the Distributive sector while new opportunities for self-employment open in Construction

predominated by EU10 and Eastern European migrants (Ruhs, 2006). What is more, the disadvantage against New Commonwealth and Chinese migrants (who have arrived after 1990) in the mainstream labour market is lower than the penalization of Central and Eastern European migrants as evident from their participation and employment patterns, and self-employment has always been associated with the more disadvantaged groups (Clark and Drinkwater, 1998). Finally, recent studies have implied that self-employment has been used by Central and Eastern Europeans as a way of circumventing the complicated procedure of applying for a work permit as the rates of self-employment are very high for both men and women in these groups, and many self-employers in Construction are in their turn sub-contracting (Ruhs, 2006).

Although these thriving forms of dependent self-employment have brought increased flexibility to the labour market and benefits for the British economy, the uncertainty in pay, working hours and conditions associated with them make their practice and perpetuation questionable (Boheim and Muehlberger, 2006). The issue should be studied in greater detail as dependent self-employment shows all signs of becoming the future migrant labour market niche, especially if migrant turnover increases.

The next 20 years

On the basis of the heretofore outlined patterns in migration and the incorporation of minority members into the British labour market and society in general, it is likely that over the next 20 years, three major trends will be observed.

First, minority groups will have strengthened their participation in decision-making processes due to a growing representation in authority structures. The ever-expanding size of first and second generation minority communities and their importance for the British economy is, of course, not only a matter of debate in the Home Office, but also within the minority groups; with both the realization of their role in civic society and sensitivity towards social and economic inequality on the rise (Edwards, 1995). This certainly reflects upon the improvement of the minorities' position in government and local authorities and the described momentum will become a major driving force for changes in the future. For example, according to the annual Race Equality Report for 2008, the Home Office made good progress on the representation of ethnic minority staff, with particularly strong results for the representation of ethnic staff in London and Croydon as a whole (24%), the United Kingdom Border Agency (27.5%) and the Identity and Passport Service (13.6%). In terms of the progress made by ethnic minorities along the ranks of civil servants, in 2008 6% (4 out of 65) of Senior Civil Servants were from minority ethnic groupings¹⁴ (Race Equality Report, 2008). The increase in this representation and its extension to the local administration and councils in the future is high on the agenda of the Home Office (Race Equality Report, 2008) and even the need to achieve proportional representation of different minority groups instead of regarding them as one whole is gradually acknowledged and lobbied for (Field, 2002).

Thus, in 20 years time, I think we will have witnessed some serious steps towards the reduction of inequality, and an improvement in the labour market position of first and second generation minority members that will be largely due to active participation of the minority groups in the debate over, and the management of, the British policy. At the same time, I envisage certain tightening of the immigration controls. The failure to produce a homogenous immigrant flow through the '*Europeanization*' of the migrant waves even in terms of age structure will bring about the introduction of more severe requirements for work and settlement in the UK. English language fluency is most likely to be the first added requirement, especially given the warning signs and discussions in the press, and the unanimity of the general public opinion on the issue (BBC², 2007). Whereas, language barriers *per se* might pose less of a challenge in 20 years time with increased mobility and the presence of English in school curricula throughout the world,

the debate about the need of migrants to know English can easily expand into a debate about their knowledge of British culture and suitability to become part of British society. I do not think that the current tests accompanying the process of naturalization will be extended to the entry of migrants in 2028; however, in my opinion, the discussion about the imposition of such tests will be in full force at that moment. Again, I think all minority communities will take a very lively participation in this debate, which is exactly why the institutionalizing of the evaluation of 'Britishness' will not happen over night. Moreover, the role of tests in positive migrant selection (Independent, 2003) is likely to be one of the future's most contingent or at least most recurrent topics. On the other hand, these restricting measures will not be carried to extremes. For example, the imposing of absolute control over the age of prospective migrants even in 20 years time when the ageing of the British society will be felt much more explicitly, for me, remains unlikely given the predicted growth say of migrant communities in the decision-making processes.

Finally, in my opinion, vacancies in health, social services and low-skilled work will continue to afflict the British labour market of the future, which will trigger a persistent need for immigrant labour. In the health sector, particularly in the nursing and associate health professions, attempts will probably be made to raise the pay and improve the working conditions in order to encourage second generation minority members to fill the positions in which they are currently underrepresented (Field, 2002). Such practices can be instituted to placate the public fear of unethical recruitment of nurses and counteract the draining of source countries (Kingma, 2006). Yet, such positive trends are unlikely to extend to all vacancies. Negative selection of migrants and skill downgrading are still to be expected if divergence in the levels of income inequality in the source and host countries continues to exist and in more general terms manual labour is not superseded by automated labour.

Conclusion

With the British population rapidly ageing, there is a growing realization of the important role that both first and second generation ethnic minorities can play in demographic change. A great deal, however, depends upon the integration of the minority members and the reaching of parity between ethnic groups. This paper strived to show that to achieve integration the existence of differential social resources between ethnic groups should be acknowledged and programmes put in operation to correct these patterns rather than simply rely on the permeating force of the global cultural and labour market changes which will take place in the next few decades.

It could be argued that in the next 40 years, migration will not present a problem since new technologies and widespread education would guarantee the emergence of a more mobile, culturally integrated world. At the same time, many signs show that such predictions should be regarded with caution. The enlargement of the European Union is a case in point. Although research shows that migrants are centred in low-skilled and seasonal work that the British-born White have left vacant, a rise in the group size of White migrants made them more 'visible' and questioned their previously assumed homogeneity. Thus, the 'Europeanisation' of the migration waves still raised concerns about the integration and presence of migrants.

Recently, the Commission for Integration and Cohesion (BBC, 2008) pointed out that language is the single and largest barrier to the successful adaptation of minority members. Without belittling this important issue, it should be acknowledged as the present paper shows that the labour market penalties are high even for second generation minority members who have been raised and educated in Britain, and for Black Caribbean migrants. In addition, migrants are streamlined for jobs according to their skill levels – the highly-educated ones with good knowledge of English occupy professional positions and the rest are concentrated in low-skilled and semi-skilled work.

The unavailability of Intermediate positions indirectly guarantees that even better-qualified migrants end up with jobs at the end of the occupational hierarchy. In this way, the problem is not that the nature of White migration has changed from English-speaking Old Commonwealth countries and the US to Central and Eastern European migrants, but the mere existence of unqualified labour.

Moreover, as the living standards are bound to improve within the European Union in the next 40 to 50 years, the '*European*' migration wave especially for low-skilled work might shift further towards the East and even cease altogether. In which case, the negative selection of migrants is not guaranteed to disappear. A possible resolution of this situation would be to keep large migrant turnover for unskilled vacancies and further restrict settling. Yet, again, travelling distance and high migration costs will make such a decision impractical and in reality unattainable.

Building informed public opinion will also play a large role in the bridging of the gaps between the majority and minority populations. Currently, very little is known about return migration, and many of the temporary migrants are considered potential settlers which raises fears about housing, social services and general anti-migration feelings. However, the recent statistics (Office for National Statistics, 2008) showed that in mid-2007, natural change started playing a greater impact in population change and there was a decline in the net migration rate possibly due to greater return migration. The existing International Passenger Survey (Office for National Statistics, 2008) which records the purpose of stay of people entering the UK and their envisaged date of leaving the country is not enough for the patterns of return migration to be outlined. Likewise, more detailed analyses of the labour market performance of refugees are needed since on the basis of current knowledge, hardly any recommendations can be made about their future integration.

It is clear that a successful adaptation to Britain's ageing demographic structure cannot happen without ensuring the incorporation of the minority groups already settled in Britain and the extension of the principles of fair treatment to the incoming migration waves. In a way, both are likely to be achieved through the increasing efforts of minority communities to become better represented in public authorities and participate in the decision-making processes; and through the encouragement of research in previously unexplored areas. Nevertheless, migration, equality and inclusion are still very likely to be as hot and as debatable issues in 20 years time in Britain as they are today due to the gradual pace in which the labour market transformations in global as well as local plan take place.

Notes

1. Neli Demireva is a DPhil student in Sociology at the University of Oxford at the end of her studies. Her doctoral thesis is titled "Examining ethnic minority disadvantage in the British labour market – evidence from job search behaviour". In addition to her post-graduate research, she participated from 2006 till 2008 as a researcher in the Ethnicity and Immigration Research Group of the 'Economic Change, Quality of Life and Social Cohesion' (Equalsoc) Network with a specific focus on migrants arriving in the UK after the 1990s. For correspondence: Neli Demireva, St. John's College, Oxford, OX1 3JP, email: neli.demireva@sjc.ox.ac.uk

2. Bulmer (1996) defines ethnic groups as "*a collectivity within a larger population having real or putative ancestry, memories of a shared past, and a cultural focus upon one or more symbolic elements which define the group's identity, such as kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance. Members of an ethnic group are conscious of belonging to an ethnic group*" (Bulmer, 1996, p35). The term ethnic minority refers both to first and to second generation minority groups.

3. The term Old Commonwealth refers to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The major sending countries of the New Commonwealth are India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, Kenya and South Africa. For full list of Commonwealth states, see McIntyre, 2001. Old Commonwealth and New Commonwealth migrants constitute the largest immigrant groups both before and after 1990. Changes in their immigrant status, however, render the migrants from these communities arriving after the 1990s more similar to other labour migrants. Recent Pakistani migrants, for example, are also defined as aliens and therefore do not benefit from having special residence and work permits as some of the older colonial generation (Soysal, 1994).

4. Asylum and Immigration Act, 1996, [Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999](#), [Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, 2002](#), and most recently in the [Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act, 2006](#).

5. The SBS currently only applies to nationals from Bulgaria and Romania. The programme was scheduled to be phased out by 31 December 2006, but was retained for both nations upon their accession to the European Union on 01 January 2007.

6. The 1981 British Nationality Act introduced the primary purpose rule under which an immigration officer could deny entry to spouse or fiancée if the primary purpose of marriage was immigration.

7. The study is based on data from the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities and the Family and Working Lives Survey for 1994-1995.

8. Empirical economic studies can contribute little to enlighten this matter. At best, they provide only indirect evidence of discrimination by virtue of existing differentials in the wage and occupational achievements of British-born Whites and ethnic minority members. These differentials can in addition be attributed to a number of factors beside discrimination such as the aforementioned strength of social networks or degree of adaptation to the host country. Amongst the quantitative attempts at more direct evidence of discrimination, the studies using matched employer-employee data should be highlighted. Frijters et al (2006), on the basis of data from the Workplace Employee Relations Survey, showed that job satisfaction was significantly lower for White workers in workplaces with a high density of ethnic minorities, and that White male workers required a wage premium of around 12% to compensate for a move from a work place

with no ethnic minorities to a work place with a higher density of ethnic minorities (Frijters et al, 2006).

9. The term ethnic penalty has been introduced to account for "*any remaining disparity that persists in ethnic minorities' chances of securing employment or higher-level jobs, or income, after taking account of their measured personal characteristics such as their qualifications, human capital and the like*" (Heath and Yu, 2005, p192).

10. Patterns inconsistent with discrimination used as the sole explanation of ethnic penalization are the similar level of self-reported discrimination amongst minorities with various group economic successes (Modood et al, 1997) and the stable-over-time proportion of British-born White employers who are likely to commit basic acts of discrimination (Brown and Gay, 1994; Simpson and Stevenson, 1994). An example for the first is the particularly low level of self-reported discrimination amongst Bangladeshis – the group pointed out by all other ethnic and religious minority groups as most vulnerable – in contrast to the relatively higher perception of discrimination on the part of Indians (Modood et al, 1997). The second trend is not inconsistent with rising awareness of discrimination in the society in general and in the media discourse that will possibly lead to a situation in which the knowledge of existing discrimination outstrips the actual experience of it (Modood et al, 1997).

11. According to Portes (1995), the term social resources could be used in economic sociology to denote both the referral to the social and often co-ethnic networks available to the minority members but also to the use of the institutional settings of the host country.

12. Bonding social capital refers to relationships between similar persons (for example, those alike with respect to sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics), while bridging social capital refers to relationships between dissimilar persons at the same level of hierarchy (Putnam 1995).

13. The sample consists of 1998-2008 datasets. The New Commonwealth migrants referred to have arrived in Britain after the 1990s.

14. Although it should be borne in mind that only 65 out of 118 Senior Civil Servants acknowledged their ethnicity.

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