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# The social and economic circumstances of mixed ethnicity children in the UK: Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study

Lidia Panico, James Nazroo

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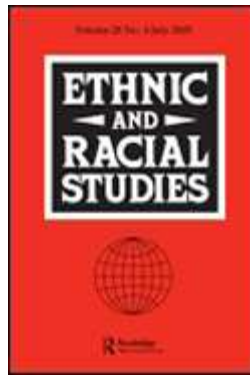
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**The social and economic circumstances of mixed ethnicity children in the UK: Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study**

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35 **Panico, L. (1)\* and Nazroo, J. (2)**  
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39 **(1) Department for Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London**  
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42 **(2) Cathie Marsh Centre for Social Research, School of Social Sciences, University**  
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44 **of Manchester**  
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46 **\* Corresponding author**  
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## Abstract

The number of people with a “mixed” ethnicity heritage is growing in contemporary Britain. Research in this area has largely focussed on implications for cultural and racialised identities, and little is known about associated economic and social factors. Data from the Millennium Cohort Study, a representative panel survey of children born in 2000/2001, are used to examine the circumstances of mixed ethnicity children in comparison with their non-mixed and white counterparts. Findings suggest a cultural location between ‘white’ and minority identities, and socioeconomic advantage in comparison with non-mixed counterparts. For example, households of non-mixed white children had poorer economic profiles than households of both mixed white and mixed Indian children. This effect is associated with the presence of a white parent, and the factors underlying it are examined. Although the statistical approach used bypasses a consideration of the dynamics of identity, it provides important evidence on stratification and inequality, and the factors driving this.

Keywords: mixed ethnicity; children; household, demographic and socioeconomic characteristics; inequality; Millennium Cohort Study

## Introduction

In the 2001 UK Census, where a series of “mixed ethnicity” options were offered for the first time, 1.2 per cent of the total population classified themselves as “mixed” (Office for National Statistics, 2005a). The more detailed set of categories available for England and Wales revealed that of those who chose a mixed group, 36 per cent chose a white and Black Caribbean option, 29 per cent chose a white and Asian option, 12 per cent chose a white and Black African option, and 24 per cent chose an “other” option. The mixed ethnic groups have a young age structure; over half are under the age of 16, compared with 20 per cent of the general population (Office for National Statistics, 2005a). Indeed, at the 2001 Census five per cent of all children under five were allocated into mixed ethnic categories (Owen, 2005). The young age of the “mixed ethnicity” population reflects a fast growing population. Projections based on the 2001 UK Census have the “mixed ethnicity” group as the fastest growing ethnic group in the next two decades (Rees, 2008, Coleman and Smith, 2005).

This trend is paralleled by a rise in couples containing individuals of different ethnic backgrounds. “Mixed marriages” made up two per cent of all marriages recorded in the 2001 Census in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2005a). A more recent analysis suggested that they make up seven per cent of marriages or cohabiting partnerships (Platt, 2009). This is a large number, only nine per cent of the population of England and Wales were recorded in a non-white category at the 2001 Census. The Census data (Bradford, 2006) show that the most common inter-ethnic marriages, excluding cohabitations, are between white and mixed ethnicity people (26 per cent), followed by those between a white person and someone from the “Other” ethnic group (15 per cent), then white and Black Caribbean (12 per cent), and white and Indian marriages (11 per cent). Patterns for cohabiting

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3 relationships could, however, differ. A particularly high proportion of those in certain ethnic  
4 groups are married to someone outside their ethnic group, for example 48 per cent of Other  
5 Black men, and 29 per cent of Black Caribbean men are married to someone outside of a  
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8 “Black” ethnic group (mostly white women) (Office for National Statistics, 2005b), and 50  
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10 per cent of British born Black Caribbean men who are married or cohabiting have a White  
11 partner (Berthoud, 2000). Although the percentages reported in Platt’s analysis of the Labour  
12 Force Survey are higher – they include cohabitations as well as marriages – the general  
13 pattern is the same (Platt, 2009).  
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25 Despite these trends, the demographic, economic and social characteristics of “mixed  
26 ethnicity” populations in the UK have only been investigated to a limited extent. This is  
27 partly a consequence of data limitations, particularly until the most recent (2001) Census  
28 cycle; and in part a consequence of a public discourse where people of “mixed ethnicity” are  
29 usually understood and referred to by their non-White ethnicity (Kessel, 2006, Burdsey,  
30 2004). So, Barack Obama is often described as being the first US “Black President”, although  
31 he mostly lived with his white family, and footballer Ashley Cole, who was mostly brought  
32 up by his white mother in a predominately white environment and calls himself “mixed race”,  
33 is also usually referred to as “Black” (Kessel, 2006). While coverage of “mixed race” issues  
34 is increasing, particularly in the “quality” press and through TV documentaries and radio  
35 shows, those that do not focus on ethnicity/race per se tend to ignore a person’s mixed  
36 background.  
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55 Where research has been conducted on mixed ethnicity in the UK it has generally focussed  
56 on issues regarding the self-identity of those of “mixed ethnicity”, experiences of racism and  
57 of “mixed” marriages, using predominantly qualitative methods (Ifekwunigwe, 1999 and  
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3 2004, Katz, 1996, Tizard and Phoenix, 2001, Ali, 2003). These studies illustrate how  
4 individuals of mixed ethnicity and couples from different ethnic backgrounds have difficulty  
5 laying claim to 'authentic' ethnic identities, face distrust and suspicion from both "sides", and  
6 may experience more racial abuse than their non-mixed minority peers (Parker and Song,  
7 2001). Such experiences are often discussed in terms of 'new' or hybrid ethnicities, and the  
8 challenges mixed ethnicity poses for traditional conceptions of ethnicity and race, for  
9 example illustrating how cultural identities are actively constructed from a range of choices,  
10 rather than merely inherited. They have also been inferred to indicate a location 'between'  
11 two ethnic groups.  
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27 This is a position that has also guided statistical analyses of data from the 2001 Census and  
28 more recent surveys that have adopted the Census classification, with analysts explicitly  
29 asking whether people of "mixed ethnicity" have characteristics that are somewhere between  
30 those of their parents' ethnic groups. Implicit in this approach is both a reification and  
31 essentialisation of ethnic categories, which we return later. Nevertheless, it is worth briefly  
32 summarising findings from recent statistical analyses of the circumstance of "mixed  
33 ethnicity" people.  
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46 Such analyses are limited to the categories available in the data, of course, meaning a focus  
47 on four broad groups: white and Asian, white and Black Caribbean, white and Black African,  
48 and other mixed. Beyond demographic factors, summarised above, much of the analysis has  
49 focused on socioeconomic circumstances. Findings (Bradford, 2006) have shown that the  
50 proportion of people with Mixed White and Asian ethnicities in a managerial or professional  
51 occupation (30 per cent) was higher than the proportion among the White British group (27  
52 per cent). In contrast, the Mixed White and Black Caribbean group had fewer people in  
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3 managerial and professional occupations than both the Black Caribbean and White British  
4 groups (20 per cent compared with 25 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively). Men with  
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6 Mixed ethnic backgrounds had the second highest unemployment rate in Great Britain (after  
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8 Bangladeshi men), at 17 per cent, and women in this group also had a relatively high  
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10 unemployment rate, at around 12 per cent, three times the rate for White British women.  
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12 These unemployment rates were highest for the Mixed White and Black Caribbean group,  
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14 followed by the Mixed White and Black African group. It is suggested that part of the  
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16 explanation for these high unemployment rates lies with the young age profiles of the Mixed  
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18 ethnic groups. The relative disadvantage of the Mixed White and Black Caribbean group is  
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20 also shown in education: they are the only mixed group to have a lower proportion with a  
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22 higher qualification than the general population.  
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32 This brief summary shows both the limited nature of current statistical analyses of the  
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34 circumstances of people of “mixed ethnicity”, and how the categorisation of “mixed  
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36 ethnicity” is often vague or too heterogeneous in such data. For example, “mixed” groups are  
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38 presented as one, or grouped as South Asian Mixed or Black Mixed. In many analyses  
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40 “Mixed ethnicity” is included as an additional, largely unexplored, ethnic category. Such  
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42 analyses are also largely descriptive. To begin to rectify these problems, we explore the  
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44 characteristics of “mixed ethnicity” children using data from the Millennium Cohort Study  
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46 (MCS), a nationally-representative sample of children and their parents born in the UK  
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48 between October 2000 and September 2001. The MCS is a rich data set, which allows us to  
49  
50 describe the social, economic, cultural and demographic situation of a particular generation of  
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52 “mixed ethnicity” children.  
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## Methods



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6 *The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)*  
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8 The MCS sample was drawn from children born in the UK during a 12-month period from  
9 2000 to 2001. As the parents are all recent parents and therefore of similar ages, age  
10 standardisation is less of an issue with the MCS than other studies described above.  
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12 Households included in the study were identified through the Department of Work and  
13 Pensions Child Benefit system and selected on the basis of where the family was resident  
14 shortly after the child's birth. Uptake of Child Benefit is almost universal (98 per cent). The  
15 sample has a probability design and is clustered at the electoral ward level, with  
16 disadvantaged residential areas and areas with a high proportion of ethnic minority people  
17 over represented. A ward was considered as a high proportion of ethnic minority population  
18 if at the 1991 UK Census over 30% of the population was classed as Black or Asian. A ward  
19 was considered disadvantaged if it was not classed as a ward with a high proportion of ethnic  
20 minority population and was in the poorest 25% wards based on the Child Poverty Index.  
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22 18,553 households participated in the initial survey, an overall response rate of 68 per cent.  
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41 The analyses presented here use data from the first sweep of interviews, carried out when the  
42 cohort member was aged approximately nine months. In addition, we use the second sweep  
43 of interviews, with a total sample size of 15,307, to analyse parental migration status. The  
44 main respondent was the mother in 98 per cent of cases; information from their co-resident  
45 partners was also collected in a separate interview where possible. Almost all parents  
46 interviewed at sweep 1 were the natural parents. When the mother could not understand or  
47 speak English, the resident father was asked to be the main respondent. If neither of the  
48 resident parents could undertake the interview in English, another household member above  
49 the age of sixteen was asked to translate. If this was not possible, a translator was used with  
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3 the mother as the main respondent. In total, the main respondent was the father in only 29  
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5 households, all of which were lone parent households headed by the father.  
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### 10 *Ethnic categories*

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12 During the interview, 2001 UK Census questions and categories were used to classify the  
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14 ethnic background of the cohort member and others living in the household. In this paper the  
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16 child's ethnicity was categorised as "mixed" if the main respondent chose one of the "mixed"  
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18 Census categories for the child, or if the Census categories for his or her natural parents were  
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20 different. If the main respondent chose a "mixed" ethnic category for the child, but the  
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22 categories of child's natural parents were the same, we reclassified the child according to the  
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24 parents' ethnicity. This was mostly done to correct coding errors. To help us code the child's  
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26 ethnicity, we used the non-resident father's ethnicity where this was available. The child of  
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28 two mixed parents would also be classed as mixed. In total, we re-classified the ethnicity of  
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30 512 children, or 2.8% of the sample. Of those children, 377 were re-classified as mixed and  
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32 135 as non-mixed. Our approach to re-classification reflected our focus on mixed ethnic  
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34 heritage, rather than a respondent's perception and experience of (mixed) ethnic identity. We  
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36 return to this in the discussion. Re-classified children were slightly more likely to live in poor  
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38 households, but came from households with similar occupational and educational  
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40 backgrounds to others.  
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51 Ethnic categories used for analysis are: White, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black  
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53 Caribbean, and Black African, and their "mixed" counterparts. (The White Mixed group is  
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55 made up of children whose parents are from different White backgrounds, for example, a  
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57 White Mixed child might have a White European mother and a White British father.)  
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59 Therefore we use a more detailed classification than the Census "mixed" categories of: White  
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3 and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and Other mixed. While  
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5 the 'Black Other' group is not separately analysed, we included British-born children of  
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7 Caribbean origin in the 'Black Caribbean' group if they were originally classed in the 'Black  
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9 Other' group. Where a mixed child had two minority ethnicity parents, she/he was assigned  
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11 to the mother's ethnicity (for example, a child with a Pakistani father and an Indian mother  
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13 would be assigned to the Indian mixed group). These rules were followed across all ethnic  
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15 groups. Other groups, such as Chinese mixed children, were not large enough to be analysed  
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17 separately, possibly because the clustered nature of the survey sampling scheme did not  
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19 oversample those who do not live in ethnically dense areas  
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27 As shown in Table 1, the Black Caribbean group has a high proportion of re-classifications.  
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29 This may be because the categories commonly used in quantitative analysis may not capture  
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31 sufficient detail on Caribbean ethnicities.  
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36 Our analyses compare the characteristics of mixed ethnicity cohort members with those of  
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38 their non-mixed counterparts and the White non-mixed cohort members (for example, the  
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40 Indian mixed group will be compared with the Indian non-mixed and the White group).  
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#### 46 *Socio-demographic circumstances*

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51 To describe and compare the family circumstances of mixed ethnicity children, we look at a  
52  
53 variety of economic, social, demographic and cultural indicators, as detailed below.  
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57 Total annual household income was collected using a showcard with banded categories. We  
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59 use the following categories: <£10,400, £10,400-£20,800, £20,801-£31,200, £31,201-  
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3 £52,000, >£52,000, and 'refusal/don't know' for descriptive analysis. We also calculated an  
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equivalised household measure to account for household size and composition. To construct this variable we used the modified OECD equivalence scale (Haagenaars et al., 1994). The first adult in the household was assigned a weight of 1 point, each additional person over 15 years is allocated 0.5 points, and each child 0.3 points. Equivalised household income is derived by dividing household income by a factor equal to the sum of the equivalence points allocated to the household. We base the construction of the equivalised income measure on an income variable with narrower bands than the variable presented in this paper.

Occupational class was classified using the 5-category National Statistics Social and Economic Classification, which distinguishes: managerial and professional, intermediate, small employer and self employed, supervisory and technical, and semi-routine and routine. We use the most advantaged occupational class in the household. We consider work status for mothers and, where they reside in the household, fathers. Households are classified according to whether the mother is, in paid work, and, for two-parent households, whether the father is in paid work and whether both parents are in paid work. Educational qualifications are reclassified into NVQ levels 1 to 5, overseas qualifications and having no qualification. The peak level of qualification in the household is used. Housing tenure is classified into owner, private renter, public renter and other. Two markers of housing quality, damp housing and overcrowded housing, are used.

In addition to these socioeconomic measures, we consider a range of demographic and cultural characteristics. These include: age of the mother at the birth of the cohort member, lone parenthood, whether a grandparent lives in the household, number of children in the household, the language spoken at home (English only, English and another language,

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3 another language only), whether the interview with the main respondent was translated from  
4 English, whether a parent is religious (for two parent households whether both parents are  
5 religious), and maternal generation (first, second, third or more). By “first generation” we  
6 mean mother who were born abroad themselves, and by “second generation” we mean a  
7 British born mother with one or both parents born abroad.  
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18 It is worth noting that these variables may describe different things for different individuals  
19 and groups. For example, while grandparents living in the household may be a sign of  
20 cultural tradition for some, for others it may be a sign of economic need.  
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### 27 *Statistical analysis*

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29 The analyses we present compare the socio-demographic characteristics of mixed ethnicity  
30 cohort members with those of their non-mixed counterparts and the White non-mixed cohort  
31 members using cross-tabulations. We use interval regression to model income differences and  
32 the factors that might explain income differences for mixed categories with sufficient sample  
33 sizes. Interval regression allows us to take into account the interval nature of income in MCS,  
34 as well as its non-normal distribution, as it take into consideration the uncertainty concerning  
35 the exact value within each interval.  
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48 All analyses were carried out using Stata 9.2 (STATA Corporation, 2006). Analyses are  
49 based on cases with complete data on all variables using methods which take into account the  
50 clustered sample design as well as the over-representation of wards that were disadvantaged  
51 and had a high concentration of ethnic minority people. Adding weights did not make  
52 substantive differences to the results.  
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## Results

### *Descriptive findings*

Overall, 7 per cent of cohort members were of “mixed” ethnicity, as were 22 per cent of non-White children (Table 1). 49.8 per cent of Black Caribbean children, 20.6 per cent of Black African children, 15.5 per cent of Indian children, 6.7 per cent of Pakistani children and 5.5 per cent of Bangladeshi children had a mixed ethnicity background. The small number of mixed ethnicity Bangladeshi babies (only 21) means that findings for this group should be treated with great caution. We do include them in the tables for information, but do not discuss them further.

The ethnic patterning of the income distribution of households without a mixed ethnicity baby followed the expected pattern, with the white and Indian groups better off than other groups (Table 2). White households are also more advantaged than households with a non-white mixed ethnicity baby, except for the mixed Indian group. Indeed, this group has the highest income profile. Comparisons between the mixed and non-mixed cohort members show that those of mixed ethnicity were likely to be in better-off households than their non-mixed counterparts. For example, for the mixed white, mixed Indian and mixed Caribbean children 38.4 per cent, 48.2 per cent and 18 per cent were in households with an income above £31,200 respectively, compared with 23.9 per cent, 20 per cent and 8 per cent of their non-mixed counterparts. This is reflected in the mean equivalised income figures, which in each case was higher for the mixed ethnicity children’s households.

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3 In line with the findings for income, the households of mixed ethnicity children were more  
4 likely to be in higher occupational classes than their non-mixed counterparts (Table 2). This  
5 was particularly the case for the white and Indian groups, where almost three quarters of the  
6 mixed ethnicity children were in managerial or professional households, compared with a  
7 little under half of their non-mixed counterparts.  
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17 The pattern for employment levels was less clearly differentiated between the parents of  
18 mixed and non-mixed children. On the whole, fathers of mixed and non-mixed children were  
19 just as likely as each other to be in paid work, although for Caribbean children fathers of  
20 mixed children were more likely to be in work (84.3 per cent compared with 74.2 per cent).  
21 Differences between mothers of mixed and non-mixed babies were particularly marked for  
22 the Indian and Pakistani groups, with mothers of mixed babies being much more likely to be  
23 in paid work (60.9 per cent versus 46.1 per cent and 26.7 per cent versus 13.3 per cent for  
24 Indian and Pakistani children respectively), but not large for the other groups. The findings  
25 for having two parents in work broadly reflected those for having a mother in paid work,  
26 while those for having no parent in work broadly reflected those for having a father in paid  
27 work, except in the case of white and Caribbean children (both more likely than others to  
28 come from lone parent households) where mixed ethnicity children were much less likely to  
29 be in 'workless' households.  
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51 Continuing on the theme of socioeconomic advantage, across all groups households with a  
52 mixed ethnicity child were more likely to hold a formal educational qualification than their  
53 non-mixed counterparts for all but the Black Caribbean and Black African groups, and were  
54 also more likely to hold British qualifications (see Table 2).  
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3 Table 2 shows that, with the exception of the Pakistani group, households with a mixed  
4 ethnicity child were more likely to own their homes. This was particularly the case for the  
5 Black Caribbean group. Households with a mixed ethnicity child were also more likely to  
6 rent privately (the white group are the exception to this) and less likely to rent from the  
7 council or a housing association (the Indian and the Pakistani groups are the exception).  
8 Across all groups, households with a mixed ethnicity child were less likely to live with  
9 parents or in another rent-free arrangement. For one marker of the quality of accommodation  
10 – damp housing – there was little difference between households with a mixed and non-  
11 mixed child, except for the Black Caribbean group where households with a non-mixed child  
12 had much higher rates of damp than those with a mixed child. For overcrowded housing,  
13 differences were present for the Indian, Pakistani and Black African groups, where those with  
14 a non-mixed child had much higher rates than those with a mixed child.  
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34 Table 3 show findings for a series of demographic and cultural variables. Data on mean and  
35 median age of the mother at the birth of the child shows that mothers of mixed ethnicity  
36 children were on average older for the white and South Asian groups, and slightly younger  
37 for the two Black groups. This data does not, of course, reveal the full spread of ages. To do  
38 so, figures 1 and 2 compare the distribution of age at birth by ethnicity for mothers between  
39 white non-mixed mothers and mothers of non-mixed minority children (Figure 1) and  
40 mothers of mixed children (Figure 2). For non-mixed children there appears to be three  
41 distributions: younger mothers (for Pakistani, Bangladeshi and, to a lesser extent, Indian  
42 mothers), older mothers (for white and Black African groups) and a wider spread of ages (for  
43 Black Caribbean mothers). For mothers of non-white mixed-ethnicity children the  
44 distribution is more similar across ethnic groups. Not shown in the figures is that the mothers  
45 of mixed-white children have a slightly older age distribution than the other groups.  
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6 Regarding household structure, Table 3 shows that for most ethnic groups lone parent  
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8 households were more common for non-mixed children, although this was not the case for  
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10 the Indian group (where lone parenthood was rarer). Similarly, households with non-mixed  
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12 babies were more likely to have a grandparent in the household than those with mixed babies.  
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14 This difference was particularly large for the Indian group. And households with a non-mixed  
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16 child had on average more children than those with a mixed child, except for Black  
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18 Caribbean households where numbers of children were very similar for those with and  
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20 without a mixed child.  
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27 For the non-white ethnic groups, mixed ethnicity cohort members were more likely to have a  
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29 British-born mother than their non-mixed counterparts, and even more likely to have a third  
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31 generation mother (Table 3). For example, just over three-quarters (75.9 per cent) of mixed  
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33 ethnicity Black Caribbean children had a third generation or higher mother, compared with  
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35 under one-fifth (17.5 per cent) of their non-mixed counterparts. Non-white ethnic minority  
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37 respondents with a non-mixed child were more likely to have had an interview requiring  
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39 translation, and were more likely to speak a language other than English in the home, except  
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41 in the case of the Black Caribbean group. Non-mixed non-white ethnic minority children  
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43 were also more likely to have one, or both, parents reported as religious than their mixed  
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45 counterparts.  
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### 53 *Explanatory analysis*

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58 Having described differences between the households of mixed and non-mixed children in  
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60 different ethnic groups across a number of dimensions, we now present statistical models

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3 designed to help us understand the drivers of these differences. For the first set of models we  
4 take annual income as a proximal marker of socioeconomic status and economic well-being,  
5  
6 and identify the factors that contribute to the income differences reported in Table 2. For this  
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8 analysis we focus on the White, Indian and the Black Caribbean groups, because these  
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10 samples have a sufficiently large proportion of mixed ethnicity babies. Models compare non-  
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12 equivalised household income in Indian and Black Caribbean households with a mixed and  
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14 non-mixed child, and white households with a mixed child, with white households with a  
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16 non-mixed child. They then compare households with a mixed child with those without a  
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18 mixed child in the Indian and Black Caribbean groups.  
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27 Findings of this analysis are shown in Table 4. Each column of Table 4 is a separate, single  
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29 model. The initial column reports differences in mean annual income without taking into  
30  
31 account differences in the characteristics of the groups. Subsequent columns show differences  
32  
33 in income after taking into account one of a range of characteristics (generation, education,  
34  
35 lone parenthood and language spoken at home) that might contribute to differences in income  
36  
37 across groups – so the difference between the figures shown in one of these columns  
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39 compared with the first column shows the contribution of that factor to the differences in  
40  
41 income for the compared ethnic groups. And the final column takes into account all of the  
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43 previous factors to show the contribution they jointly make to differences in income across  
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45 the compared ethnic groups.  
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53 Households with a mixed child have a significantly greater annual income than their non-  
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55 mixed counterparts; the difference within the white group is £6,933, within the Indian group  
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57 £11,227 and within the Caribbean group £5,463. In comparison with white households with a  
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59 non-mixed child, Indian households with a mixed child have a similarly greater annual  
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3 income (£8,683), which the adjusted models suggest in part reflects: the income advantage of  
4 those in this group with mothers who were not born in the UK; differences in education level;  
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6 and, to a lesser extent lower rates of lone parenthood and, perhaps surprisingly, the use of  
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8 languages other than English in the home. Once all of these factors are taken into account, the  
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10 advantage of Indian households with a mixed child compared with the non-mixed white  
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12 group is reduced considerably (down to a statistically non-significant figure of £3,289),  
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14 although the advantage in comparison with the Indian non-mixed group remains.  
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22 In comparison with white households with a non-mixed child, Black Caribbean households  
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24 with a mixed child have a smaller annual income (£4,141 less), which in part reflects  
25  
26 differences in education level and higher rates of lone parenthood. Once all factors are taken  
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28 into account, the disadvantage of Black Caribbean households with a mixed child is reduced  
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30 considerably (down to a statistically non-significant figure of £1,207). In addition, once these  
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32 factors are taken into account the advantage of Black Caribbean households with a mixed  
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34 child in comparison with their non-mixed counterparts also reduces considerably (from  
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36 £5,463 to £2990), although remains statistically significant.  
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43 The income advantage of white households with a mixed child in comparison with their non-  
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45 mixed counterparts also appears to be partly explained by differences in education and lone  
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47 parenthood, although as for the Indian group there is also an advantage carried by first  
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49 generation migrants. Indeed, for the Black Caribbean and, particularly, Indian households  
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51 with a non-mixed child the advantage carried by first generation migrant mothers is also  
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53 apparent, and for the Indian group this suggests a particular disadvantage for second and  
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55 subsequent generation mothers who have non-mixed children. More generally, for these  
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57 groups the impact of education differences (higher education levels for the Indian and lower  
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3 for the Black Caribbean, compared with the white, group), and lone parenthood (with a  
4 particularly large impact for the Black Caribbean group), are similar to those for other  
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6 groups.  
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12 The final step of our analysis is to explore how far observed differences relate to having a  
13 white British parent. For these analyses we compare socioeconomic markers for white  
14 households with a non-mixed child, with those for Indian and Black Caribbean households  
15 with a mixed child with and without a white British parent. 73 per cent of the mixed Black  
16 Caribbean cohort members have a White British parent, while in the other mixed groups  
17 around half have a White British parent. The White British parent is usually the mother (72  
18 per cent). Findings, shown in Table 5, indicate that much of the socioeconomic advantage for  
19 households with a mixed child is only present when one parent is white British, although  
20 differences for the Black Caribbean group are smaller than for the Indian group. For the  
21 Indian group with a mixed child, those with a white British parent have a markedly better  
22 socioeconomic profile than the white group, while those without a white British parent have a  
23 profile that is only slightly better than the white group. For the Black Caribbean group, the  
24 socioeconomic profile of those with a white British parent is very similar to that of the white  
25 group, while those without a white British parent is much worse. We investigated whether  
26 having a White mother or a White father was more important, however, our sample was not  
27 large enough to provide statistical power for these analyses.  
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## 51 52 53 **Discussion**

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57 Overall, seven per cent of this nationally-representative sample of babies born in 2000-2001  
58 were of mixed ethnicity. Taking into account the younger age of our sample, this is  
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3 comparable to the five per cent of all children under 5 classed as “mixed” by the 2001  
4 Census. However, because of the classification criteria that we use, we potentially  
5 underestimate the proportion of “mixed ethnicity” children in groups with high rates of one-  
6 parent households, such as the Black Caribbean group. When both natural parents were  
7 interviewed we re-classified the ethnicity of cohort members as mixed if the parents did not  
8 have the same ethnicity, but of course could not do so in one parent households, as the non-  
9 resident partner’s ethnicity was not collected. Similarly, we reclassified as not-mixed those  
10 children who were identified as mixed but appeared to have two natural parents of the same  
11 ethnicity. This indicates a particular tension in the kind of analysis offered here, we treat  
12 ethnicity, and being “mixed”, as an objective descriptive phenomenon, rather than as a  
13 subjective identity and experience. Having clear and consistent categorisations, such as those  
14 used in this paper, fits with the statistical approach we have taken, and over-riding subjective  
15 choices with our classification approach makes little difference to the statistical conclusions  
16 we reach. But it does have implications for how we conceptualise ethnicity and being  
17 “mixed”, something to which we return shortly. First, we summarise the main findings in the  
18 paper.

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43 The analyses we present consistently show the socioeconomic advantage of households with  
44 a mixed child compared with their ethnic counterparts with a non-mixed child for this  
45 specific age cohort. Large differences are present for income, occupational class, mothers’  
46 participation in paid work, education level, housing tenure and overcrowded housing. This  
47 advantage is present across all ethnic groups studied, including the white group. For the non-  
48 white groups we also show that much of this economic advantage is only present if one of the  
49 parents of the mixed ethnicity child is white. Multivariate analyses to model income  
50 differences show that the relative advantage of mixed ethnicity children appears to come  
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3 from a combination of the distribution of four characteristics – migrant generation, parental  
4 education level, lone parenthood, and language spoken in the home.  
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10 A finding that is perhaps unexpected is that households of ‘mixed’ children do not  
11 consistently have socioeconomic characteristics somewhere between the households of their  
12 non-mixed counterparts and those of white children. Being ‘between’ is the case for the  
13 poorer than average Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani households, but it is not  
14 for the richer Indian group. For the Indian group, the profile of non-mixed cohort members is  
15 similar to that of non-mixed white children, while that of mixed Indian cohort members is  
16 considerably better. Rather than the mixed ethnic minority cohort member being somehow  
17 between non-mixed and white, the findings reported here are better characterised as  
18 indicating an improved socioeconomic position for mixed groups, including white, compared  
19 with their non-mixed counterparts. It is not clear how far this is a consequence of selection –  
20 non-white ethnic minority people in a better socioeconomic position being more likely to  
21 partner a white person, and white British people in a better socioeconomic position being  
22 more likely to partner a white minority person – as well as a consequence of the advantage  
23 brought by the white person to the mixed partnership.  
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46 In contrast, findings for demographic and cultural measures (age of mother at birth of the  
47 child, lone parenthood, having grandparents in the household, mother’s generation, using  
48 languages other than English, and religiosity) suggest that households with a mixed ethnicity  
49 cohort member begin to approximate the characteristics of white households – that is, for  
50 these measures mixed ethnicity cohort members do sit somewhere between their non-mixed  
51 counterparts and white people. Here, perhaps we are seeing two processes, one where shifts  
52 in behaviours, attitudes and expectations lead to shifts in cultural forms that are reflected in  
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3 these demographic and cultural measures, and one where ethnic mixing reflects social  
4 selection, social mobility and processes of stratification that cut across ethnic categories. This  
5 indicates a need to consider (“mixed”) ethnicity in terms of both class/stratification processes  
6 and identity processes, and while the kind of analysis presented here offers some insight for  
7 the former, it says little about the latter.  
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17 A recognition of the need to consider ethnicity in terms of social and personal identities  
18 indicates the need to reject the reified and essentialist approach that is often implicit in  
19 statistical analyses – that the ethnic categories used are in some sense natural and clearly  
20 bounded and that the characteristics measured (income, employment, health, crime, etc.) are  
21 core attributes of the group described. As we indicated earlier, a focus on “mixed ethnic”  
22 groups carries the potential to further reify and essentialise ethnicity, particularly given the  
23 approach adopted in the UK where the “mixed” are labelled along racial lines and considered  
24 as somehow being between their “origin” groups – rather than reflecting the possibility for  
25 “new” hybridised identities, the implication is of the biological mixing of ‘pure’ categories  
26 (Aspinall, 2003). This is also, in part, a consequence of traditional approaches to defining, or  
27 understanding ethnic group membership, and the limitations such approaches have for  
28 understanding new, hybrid, and mixed identities in globalised, late modern, nations. For  
29 example, in a volume discussing data from the 1991 UK Census, (Bulmer, 1996) says:  
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51 An ethnic group is a collectivity within a larger population having real or  
52 putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past, and a cultural focus  
53 upon one or more symbolic elements which define the group’s identity, such  
54 as kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical  
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3 appearance. Members of an ethnic group are conscious of belonging to an  
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5 ethnic group  
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8 (pg. 35)  
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10 Qualitative, ethnographic, research has shown how such approaches fail to incorporate the  
11 experiences of “mixed ethnicity” people. Ifekwunigwe (1999) illustrates this point well:  
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15 the different and complex ways in which, over time, they have forged  
16 identities that are neither necessarily essentialized nor exclusively bi-  
17 racialized. Their perspectives challenge the homogenization of Blackness as a  
18 political strategy as well as the exclusionary practices of normative Whiteness  
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20 ... At the center is the interrogation of the taken-for-granted constructs of  
21 “race,” nation, culture and family and their confluent relationships to gendered  
22 identities. The narratives of the *griottes* reveal dynamic articulations of selves.  
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24 They also account for the situational ways in which bi-racialist societies  
25 attempt to situate those of us who have already been named.  
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39 (pg. 192)  
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43 Such experiences carry an important critique for dominant approaches to ethnic  
44 categorisation in the collection of statistical data, and not just for “mixed ethnicity” people,  
45 but for ethnic categories generally. This critique is particularly important when personal and  
46 social identities and meanings are crudely read into statistical categories, as was the case in  
47 the recent discussion of “mixed” relationships bringing an end to a “singular” “distinctive”  
48 Caribbean cultural heritage (Platt, 2009). We do however believe that survey measures of  
49 ethnic identities could be made more useful in two ways. First, is to collect sufficient detail to  
50 minimise heterogeneity within categories, as the use of a broad ‘mixed’ category is not  
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3 helpful. Second is to collect additional data on strength of affiliation, culturally informed  
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5 practices and attitudes, and experiences of racism and discrimination, so that the ways in  
6  
7 which ethnic identities are experienced can be examined (Nazroo and Karlsen, 2003). Such  
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9 measures are beginning to appear in UK surveys, such as the Millennium Cohort Study and  
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11 Understanding Society.  
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17 We would suggest that a quantitative accounting of similarities and differences between  
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19 mixed and non-mixed children is compatible with recognition of the complex and contingent  
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21 nature of subjective ethnic identities. While survey data, such as those used here, are the most  
22  
23 appropriate source to investigate demographic and socioeconomic differences, being able to  
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25 draw on a literature that exposes such complexity allows us to avoid reductionist approaches  
26  
27 and cautions us to interpret our quantitative data carefully, even if the classification schemes  
28  
29 such data require cannot capture the nuanced nature of felt identities. It is the complementary  
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31 nature of such approaches that we draw attention to. Indeed, the data presented here provide  
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33 telling accounts of on-average differences in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics,  
34  
35 providing important evidence on stratification, inequality and mobility, and the factors that  
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37 might be driving this. And provide additional insights into the experiences of people within  
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39 ethnic categories in a way that allows their taken-for-grantedness to be challenged.  
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3 LIDIA PANICO is Research Student at the Department for Epidemiology and Public Health,  
4  
5 University College London.  
6

7  
8 ADDRESS: Department for Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London, 1-  
9

10 19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 6BT. Email:

11  
12 [l.panico@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:l.panico@ucl.ac.uk)  
13  
14

15  
16  
17 JAMES Y NAZROO is Professor at Sociology and Director of the Cathie Marsh Centre for  
18  
19 Census and Survey Research, University of Manchester.  
20

21  
22 ADDRESS: School of Social Sciences, Humanities Bridgeford Street, University of  
23

24 Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL Email:  
25

26  
27 [James.nazroo@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:James.nazroo@manchester.ac.uk)  
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**Table 1: Cohort member’s ethnicity by mixed ethnicity indicator, % of cohort member’s ethnicity reclassified, and sample size for final income regression analysis**

Cohort member’s ethnicity	Is the cohort member mixed?			% re-classified when cleaning data	Sample size in income regression analysis (% included)
	Mixed	Not mixed	% mixed		
White	597	14,615	3.9	0.22	12,204 (80.2)
Indian	81	441	15.5	11.7	406 (77.8)
Pakistani	62	869	6.7	5.3	-
Bangladeshi	21	358	5.5	4.5	-
Black Caribbean	247	249	49.8	43.0	340 (68.5)
Black African	96	370	20.6	14.8	-
Other	237	278	46.0	8.5	-

FOR Peer Review Only

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Table 2: Family socio-economic circumstances by cohort member's ethnicity, sweep 1 (cohort members aged on average 9 months)

Mixed ethnicity?	White		Indian		Pakistani		Bangladeshi		Black Caribbean		Black African	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Household income, %</b>												
> £52,000	6.9	15.8	7.9	25.4	1.7	0.5	0.2	16.8	0.6	2.1	3.8	8.9
£31,201-52,000	17.0	22.6	12.1	22.8	3.3	13.3	3.4	5.1	7.4	15.9	11.4	9.2
£20,801-£31,200	22.0	24.3	15.2	10.4	6.1	12.9	3.6	0.0	11.2	20.0	9.5	11.4
£10,401-£20,800	29.4	22.6	31.9	17.1	35.6	17.3	28.4	15.3	23.2	20.1	23.2	24.9
£0-£10,400	18.3	6.8	17.8	13.4	36.3	35.6	37.5	30.6	46.4	34.8	37.4	36.7
<b>Mean equivalised income (£)</b>	12389	16966	1057	19079	5717	8352	4844	12927	6934	9753	8628	11373
			3									
<b>Income unknown/refused, %</b>	6.4	8.0	15.1	10.9	17.1	20.4	26.8	32.2	11.2	7.1	14.7	9.0
<i>Base</i>	13,604	544	371	68	715	47	268	17	217	225	305	86
<b>Highest occupational class, %</b>												
Managerial and professional	48.1	72.8	44.4	72.4	18.9	39.4	18.8	52.1	32.4	45.0	38.1	43.6
Intermediate	14.0	7.9	13.8	9.5	11.9	5.8	5.5	8.2	26.1	13.2	13.8	9.8
Small and self-employer	6.4	5.9	9.9	7.0	17.1	20.8	14.0	0.0	1.4	5.8	5.0	11.4
Low supervisory and technical	9.1	6.1	6.0	3.0	9.8	8.4	10.5	0.0	9.0	7.6	7.7	10.2
Semi-routine and routine	22.3	7.2	22.3	8.1	42.4	25.6	51.2	39.7	31.1	28.4	35.5	25.0
<i>Base</i>	13,929	588	407	79	712	60	292	21	216	231	260	85
<b>Household work status, %</b>												
No parent in work	15.5	6.4	7.3	7.1	21.9	22.8	25.2	16.2	43.6	26.5	39.0	43.6
Mother in work	53.3	58.0	46.1	60.9	13.3	26.7	11.0	20.7	47.4	51.1	44.8	40.4
<i>Base</i>	14,615	597	441	81	869	62	358	21	249	247	370	96
Father in work <sup>1</sup>	91.3	92.2	92.1	90.6	81.7	81.1	75.7	85.5	74.2	84.3	79.1	71.5
Two parents in work <sup>1</sup>	55.6	56.0	43.6	56.1	11.4	25.5	8.2	21.1	53.6	53.8	52.2	47.2
<i>Base</i>	12,077	580	421	74	790	58	333	20	102	166	204	66

<sup>1</sup> Analysis restricted to two-parent households with information available for both parents

Table 2 continued

Mixed ethnicity?	White		Indian		Pakistani		Bangladeshi		Black Caribbean		Black African	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Highest qualifications, %</b>												
NVQ 5	6.1	22.1	13.1	25.8	7.0	10.1	3.2	24.0	2.5	4.3	15.9	11.7
NVQ 4	37.2	47.8	42.4	44.4	15.4	30.7	13.4	21.9	33.1	32.1	32.9	35.2
NVQ 3	16.8	11.6	11.0	15.7	13.8	18.2	11.6	16.2	14.4	14.8	7.6	12.3
NVQ 2	26.3	14.4	14.4	6.3	20.9	13.5	22.3	8.2	28.9	30.5	11.3	20.1
NVQ 1	5.7	1.7	4.0	0.8	9.0	5.7	8.5	9.3	6.2	9.0	2.6	2.1
Overseas	0.9	0.7	4.8	1.7	9.3	8.5	12.0	5.1	2.4	2.1	8.0	7.7
None of these	6.9	1.7	10.4	5.2	24.6	13.4	29.0	15.4	12.6	7.1	21.7	11.0
<i>Base</i>	<i>14,598</i>	<i>596</i>	<i>440</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>865</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>246</i>	<i>370</i>	<i>96</i>
<b>Housing tenure, %</b>												
Owner	65.6	79.3	68.0	74.6	57.7	52.5	34.1	62.2	27.2	45.6	20.8	28.5
Rent privately	8.0	8.0	7.4	10.7	6.9	15.4	8.4	4.0	3.5	5.8	6.9	19.5
Rent council, housing association	21.5	10.6	7.8	7.4	15.0	20.6	42.0	27.4	61.3	44.6	69.3	49.9
Other, including living with parents	4.8	2.1	16.8	7.3	20.5	11.6	15.6	6.4	8.0	4.1	3.1	2.2
<i>Base</i>	<i>14,592</i>	<i>587</i>	<i>437</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>862</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>369</i>	<i>96</i>
<b>Poor housing, %</b>												
Damp house	12.5	12.9	7.4	11.1	15.7	14.7	24.2	15.0	24.1	13.6	23.1	19.7
<i>Base</i>	<i>14,589</i>	<i>587</i>	<i>437</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>864</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>355</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>370</i>	<i>96</i>
Overcrowded housing	6.7	4.8	20.8	8.6	31.4	17.4	51.3	33.8	12.9	12.5	33.7	17.8
<i>Base</i>	<i>14,596</i>	<i>587</i>	<i>439</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>866</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>370</i>	<i>96</i>

**Table 3: Family demographic circumstances by cohort member's ethnicity, sweep 1 (cohort members aged on average 9 months)**

Mixed ethnicity?	White		Indian		Pakistani		Bangladeshi		Black Caribbean		Black African	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Age of mother at birth of cohort member</b>												
Mean age	28.8	31.7	28.5	31.2	26.5	27.9	26.4	27.3	29.0	28.3	31.1	28.7
Standard error	0.056	0.215	0.289	0.736	0.218	0.884	0.351	1.296	0.524	0.453	0.350	0.607
Median age	29	32	28	31	26	27.5	25	26	28	28	31	29.5
<i>Base</i>	14,613	596	441	81	866	62	356	21	249	246	370	96
<b>Lone parenthood, %</b>												
Lone parent household	13.7	2.1	4.0	7.4	7.5	5.7	5.3	1.9	56.0	26.6	40.0	34.0
<i>Base</i>	14,615	597	441	81	869	62	358	21	249	247	370	96
<b>Grandparent lives in hh, %</b>												
Grandparent in hh	6.6	2.9	32.9	13.1	26.6	22.6	29.6	27.9	18.7	12.7	6.5	7.1
<i>Base</i>	14,615	597	441	81	869	62	358	21	249	247	370	96
<b>Number of children in the hh, %</b>												
One	42.4	46.7	42.7	45.4	33.4	45.3	26.3	48.7	42.3	45.7	28.9	52.3
2/3	51.5	48.5	53.0	52.1	47.4	49.9	45.8	44.3	47.8	44.5	55.5	42.2
4+	6.1	4.8	4.3	2.5	19.3	4.9	27.9	7.0	10.0	9.8	15.6	5.3
<i>Base</i>	11,785	477	347	60	664	44	251	16	159	185	239	76
<b>Maternal generation<sup>2</sup>, %</b>												
First generation	3.4	35.8	53.5	28.1	59.1	43.6	92.9	63.0	20.1	6.7	77.2	26.5
Second generation	1.4	3.3	44.5	36.8	38.5	25.2	7.1	4.4	62.5	17.4	20.3	14.5
Third generation or higher	95.3	55.1	2.0	35.1	2.5	31.2	0.0	32.6	17.5	75.9	2.5	59.0
<i>Base</i>	11,734	476	346	60	662	44	247	16	158	184	237	75

<sup>2</sup> Analysis based on sweep 2 data (cohort members aged on average 3 years)



Table 3 continued

Mixed ethnicity?	White		Indian		Pakistani		Bangladeshi		Black Caribbean		Black African	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Language spoken at home, %</b>												
Whether interview needed translation	0.1	0.4	7.7	2.1	18.0	4.5	24.8	26.2	0.3	0.0	4.7	0.5
<i>Base</i>	11,954	485	350	61	668	45	253	16	162	187	244	76
English only	98.5	78.5	16.6	69.3	6.0	44.2	0.5	13.7	97.8	97.0	38.6	78.0
English and another language	1.1	20.7	71.3	25.3	69.4	52.3	64.9	40.7	2.2	2.8	48.2	16.6
Another language only	0.4	0.9	12.1	5.4	24.5	3.5	34.6	45.6	0.0	0.2	13.2	5.3
<i>Base</i>	12,439	477	350	61	668	45	253	16	162	187	244	76
<b>Religion, %</b>												
Neither parent religious	28.4	24.4	3.3	20.9	0.3	2.5	0.0	5.8	2.3	19.4	0.6	10.6
Only one parent religious	71.6	71.5	96.7	79.1	99.7	97.5	100.0	94.2	97.7	80.6	99.4	89.4
<i>Base</i>	12,704	591	439	80	865	62	357	21	247	245	370	96
Both parents religious <sup>3</sup>	30.7	38.4	90.6	53.9	98.9	77.6	97.5	70.8	58.4	30.7	97.9	64.8
<i>Base</i>	9,297	564	320	70	562	54	250	19	69	143	142	59

<sup>3</sup> Analysis restricted to two-parent households with information available for both parents

Figure 1: Age distribution of mothers of non-mixed ethnicity children

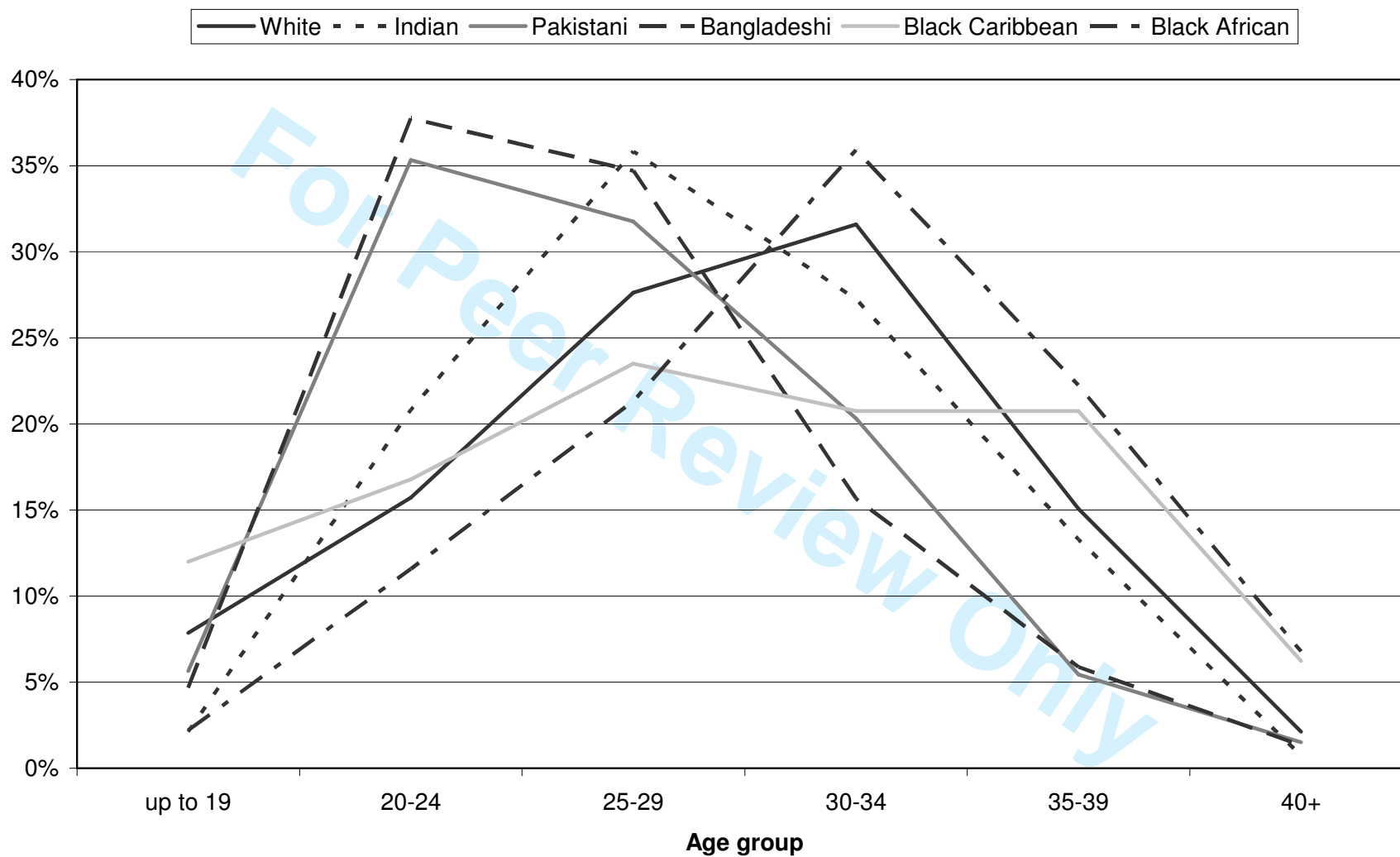


Figure 2: Age distribution of mothers of mixed ethnicity children

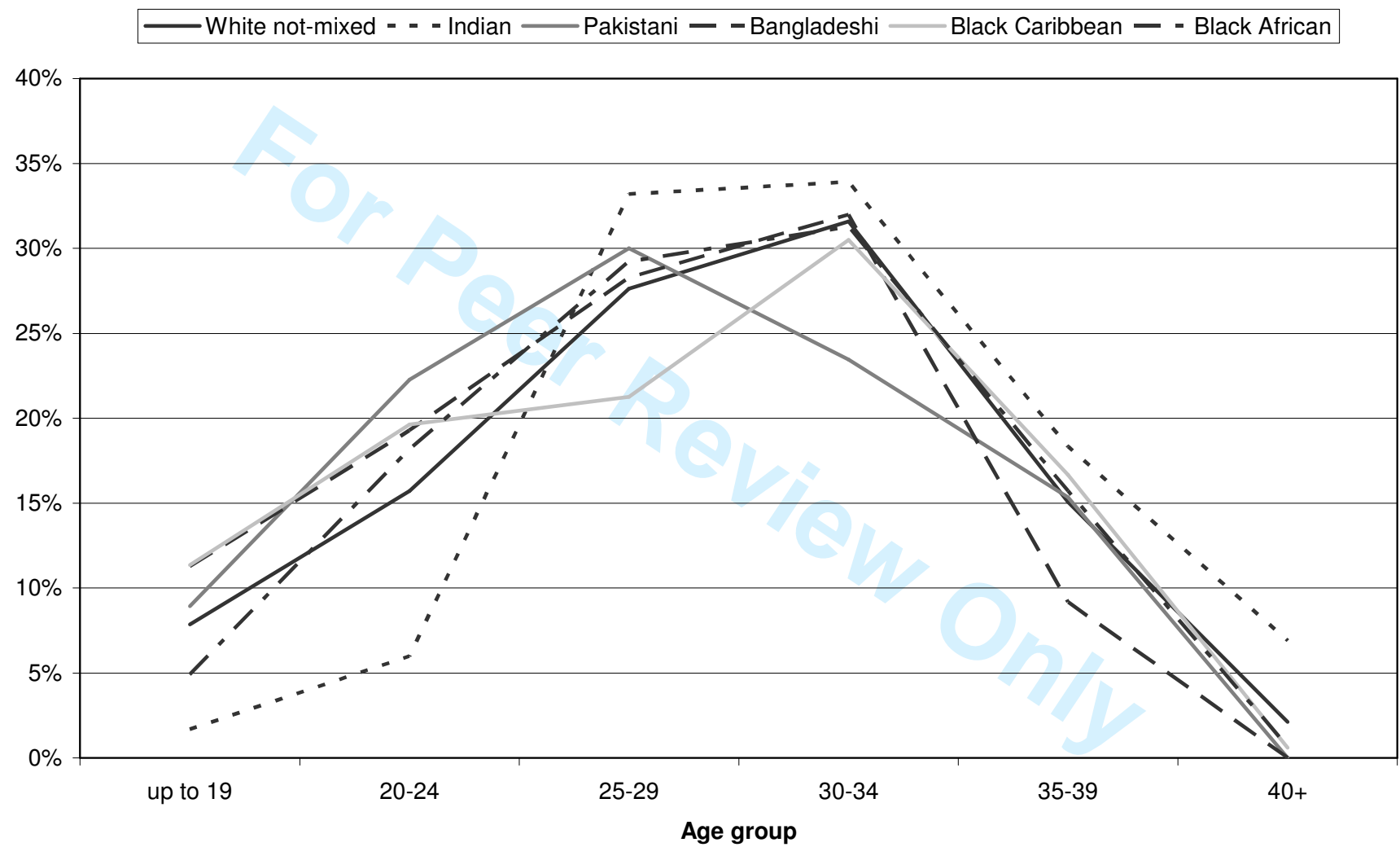


Table 4: Factors contributing to income difference (annual household income in UK pounds) across households using interval regression

	Unadjusted		Single adjustments								Fully adjusted	
	Coeff.	p-value	<i>Generation</i>		<i>Education</i>		<i>Lone parenthood</i>		<i>Language</i>		Coeff.	p-value
			Coeff.	p-value	Coeff.	p-value	Coeff.	p-value	Coeff.	p-value	Coeff.	p-value
<b>Compared to White non mixed cohort member</b>												
White mixed	£6933	<0.001	£6158	<0.001	£1937	0.026	£4903	<0.001	£6529	<0.001	£1395	0.135
Indian non-mixed	-£2544	0.095	-£5545	0.001	-£4157	0.001	-£4182	0.005	£2730	0.061	-£6235	0.001
Indian mixed	£8683	0.010	£6842	0.056	£3328	0.266	£7516	0.018	£9248	0.011	£3289	0.295
Black Caribbean non-mixed	-£9603	<0.001	-£11767	<0.001	-£7823	<0.001	-£2569	0.004	-£9027	<0.001	-£4197	<0.001
Black Caribbean mixed	-£4141	<0.001	-£4645	<0.001	-£2889	0.008	-£1964	0.077	-£3869	0.008	-£1207	0.301
<b>Compared to Indian non-mixed cohort member</b>												
Indian mixed	£11227	<0.001	£12388	0.001	£7486	0.012	£11689	<0.001	£11978	0.001	£9524	0.004
<b>Compared to Black Caribbean non-mixed cohort member</b>												
Black Caribbean mixed	£5463	<0.001	£7121	<0.001	£4934	<0.001	-£604	0.661	£5159	0.005	£2990	0.053

Table 5: Mixed households with and without a white parent

	White non-mixed	Indian mixed		Black Caribbean mixed	
		No White British parent	White British parent	No White British parent	White British parent
<b>Household income</b>	£24,220	£29,282	£44,317	£12,388	£20,928
<b>Qualifications, %</b>					
NVQ 5	6.1	17.2	31.8	6.1	3.9
NVQ 4	37.2	40.6	47	27.3	33.4
NVQ 3	16.8	21.3	11.8	10.5	15.9
NVQ 2	26.3	8.6	4.7	36.1	29.1
NVQ 1	5.7	2.1	0	13.1	8
Overseas	0.9	4.1	0	1.2	2.3
None of these	6.9	6.1	4.6	5.6	7.5
<b>Occupational class, %</b>					
Managerial & professional	48.1	59.6	81.3	40.5	46.1
Intermediate	14.0	13.9	6.5	12.6	13.4
Small employer & self	6.4	8.3	6.1	4.1	6.2
Low supervisory & technical	9.1	4.2	2.1	3.5	8.6
Semi routine and routine	22.3	14.0	4.0	39.4	25.8
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>14,615</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>180</i>

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