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

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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 nonmixed 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

relationships could, however, differ. A particularly high proportion of those in certain ethnic groups are married to someone outside their ethnic group, for example 48 per cent of Other Black men, and 29 per cent of Black Caribbean men are married to someone outside of a "Black" ethnic group (mostly white women) (Office for National Statistics, 2005b), and 50 per cent of British born Black Caribbean men who are married or cohabiting have a White partner (Berthoud, 2000). Although the percentages reported in Platt's analysis of the Labour Force Survey are higher – they include cohabitations as well as marriages – the general pattern is the same (Platt, 2009).

Despite these trends, the demographic, economic and social characteristics of "mixed ethnicity" populations in the UK have only been investigated to a limited extent. This is partly a consequence of data limitations, particularly until the most recent (2001) Census cycle; and in part a consequence of a public discourse where people of "mixed ethnicity" are usually understood and referred to by their non-White ethnicity (Kessel, 2006, Burdsey, 2004). So, Barack Obama is often described as being the first US "Black President", although he mostly lived with his white family, and footballer Ashley Cole, who was mostly brought up by his white mother in a predominately white environment and calls himself "mixed race", is also usually referred to as "Black" (Kessel, 2006). While coverage of "mixed race" issues is increasing, particularly in the "quality" press and through TV documentaries and radio shows, those that do not focus on ethnicity/race per se tend to ignore a person's mixed background.

Where research has been conducted on mixed ethnicity in the UK it has generally focussed on issues regarding the self-identity of those of "mixed ethnicity", experiences of racism and of "mixed" marriages, using predominantly qualitative methods (Ifekwunigwe, 1999 and

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2004, Katz, 1996, Tizard and Phoenix, 2001, Ali, 2003). These studies illustrate how individuals of mixed ethnicity and couples from different ethnic backgrounds have difficulty laying claim to 'authentic' ethnic identities, face distrust and suspicion from both "sides", and may experience more racial abuse than their non-mixed minority peers (Parker and Song, 2001). Such experiences are often discussed in terms of 'new' or hybrid ethnicities, and the challenges mixed ethnicity poses for traditional conceptions of ethnicity and race, for example illustrating how cultural identities are actively constructed from a range of choices, rather than merely inherited. They have also been inferred to indicate a location 'between' two ethnic groups.

This is a position that has also guided statistical analyses of data from the 2001 Census and more recent surveys that have adopted the Census classification, with analysts explicitly asking whether people of "mixed ethnicity" have characteristics that are somewhere between those of their parents' ethnic groups. Implicit in this approach is both a reification and essentialisation of ethnic categories, which we return later. Nevertheless, it is worth briefly summarising findings from recent statistical analyses of the circumstance of "mixed ethnicity" people.

Such analyses are limited to the categories available in the data, of course, meaning a focus on four broad groups: white and Asian, white and Black Caribbean, white and Black African, and other mixed. Beyond demographic factors, summarised above, much of the analysis has focused on socioeconomic circumstances. Findings (Bradford, 2006) have shown that the proportion of people with Mixed White and Asian ethnicities in a managerial or professional occupation (30 per cent) was higher than the proportion among the White British group (27 per cent). In contrast, the Mixed White and Black Caribbean group had fewer people in

managerial and professional occupations than both the Black Caribbean and White British groups (20 per cent compared with 25 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively). Men with Mixed ethnic backgrounds had the second highest unemployment rate in Great Britain (after Bangladeshi men), at 17 per cent, and women in this group also had a relatively high unemployment rate, at around 12 per cent, three times the rate for White British women. These unemployment rates were highest for the Mixed White and Black Caribbean group, followed by the Mixed White and Black African group. It is suggested that part of the explanation for these high unemployment rates lies with the young age profiles of the Mixed ethnic groups. The relative disadvantage of the Mixed White and Black Caribbean group is also shown in education: they are the only mixed group to have a lower proportion with a higher qualification than the general population.

This brief summary shows both the limited nature of current statistical analyses of the circumstances of people of "mixed ethnicity", and how the categorisation of "mixed ethnicity" is often vague or too heterogeneous in such data. For example, "mixed" groups are presented as one, or grouped as South Asian Mixed or Black Mixed. In many analyses "Mixed ethnicity" is included as an additional, largely unexplored, ethnic category. Such analyses are also largely descriptive. To begin to rectify these problems, we explore the characteristics of "mixed ethnicity" children using data from the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), a nationally-representative sample of children and their parents born in the UK between October 2000 and September 2001. The MCS is a rich data set, which allows us to describe the social, economic, cultural and demographic situation of a particular generation of "mixed ethnicity" children.

## 

# The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)

The MCS sample was drawn from children born in the UK during a 12-month period from 2000 to 2001. As the parents are all recent parents and therefore of similar ages, age standardisation is less of an issue with the MCS than other studies described above. Households included in the study were identified through the Department of Work and Pensions Child Benefit system and selected on the basis of where the family was resident shortly after the child's birth. Uptake of Child Benefit is almost universal (98 per cent). The sample has a probability design and is clustered at the electoral ward level, with disadvantaged residential areas and areas with a high proportion of ethnic minority people over represented. A ward was considered as a high proportion of ethnic minority population if at the 1991 UK Census over 30% of the population was classed as Black or Asian. A ward was considered disadvantaged if it was not classed as a ward with a high proportion of ethnic minority population and was in the poorest 25% wards based on the Child Poverty Index. 18,553 households participated in the initial survey, an overall response rate of 68 per cent.

The analyses presented here use data from the first sweep of interviews, carried out when the cohort member was aged approximately nine months. In addition, we use the second sweep of interviews, with a total sample size of 15,307, to analyse parental migration status. The main respondent was the mother in 98 per cent of cases; information from their co-resident partners was also collected in a separate interview where possible. Almost all parents interviewed at sweep 1 were the natural parents. When the mother could not understand or speak English, the resident father was asked to be the main respondent. If neither of the resident parents could undertake the interview in English, another household member above the age of sixteen was asked to translate. If this was not possible, a translator was used with

the mother as the main respondent. In total, the main respondent was the father in only 29 households, all of which were lone parent households headed by the father.

#### Ethnic categories

During the interview, 2001 UK Census questions and categories were used to classify the ethnic background of the cohort member and others living in the household. In this paper the child's ethnicity was categorised as "mixed" if the main respondent chose one of the "mixed" Census categories for the child, or if the Census categories for his or her natural parents were different. If the main respondent chose a "mixed" ethnic category for the child, but the categories of child's natural parents were the same, we reclassified the child according to the parents' ethnicity. This was mostly done to correct coding errors. To help us code the child's ethnicity, we used the non-resident father's ethnicity where this was available. The child of two mixed parents would also be classed as mixed. In total, we re-classified the ethnicity of 512 children, or 2.8% of the sample. Of those children, 377 were re-classified as mixed and 135 as non-mixed. Our approach to re-classification reflected our focus on mixed ethnic heritage, rather than a respondent's perception and experience of (mixed) ethnic identity. We return to this in the discussion. Re-classified children were slightly more likely to live in poor households, but came from households with similar occupational and educational backgrounds to others.

Ethnic categories used for analysis are: White, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, and Black African, and their "mixed" counterparts. (The White Mixed group is made up of children whose parents are from different White backgrounds, for example, a White Mixed child might have a White European mother and a White British father.) Therefore we use a more detailed classification than the Census "mixed" categories of: White

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and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and Other mixed. While the 'Black Other' group is not separately analysed, we included British-born children of Caribbean origin in the 'Black Caribbean' group if they were originally classed in the 'Black Other' group. Where a mixed child had two minority ethnicity parents, she/he was assigned to the mother's ethnicity (for example, a child with a Pakistani father and an Indian mother would be assigned to the Indian mixed group). These rules were followed across all ethnic groups. Other groups, such as Chinese mixed children, were not large enough to be analysed separately, possibly because the clustered nature of the survey sampling scheme did not oversample those who do not live in ethnically dense areas

As shown in Table 1, the Black Caribbean group has a high proportion of re-classifications. This may be because the categories commonly used in quantitative analysis may not capture sufficient detail on Caribbean ethnicities.

Our analyses compare the characteristics of mixed ethnicity cohort members with those of their non-mixed counterparts and the White non-mixed cohort members (for example, the Indian mixed group will be compared with the Indian non-mixed and the White group).

Socio-demographic circumstances

To describe and compare the family circumstances of mixed ethnicity children, we look at a variety of economic, social, demographic and cultural indicators, as detailed below.

Total annual household income was collected using a showcard with banded categories. We use the following categories:  $<\pounds10,400, \pounds10,400-\pounds20,800, \pounds20,801-\pounds31,200, \pounds31,201-$ 

£52,000, >£52,000, and 'refusal/don't know' for descriptive analysis. We also calculated an 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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another language only), whether the interview with the main respondent was translated from English, whether a parent is religious (for two parent households whether both parents are religious), and maternal generation (first, second, third or more). By "first generation" we mean mother who were born abroad themselves, and by "second generation" we mean a British born mother with one or both parents born abroad.

It is worth noting that these variables may describe different things for different individuals and groups. For example, while grandparents living in the household may be a sign of cultural tradition for some, for others it may be a sign of economic need.

# Statistical analysis

The analyses we present compare the socio-demographic characteristics of mixed ethnicity cohort members with those of their non-mixed counterparts and the White non-mixed cohort members using cross-tabulations. We use interval regression to model income differences and the factors that might explain income differences for mixed categories with sufficient sample sizes. Interval regression allows us to take into account the interval nature of income in MCS, as well as its non-normal distribution, as it take into consideration the uncertainty concerning the exact value within each interval.

All analyses were carried out using Stata 9.2 (STATA Corporation, 2006). Analyses are based on cases with complete data on all variables using methods which take into account the clustered sample design as well as the over-representation of wards that were disadvantaged and had a high concentration of ethnic minority people. Adding weights did not make substantive differences to the results.

# 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 children15.5 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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In line with the findings for income, the households of mixed ethnicity children were more likely to be in higher occupational classes than their non-mixed counterparts (Table 2). This was particularly the case for the white and Indian groups, where almost three quarters of the mixed ethnicity children were in managerial or professional households, compared with a little under half of their non-mixed counterparts.

The pattern for employment levels was less clearly differentiated between the parents of mixed and non-mixed children. On the whole, fathers of mixed and non-mixed children were just as likely as each other to be in paid work, although for Caribbean children fathers of mixed children were more likely to be in work (84.3 per cent compared with 74.2 per cent). Differences between mothers of mixed and non-mixed babies were particularly marked for the Indian and Pakistani groups, with mothers of mixed babies being much more likely to be in paid work (60.9 per cent versus 46.1 per cent and 26.7 per cent versus 13.3 per cent for Indian and Pakistani children respectively), but not large for the other groups. The findings for having two parents in work broadly reflected those for having a mother in paid work, while those for having no parent in work broadly reflected those for having a father in paid work, except in the case of white and Caribbean children (both more likely than others to come from lone parent households) where mixed ethnicity children were much less likely to be in 'workless' households.

Continuing on the theme of socioeconomic advantage, across all groups households with a mixed ethnicity child were more likely to hold a formal educational qualification than their non-mixed counterparts for all but the Black Caribbean and Black African groups, and were also more likely to hold British qualifications (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows that, with the exception of the Pakistani group, households with a mixed ethnicity child were more likely to own their homes. This was particularly the case for the Black Caribbean group. Households with a mixed ethnicity child were also more likely to rent privately (the white group are the exception to this) and less likely to rent from the council or a housing association (the Indian and the Pakistani groups are the exception). Across all groups, households with a mixed ethnicity child were less likely to live with parents or in another rent-free arrangement. For one marker of the quality of accommodation – damp housing – there was little difference between households with a mixed and non-mixed child, except for the Black Caribbean group where households with a non-mixed child had much higher rates of damp than those with a mixed child. For overcrowded housing, differences were present for the Indian, Pakistani and Black African groups, where those with a non-mixed child had much higher rates than those with a mixed child.

Table 3 show findings for a series of demographic and cultural variables. Data on mean and median age of the mother at the birth of the child shows that mothers of mixed ethnicity children were on average older for the white and South Asian groups, and slightly younger for the two Black groups. This data does not, of course, reveal the full spread of ages. To do so, figures 1 and 2 compare the distribution of age at birth by ethnicity for mothers between white non-mixed mothers and mothers of non-mixed minority children (Figure 1) and mothers of mixed children (Figure 2). For non-mixed children there appears to be three distributions: younger mothers (for Pakistani, Bangladeshi and, to a lesser extent, Indian mothers), older mothers). For mothers of non-white mixed-ethnicity children the distribution is more similar across ethnic groups. Not shown in the figures is that the mothers of mixed-white children have a slightly older age distribution than the other groups.

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Regarding household structure, Table 3 shows that for most ethnic groups lone parent households were more common for non-mixed children, although this was not the case for the Indian group (where lone parenthood was rarer). Similarly, households with non-mixed babies were more likely to have a grandparent in the household than those with mixed babies. This difference was particularly large for the Indian group. And households with a non-mixed child had on average more children than those with a mixed child, except for Black Caribbean households where numbers of children were very similar for those with and without a mixed child.

For the non-white ethnic groups, mixed ethnicity cohort members were more likely to have a British-born mother than their non-mixed counterparts, and even more likely to have a third generation mother (Table 3). For example, just over three-quarters (75.9 per cent) of mixed ethnicity Black Caribbean children had a third generation or higher mother, compared with under one-fifth (17.5 per cent) of their non-mixed counterparts. Non-white ethnic minority respondents with a non-mixed child were more likely to have had an interview requiring translation, and were more likely to speak a language other than English in the home, except in the case of the Black Caribbean group. Non-mixed non-white ethnic minority children were also more likely to have one, or both, parents reported as religious than their mixed counterparts.

# Explanatory analysis

Having described differences between the households of mixed and non-mixed children in different ethnic groups across a number of dimensions, we now present statistical models designed to help us understand the drivers of these differences. For the first set of models we take annual income as a proximal marker of socioeconomic status and economic well-being, and identify the factors that contribute to the income differences reported in Table 2. For this analysis we focus on the White, Indian and the Black Caribbean groups, because these samples have a sufficiently large proportion of mixed ethnicity babies. Models compare non-equivalised household income in Indian and Black Caribbean households with a mixed and non-mixed child, and white households with a mixed child, with white households with a mixed child with those without a mixed child in the Indian and Black Caribbean groups.

Findings of this analysis are shown in Table 4. Each column of Table 4 is a separate, single model. The initial column reports differences in mean annual income without taking into account differences in the characteristics of the groups. Subsequent columns show differences in income after taking into account one of a range of characteristics (generation, education, lone parenthood and language spoken at home) that might contribute to differences in income across groups – so the difference between the figures shown in one of these columns compared with the first column shows the contribution of that factor to the differences in income for the compared ethnic groups. And the final column takes into account all of the previous factors to show the contribution they jointly make to differences in income across the compared ethnic groups.

Households with a mixed child have a significantly greater annual income than their nonmixed counterparts; the difference within the white group is  $\pounds 6,933$ , within the Indian group  $\pounds 11,227$  and within the Caribbean group  $\pounds 5,463$ . In comparison with white households with a non-mixed child, Indian households with a mixed child have a similarly greater annual

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income (£8,683), which the adjusted models suggest in part reflects: the income advantage of those in this group with mothers who were not born in the UK; differences in education level; and, to a lesser extent lower rates of lone parenthood and, perhaps surprisingly, the use of languages other than English in the home. Once all of these factors are taken into account, the advantage of Indian households with a mixed child compared with the non-mixed white group is reduced considerably (down to a statistically non-significant figure of £3,289), although the advantage in comparison with the Indian non-mixed group remains.

In comparison with white households with a non-mixed child, Black Caribbean households with a mixed child have a smaller annual income (£4,141 less), which in part reflects differences in education level and higher rates of lone parenthood. Once all factors are taken into account, the disadvantage of Black Caribbean households with a mixed child is reduced considerably (down to a statistically non-significant figure of £1,207). In addition, once these factors are taken into account the advantage of Black Caribbean households with a mixed child is reduced child in comparison with their non-mixed counterparts also reduces considerably (from £5,463 to £2990), although remains statistically significant.

The income advantage of white households with a mixed child in comparison with their nonmixed counterparts also appears to be partly explained by differences in education and lone parenthood, although as for the Indian group there is also an advantage carried by first generation migrants. Indeed, for the Black Caribbean and, particularly, Indian households with a non-mixed child the advantage carried by first generation migrant mothers is also apparent, and for the Indian group this suggests a particular disadvantage for second and subsequent generation mothers who have non-mixed children. More generally, for these groups the impact of education differences (higher education levels for the Indian and lower for the Black Caribbean, compared with the white, group), and lone parenthood (with a particularly large impact for the Black Caribbean group), are similar to those for other groups.

The final step of our analysis is to explore how far observed differences relate to having a white British parent. For these analyses we compare socioeconomic markers for white households with a non-mixed child, with those for Indian and Black Caribbean households with a mixed child with and without a white British parent. 73 per cent of the mixed Black Caribbean cohort members have a White British parent, while in the other mixed groups around half have a White British parent. The White British parent is usually the mother (72 per cent). Findings, shown in Table 5, indicate that much of the socioeconomic advantage for households with a mixed child is only present when one parent is white British, although differences for the Black Caribbean group are smaller than for the Indian group. For the Indian group with a mixed child, those with a white British parent have a markedly better socioeconomic profile than the white group, while those without a white British parent have a profile that is only slightly better than the white group. For the Black Caribbean group, the socioeconomic profile of those with a white British parent is very similar to that of the white group, while those without a white British parent is much worse. We investigated whether having a White mother or a White father was more important, however, our sample was not large enough to provide statistical power for these analyses.

#### Discussion

Overall, seven per cent of this nationally-representative sample of babies born in 2000-2001 were of mixed ethnicity. Taking into account the younger age of our sample, this is

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comparable to the five per cent of all children under 5 classed as "mixed" by the 2001 Census. However, because of the classification criteria that we use, we potentially underestimate the proportion of "mixed ethnicity" children in groups with high rates of oneparent households, such as the Black Caribbean group. When both natural parents were interviewed we re-classified the ethnicity of cohort members as mixed if the parents did not have the same ethnicity, but of course could not do so in one parent households, as the nonresident partner's ethnicity was not collected. Similarly, we reclassified as not-mixed those children who were identified as mixed but appeared to have two natural parents of the same ethnicity. This indicates a particular tension in the kind of analysis offered here, we treat ethnicity, and being "mixed", as an objective descriptive phenomenon, rather than as a subjective identity and experience. Having clear and consistent categorisations, such as those used in this paper, fits with the statistical approach we have taken, and over-riding subjective choices with our classification approach makes little difference to the statistical conclusions we reach. But it does have implications for how we conceptualise ethnicity and being "mixed", something to which we return shortly. First, we summarise the main findings in the paper.

The analyses we present consistently show the socioeconomic advantage of households with a mixed child compared with their ethnic counterparts with a non-mixed child for this specific age cohort. Large differences are present for income, occupational class, mothers' participation in paid work, education level, housing tenure and overcrowded housing. This advantage is present across all ethnic groups studied, including the white group. For the nonwhite groups we also show that much of this economic advantage is only present if one of the parents of the mixed ethnicity child is white. Multivariate analyses to model income differences show that the relative advantage of mixed ethnicity children appears to come from a combination of the distribution of four characteristics – migrant generation, parental education level, lone parenthood, and language spoken in the home.

A finding that is perhaps unexpected is that households of 'mixed' children do not consistently have socioeconomic characteristics somewhere between the households of their non-mixed counterparts and those of white children. Being 'between' is the case for the poorer than average Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani households, but it is not for the richer Indian group. For the Indian group, the profile of non-mixed cohort members is similar to that of non-mixed white children, while that of mixed Indian cohort members is considerably better. Rather than the mixed ethnic minority cohort member being somehow between non-mixed and white, the findings reported here are better characterised as indicating an improved socioeconomic position for mixed groups, including white, compared with their non-mixed counterparts. It is not clear how far this is a consequence of selection – non-white ethnic minority people in a better socioeconomic position being more likely to partner a white minority person – as well as a consequence of the advantage brought by the white person to the mixed partnership.

In contrast, findings for demographic and cultural measures (age of mother at birth of the child, lone parenthood, having grandparents in the household, mother's generation, using languages other than English, and religiosity) suggest that households with a mixed ethnicity cohort member begin to approximate the characteristics of white households – that is, for these measures mixed ethnicity cohort members do sit somewhere between their non-mixed counterparts and white people. Here, perhaps we are seeing two processes, one where shifts in behaviours, attitudes and expectations lead to shifts in cultural forms that are reflected in

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these demographic and cultural measures, and one where ethnic mixing reflects social selection, social mobility and processes of stratification that cut across ethnic categories. This indicates a need to consider ("mixed") ethnicity in terms of both class/stratification processes and identity processes, and while the kind of analysis presented here offers some insight for the former, it says little about the latter.

A recognition of the need to consider ethnicity in terms of social and personal identities indicates the need to reject the reified and essentialist approach that is often implicit in statistical analyses – that the ethnic categories used are in some sense natural and clearly bounded and that the characteristics measured (income, employment, health, crime, etc.) are core attributes of the group described. As we indicated earlier, a focus on "mixed ethnic" groups carries the potential to further reify and essentialise ethnicity, particularly given the approach adopted in the UK where the "mixed" are labelled along racial lines and considered as somehow being between their "origin" groups – rather than reflecting the possibility for "new" hybridised identities, the implication is of the biological mixing of 'pure' categories (Aspinall, 2003). This is also, in part, a consequence of traditional approaches to defining, or understanding ethnic group membership, and the limitations such approaches have for understanding new, hybrid, and mixed identities in globalised, late modern, nations. For example, in a volume discussing data from the 1991 UK Census, (Bulmer, 1996) says:

An ethnic group is a collectivity within a larger population having real or putative common 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

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appearance. Members of an ethnic group are conscious of belonging to an ethnic group

(pg. 35)

Qualitative, ethnographic, research has shown how such approaches fail to incorporate the experiences of "mixed ethnicity" people. If ekwunigwe (1999) illustrates this point well:

the different and complex ways in which, over time, they have forged identities that are neither necessarily essentialized nor exclusively biracialized. Their perspectives challenge the homogenization of Blackness as a political strategy as well as the exclusionary practices of normative Whiteness ... At the center is the interrogation of the taken-for-granted constructs of "race," nation, culture and family and their confluent relationships to gendered identities. The narratives of the *griottes* reveal dynamic articulations of selves. They also account for the situational ways in which bi-racialist societies attempt to situate those of us who have already been named.

(pg. 192)

Such experiences carry an important critique for dominant approaches to ethnic categorisation in the collection of statistical data, and not just for "mixed ethnicity" people, but for ethnic categories generally. This critique is particularly important when personal and social identities and meanings are crudely read into statistical categories, as was the case in the recent discussion of "mixed" relationships bringing an end to a "singular" "distinctive" Caribbean cultural heritage (Platt, 2009). We do however believe that survey measures of ethnic identities could be made more useful in two ways. First, is to collect sufficient detail to minimise hetereogenity within categories, as the use of a broad 'mixed' category is not

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helpful. Second is to collect additional data on strength of affiliation, culturally informed practices and attitudes, and experiences of racism and discrimination, so that the ways in which ethnic identities are experienced can be examined (Nazroo and Karlsen, 2003). Such measures are beginning to appear in UK surveys, such as the Millennium Cohort Study and Understanding Society. We would suggest that a quantitative accounting of similarities and differences between mixed and non-mixed children is compatible with recognition of the complex and contingent

mixed and non-mixed children is compatible with recognition of the complex and contingent nature of subjective ethnic identities. While survey data, such as those used here, are the most appropriate source to investigate demographic and socioeconomic differences, being able to draw on a literature that exposes such complexity allows us to avoid reductionist approaches and cautions us to interpret our quantitative data carefully, even if the classification schemes such data require cannot capture the nuanced nature of felt identities. It is the complementary nature of such approaches that we draw attention to. Indeed, the data presented here provide telling accounts of on-average differences in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, providing important evidence on stratification, inequality and mobility, and the factors that might be driving this. And provide additional insights into the experiences of people within ethnic categories in a way that allows their taken-for-grantedness to be challenged. LIDIA PANICO is Research Student at the Department for Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London.

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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 men	nber mixed?	% re-classified when cleaning data	Sample size in income regressio analysis (% included)		
	Mixed	Not mixed	l % 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	-		

46.0 8.5

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

	Wh	ite	Inc	lian	Paki	stani	Bangl	adeshi	Black Ca	ribbean	Black	African
Mixed ethnicity?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Household income, %												
>£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
Mean equivalised income (£)	12389	16966	1057	19079	5717	8352	4844	12927	6934	9753	8628	11373
			3									
Income unknown/refused, %	6.4	8.0	15.1	10.9	17.1	20.4	26.8	32.2	11.2	7.1	14.7	9.0
Base	13,604	544	371	68	715	47	268	17	217	225	305	86
Highest occupational class, %												
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
Base	13,929	588	407	79	712	60	292	21	216	231	260	85
Household work status, %												
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
Base	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
Base	12,077	580	421	74	790	58	333	20	102	166	204	66

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

Table 2 continued

	Wh	ite	Ind	lian	Paki	stani	Bangl	adeshi	Black Ca	ribbean	Black A	African
Mixed ethnicity?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Highest qualifications, %												
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
Base	14,598	596	440	81	865	62	357	21	247	246	370	96
Housing tenure, %												
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
Base	14,592	587	437	81	862	59	357	20	247	245	369	96
Poor housing, %												
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
Base	14,589	587	437	80	864	59	355	20	247	245	370	96
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
Base	14,596	587	439	81	866	59	357	20	247	245	370	96

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

	Wh	ite	Ind	lian	Paki	stani	Bangl	adeshi	Black Ca	ribbean	Black	African
Mixed ethnicity?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
A se of weather at hirth of each art												
Age of mother at birth of cohort												
member	20.0	217	29.5	21.0	265	27.0	26.4	07.0	20.0	20.2	21.1	20.7
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
Base	14,613	596	441	81	866	62	356	21	249	246	370	96
Lone parenthood, %												
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
Base	14,615	597	441	81	869	62	358	21	249	247	370	96
Grandparent lives in hh, %												
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
Base	14,615	597	441	81	869	62	358	21.5	249	247	370	96
Buse	14,015	571	771	01	001	02	550	21	247	277	570	70
Number of children in the hh, %												
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
Base	11,785	477	347	60	664	44	251	16	159	185	239	76
Maternal generation <sup>2</sup> , %												
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	20.5	59.0
Base	95.3 11,734	<i>476</i>	2.0 346	55.1 60	2.3 662	31.2 44	247	32.0 16	17.5	184	2.3	59.0 75
Duse	11,/34	470	540	00	002	44	247	10	130	104	237	15

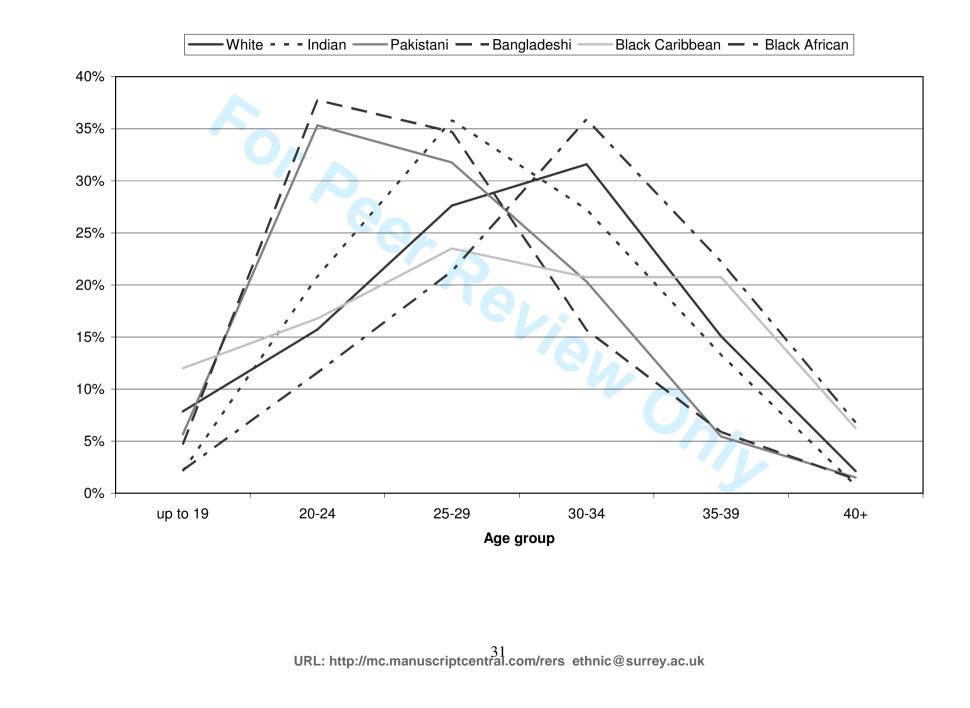
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Analysis based on sweep 2 data (cohort members aged on average 3 years)

# Table 3 continued

	Whi	te	Inc	lian	Paki	istani	Bangl	adeshi	Black Ca	aribbean	Black	African
Mixed ethnicity?	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Language spoken at home, %												
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
Base	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
Base	12,439	477	350	61	668	45	253	16	162	187	244	76
Religion, %												
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
Base	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	<b>77.6</b>	97.5	70.8	58.4	30.7	97.9	64.8
Base	9,297	564	320	70	562	54	250	19	69	143	142	59

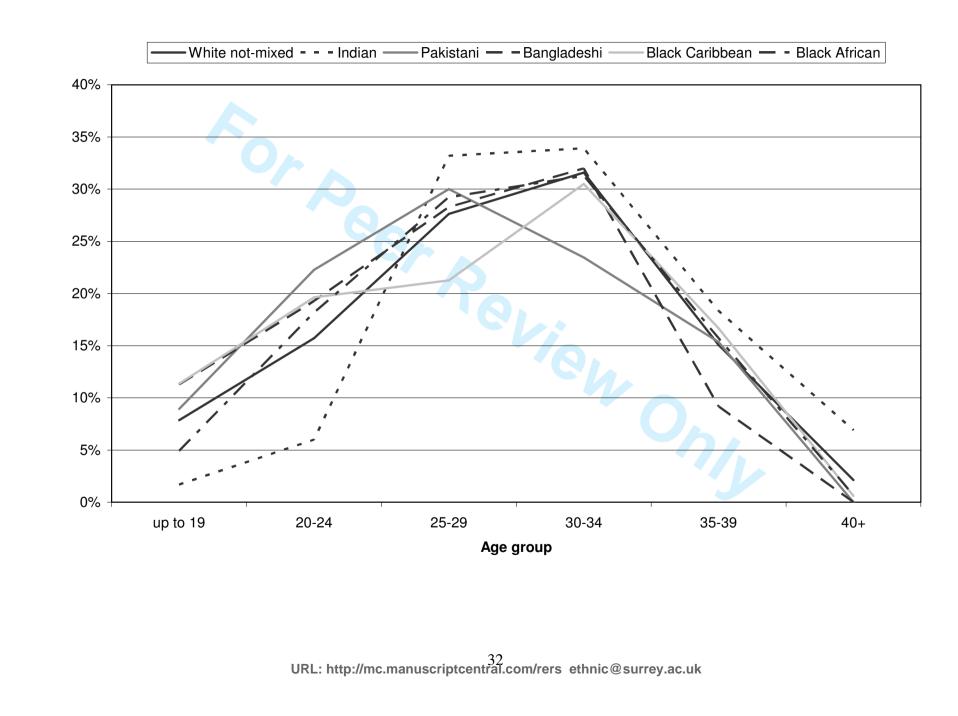
<sup>3</sup> Analysis restricted to two-parent households with information available for both parents

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



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# Figure 2: Age distribution of mothers of mixed ethnicity children



			Single adjustments									
	Unadj	usted	Genero	ation	Educ	ation	Lone par	renthood	Language		Fully a	djusted
	Coeff.	p- value	Coeff.	p- value	Coeff	p- value	Coeff.	p- value	Coeff.	p- value	Coeff	p valu
Compared to White non mixed cohort member												
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	< 0.00
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</b> <b>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</b> <b>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
Black Callobean mixed	23403	<0.001	2/121	<0.001	24734	Q0.001			£3139	0.005	12990	0.05

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# Table 5:Mixed households with and without a white parent

	White non-mixed	Indian	mixed	Black Carib	Black Caribbean mixed			
		No White	White British	No White	White British			
		British parent	parent	British parent	parent			
Household income	£24,220	£29,282	£44,317	£12,388	£20,928			
Qualifications, %								
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			
Occupational class, %								
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			
Sample size	14,615	42	39	67	180			

in.