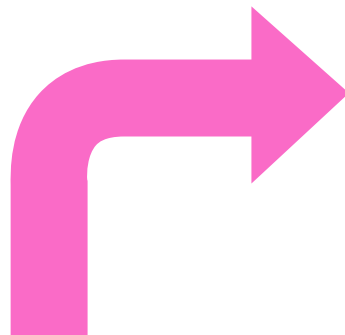




Multicultural Britain in the 21st Century





REBUILDING OUR DIVIDED NATION

CHUKA UMUNNA MP

Member of Parliament for Streatham and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Social Integration

I welcome this research and report from Opinium on multicultural Britain in the 21st century. Research such as this is invaluable for policy makers in the wake of the Brexit vote.

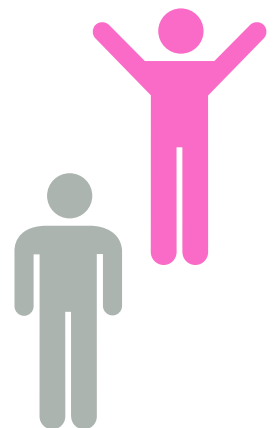
We have seen an alarming rise in hate crimes following the European Union Referendum. It is worrying to see that this report shows that regardless of their race, Britons perceive Britain to be a less tolerant place to live than it was before the Referendum. This is a disturbing development which needs urgent attention and further investigation.

Opinium's research shows the scale of the challenge for policy makers and our society, with a disparity between white and ethnic minority Britons on a number of issues including barriers to integration, tolerance and identity. Understanding people's views on modern Britain and the barriers between communities is not an attack on multiculturalism, but actually the best defence of the diverse country we have become. Only by understanding the world we live in can we hope to build more socially integrated and cohesive communities.

Globalisation – the amalgamation of international economies, the flow of people, capital, information, and services across borders, and new technologies of media and communication – has brought change like nothing we have seen before in our history. Over the next fifty years our country will continue to change profoundly. For many, globalisation and the changes it has brought, has felt like a whirlwind over which they have little control. All of our main political parties have been far too slow to respond to these challenges, and so we have witnessed the rise of a populist right which claims to speak for 'our people' to the exclusion of others.

It has been clear when I visited Boston and Halifax after the EU Referendum, and Dagenham more recently – some of the highest Leave vote areas – that immigration has impacted different areas in different ways, and the pace of change has surprised many communities. But it doesn't have to be this way if Government introduces the right policies to foster social integration and community cohesion.

In the wake of Brexit, we must rebuild our divided nation to create a country which works for everyone. This report provides a useful insight into multicultural Britain and the tests we face as we move on from the Referendum.





SETTING THE SCENE

Multicultural Britain in the 21st Century

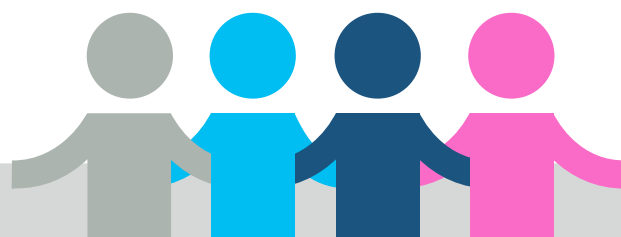
A year of political turmoil has changed all of the certainties about politics that we took for granted. The result of the Referendum on Britain's membership of the EU and the resulting political and social fallout has led us to re-examine the state of multicultural Britain sooner than we might have expected.

*In our report **A question of identity and equality in multicultural Britain**, we delved into how comfortable we truly are as the modern, multiracial country that we have become. It was a snapshot of a slowly developing improvement over the previous decades.*

Now it has become widely reported that Britain's vote to leave the European Union has changed the situation quite dramatically. In July 2016, 5,468 racially or religiously aggravated offences were reported to the police in England and Wales, up 41% on the same month in 2015. The political agenda is dominated by immigration and Britain's place in the world, as opposed to more universally accessible issues, such as the economy, which used to be prevalent.

What we see is that the mood music around culture, national identity and integration has changed dramatically, and this has impacted on the progress we believed we were seeing early in 2016. Most noticeably, all Britons of all races are more disconnected with each other.

But the more ingrained barriers to integration are still the ones we cite, such as minority groups clustering in a handful of localities and a general lack of openness to each other's cultures. Although unhelpful, the problems run much deeper than the fallout from the June Referendum, and the solutions to Britain's integration problems will be need to be equally as long-term.



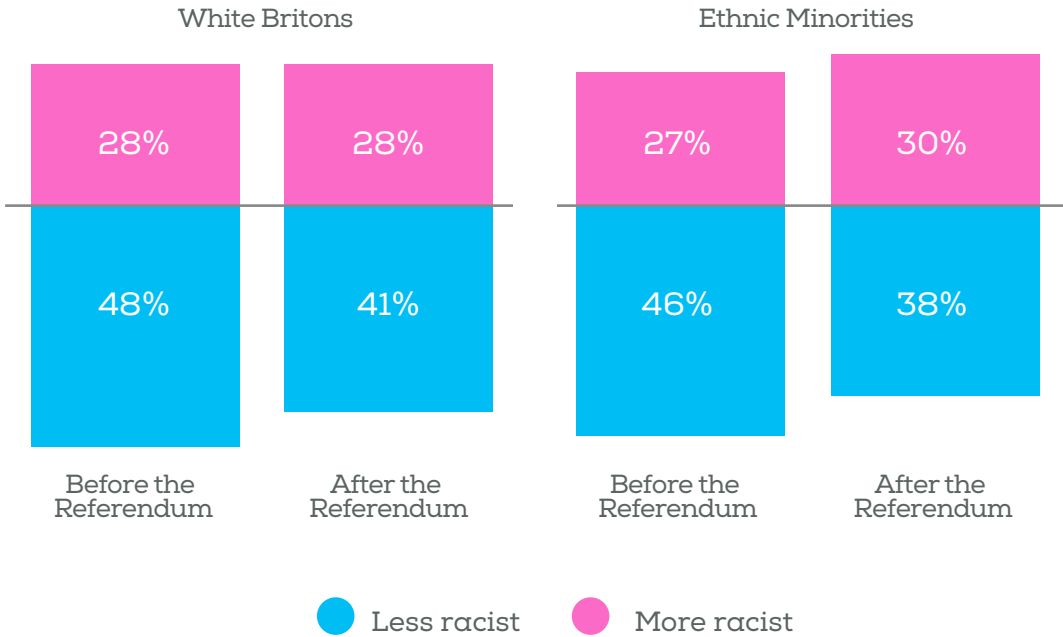
A YEAR ON

Tolerance

The progress that we found in our report last year was encouraging. Almost half (46%) of ethnic minorities believed that the UK was a less racist country than it was two decades before. The impact of the Referendum seems to be the unravelling of some of this progress.

Now only just over a third (38%) of British minorities believe that the UK is a less racist country than it was before. Even more strikingly, half (52%) of ethnic minorities think that Britain has become less tolerant since voting to leave the European Union, rising to 62% of second generation British minorities. Muslims in particular feel this acutely – 59% think the UK has become less tolerant.

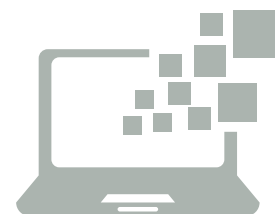
Is Britain a more or less racist country to live in than twenty years ago?



The sense of British society taking a retrograde step is mirrored however by the larger white British population, who have similar opinions to minorities on the perception of Britain being a less tolerant place to live.

But this is more than mere perception. The proportion saying they have experienced someone making a racist comment in jest or making a comment with racist undertones has risen to two fifths (41%) of ethnic minorities. Even white Britons have picked up on this, with similar increases.

However, the biggest impact seems to be on social media. Although white Britons haven't noticed much difference at all, minorities have noticed a significant change. Last year 29% saw racism on social media on a day-to-day basis, which has now risen to 37%, and rises to almost half (45%) of the younger generation (minorities aged 18 to 34).

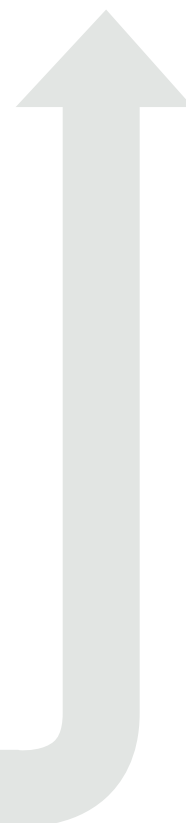


Identity

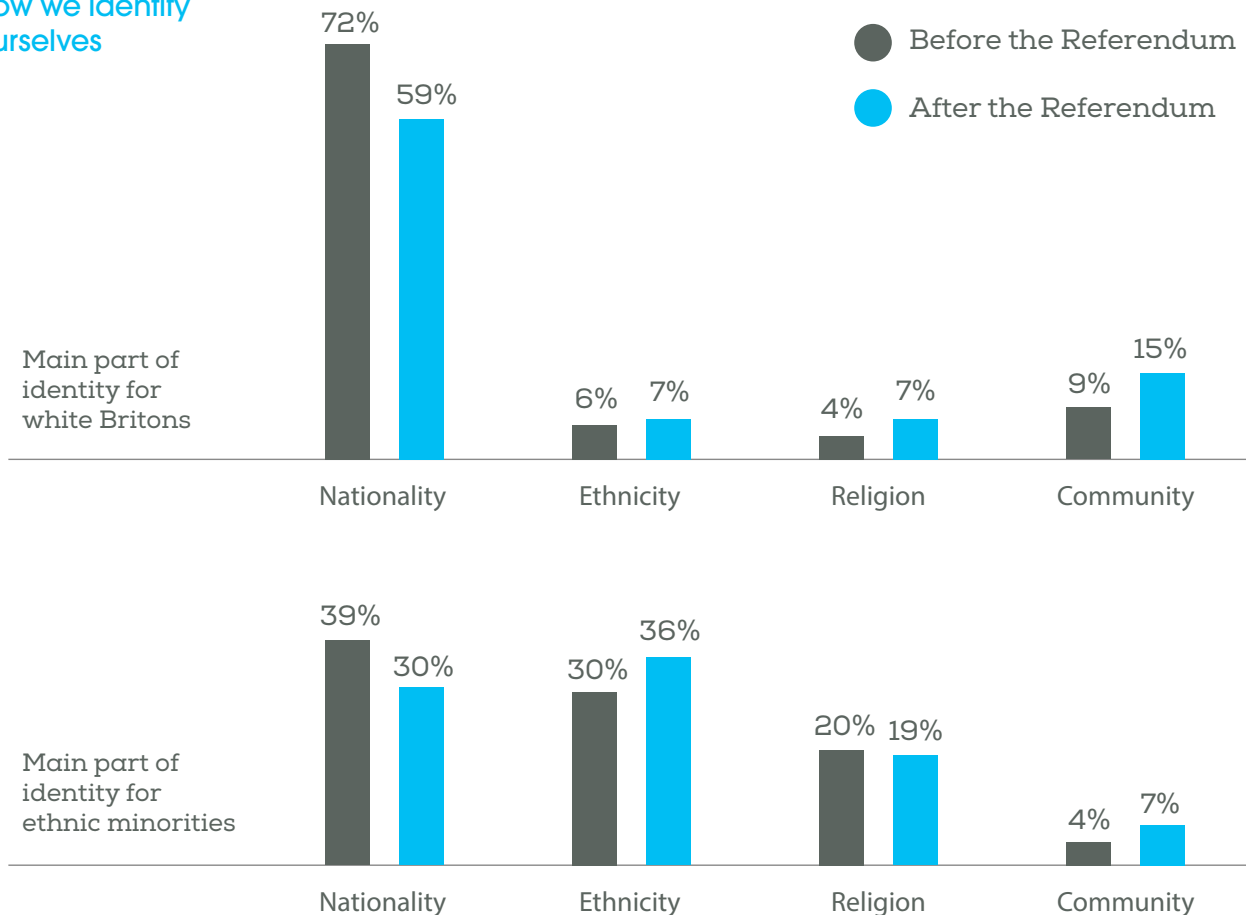
Bitter political divides are nothing new in politics. But in many ways the Referendum went to the core of several first principles in politics. We found that who we identify as has changed over the course of the year, fuelled by these divisions.

All of us are less likely to identify with the country we live in since the Referendum, suggesting the move towards a single feeling of 'Britishness' or at least 'Englishness' or 'Scottishness', for example, is becoming an even more distant prospect.

Previously, almost three quarters of white Britons (76%) said the most important part of their identity was the country they live in, but this has fallen to just under three in five (68%). Similarly, the proportion of minorities that most identified with living in Britain has dropped.



How we identify ourselves



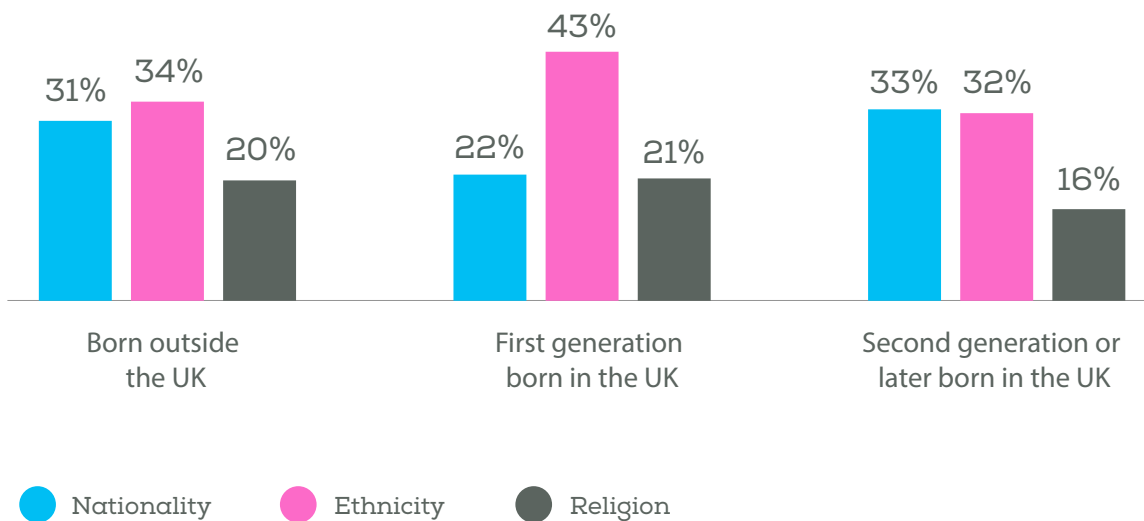
Now one in six (15%) white Britons identify with their local area or community, potentially a sign of how many have withdrawn from a wider sense of belonging to focusing in on the immediate world around them. In the wake of the Referendum result, it might not be surprising that Remainers are more likely to say this than Leave voters (17% vs 11% respectively).

The political fallout since June seems to have had a similar impact on minorities, with their ethnicity now being the single thing ethnic minorities are likely to identify with most (36%), followed by being British (30%) in second place. Asians in particular are much less likely to primarily identify with being British than before the Referendum (31% now vs 43% beforehand).

The difficulties for the first generation

Delving deeper into how identity is molded over time, we find that there are interesting generational differences amongst British minorities. In particular, we found it is the first generation of a family to be born in the UK that struggles most to identify with the country they live in. Instead, they are the most likely to identify with either their ethnicity (43%) or religion (21%). It's only then in later generations that identification with Britain improves.

Main part of identity for ethnic minorities by generation

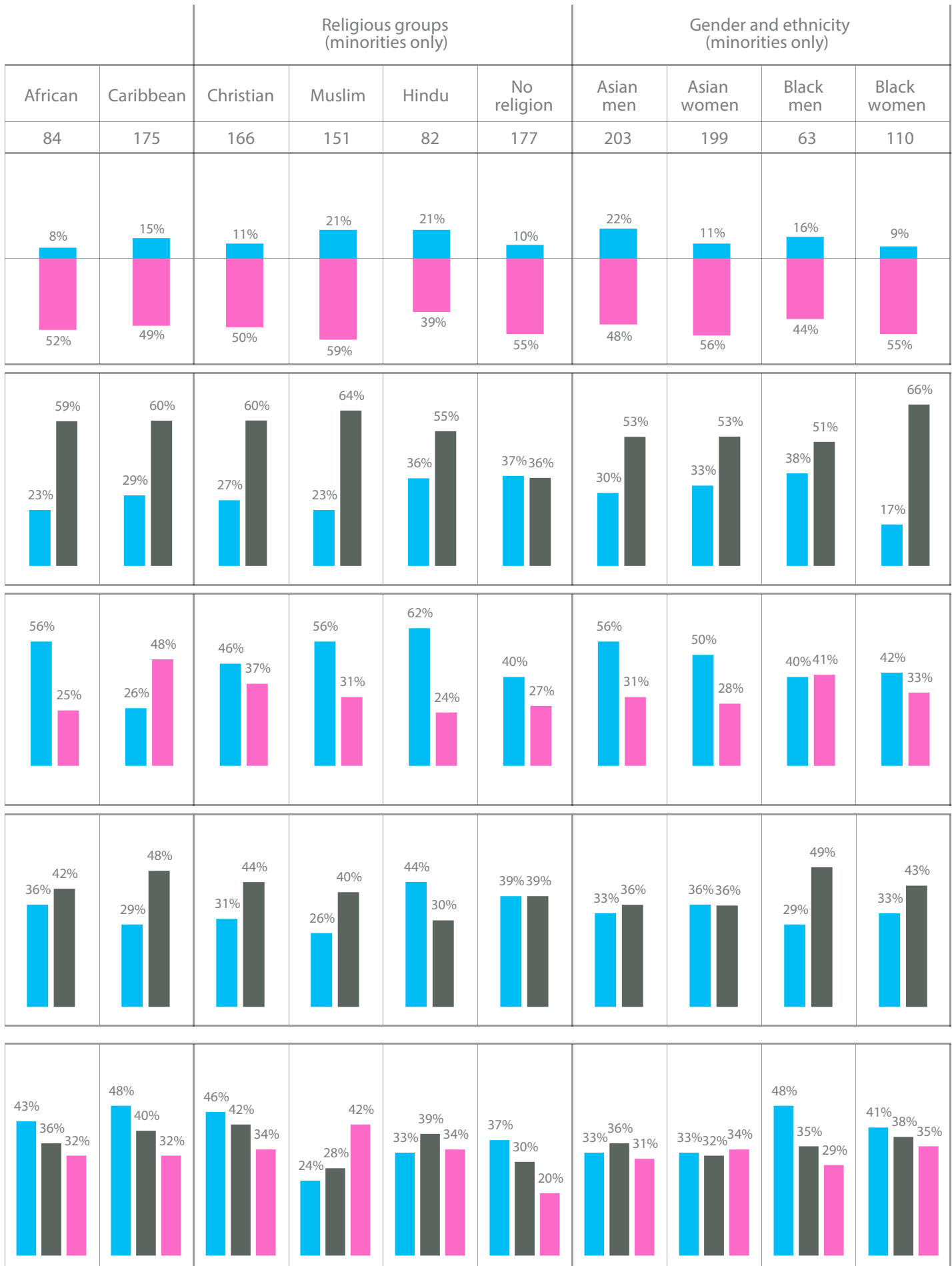


This shows that the problem of positively identifying with one's country of birth is partly generational. The difficulties for those born in Britain to parents with a noticeably different cultural background to the society they grow up in evidently takes its toll; making integration easier for this group in particular will be challenging. On the other hand, large proportions of minorities in all generations still do not identify with being British, suggesting this is only one of the numerous barriers to successful integration into British society.



Attitudes to multicultural Britain and integration





WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Integration

Despite the mood music behind community relations noticeably changing since the Referendum, a few months is not long enough to drastically change the long-term state of integration in Britain. We previously found that 22% of ethnic minorities did not feel like a part of British culture, and this has risen very slightly to a quarter (24%) post-Referendum.

Despite a sizeable portion of minorities feeling separate from the mainstream, ethnic minorities generally had a more positive image about the state of their integration than white Britons. More than half of white Britons (55%) think the UK is poorly integrated, with different cultures and communities living and working separately.

Is the UK a successfully integrated society?

Ethnic Minorities



White Britons



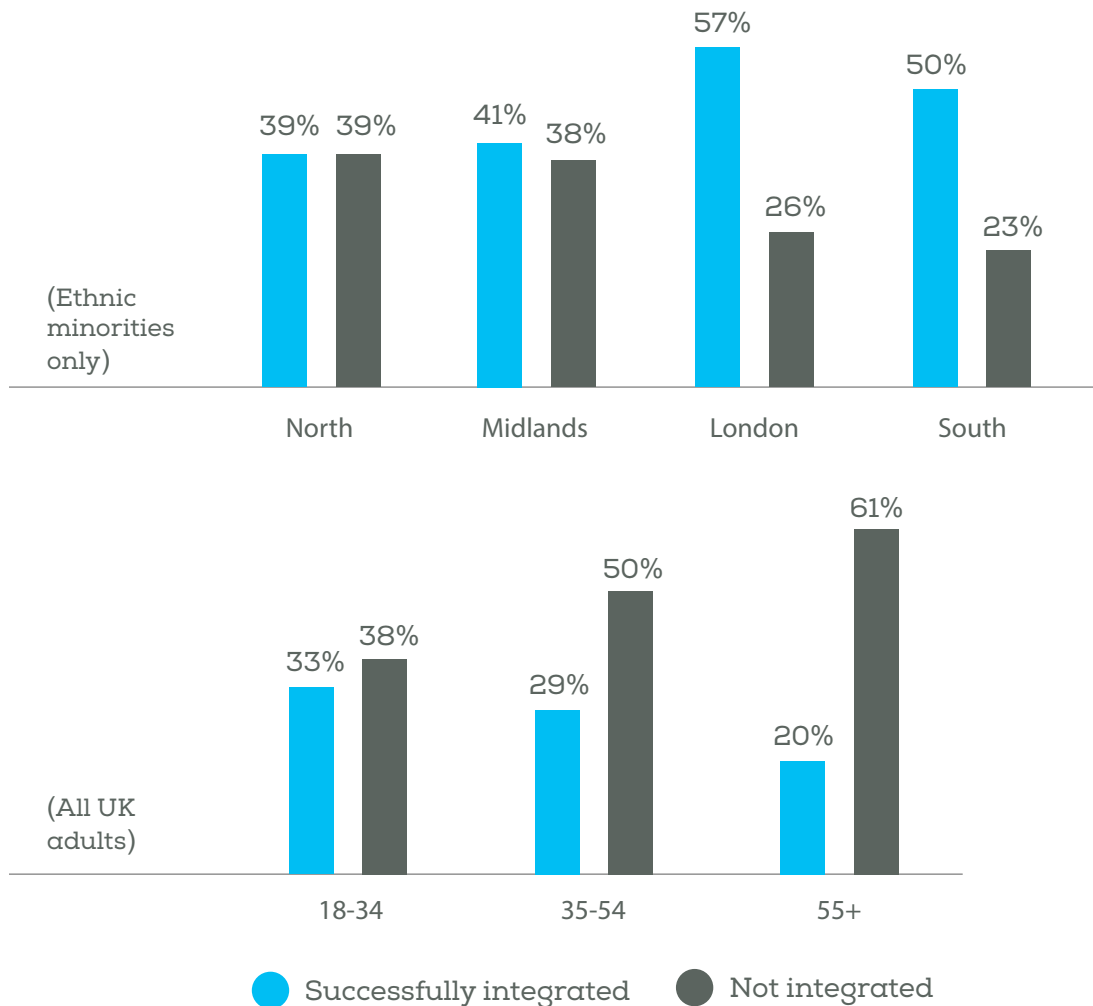
● Successfully integrated ● Neither ● Not integrated

Strikingly, ethnic minorities hold almost the complete opposite point of view. Half (49%) think the UK is actually an example of a successfully integrated society where different communities and cultures live and work together.

Regional and age divide

Unsurprisingly, Londoners have a much more positive opinion about the state of integration in Britain. Almost three in five (57%) ethnic minorities in the capital believe the UK is successfully integrated. However, minorities in the Midlands and Northern England are much more divided.

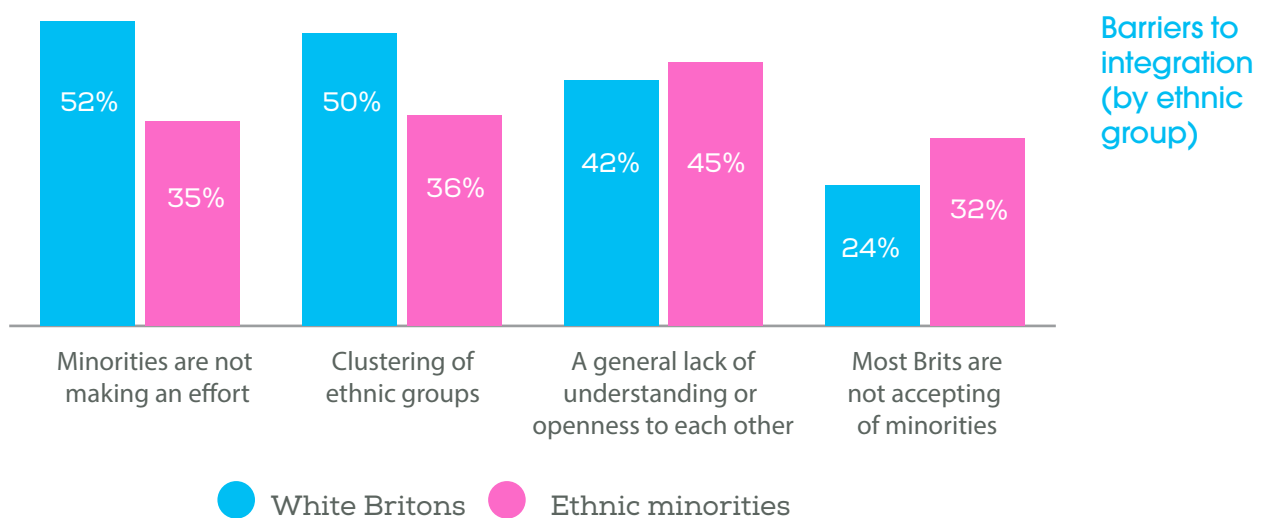
Is the UK a successfully integrated society?



For UK adults generally, the key divide is age. Older Britons, particularly those aged 55 and over, quite strongly believe that the UK is not successfully integrated, while younger Britons are much more positive.

Behind the integration

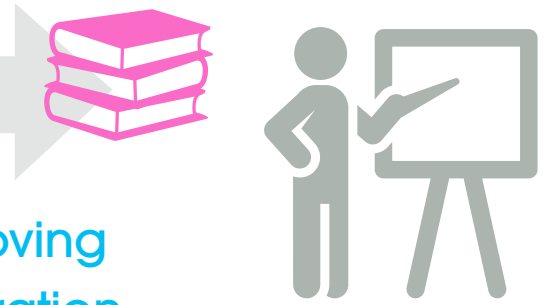
This disconnect feeds into the main reason for why some are not integrated. Half (52%) of white Britons think that the UK is not an integrated society due to minorities not making an effort to integrate.



On the other hand, minorities are much more likely than white Britons to blame a lack of acceptance from the majority for blocking integration (32% vs 24% respectively) and this rises to over half (52%) of first generation minorities.

What both do agree on, however, is that the primary responsibility for integration into wider society lies with the individual (38% of white Britons vs 34% of ethnic minorities).





Education is key to improving social and cultural integration

While there was disconnect over perceived integration levels and the reasons for why integration is not working, all of us seem to agree that reducing immigration now is locking the door after the horse has bolted (43% of white Britons vs 45% of ethnic minorities). So the only option is to look at ways to improve integration.

Educating both the white British population and ethnic minorities currently living in the UK is the best way forward to improve social and cultural integration. Half of British adults (51%) support compulsory English lessons for those that move to the UK, as do a third (36%) of ethnic minorities. A further third of UK adults (31%) support introducing a free course for all immigrants to learn about Britain when they arrive rather than when they apply for citizenship.

Utilising the school curriculum is a key route to improving social and cultural integration.

One of the best ways to do this could include lessons in schools about British culture and traditions (39% of Britons thought this could help), more lessons in schools about different religions and cultures (26%), and educating children about the effects of racism (34%). Over a quarter (27%) also believe that integration can be improved by ensuring that the intake of each school reflects the wider area and is not dominated by one group.

Nevertheless, some differences still remain. Whilst a quarter (26%) of white Britons support an integration oath on arrival for immigrants intending to settle in Britain, only one in seven (16%) ethnic minorities feel the same way.

Ethnic minorities are also more likely than white Britons to think integration could be helped by encouraging greater representation of ethnic minorities in organisations where they are currently underrepresented (25% vs 15% respectively). They are also twice as likely to think councils should use more local or community events to promote the diverse range of cultures in Britain (24% vs 13% respectively).

IN FOCUS

Clustered communities

Just over a third of minorities and half of white Britons blame the tendency for individuals in an ethnic group to cluster together for preventing minorities from integrating. Regardless of how correct they are in their diagnosis, this phenomenon is not a figment of the imagination.

Half of Britain's black population lives in only 19 English boroughs; 17 of them in London. Similarly, half of Britain's 4.3 million Asians reside in only 29 metropolitan areas across England, although at least these pockets are spread a little more widely across the country.

On one hand this means many ethnic minorities experience a very different Britain to most of the population. One in six ethnic minorities live in a borough where they are the majority, and this rises even further when you examine the local neighbourhoods most live in within these towns and cities. This is without considering that most coalesce in deprived urban areas with problems varying from scant local amenities to poor housing and transport links. In short, the Britain that most ethnic minorities live in is not the green and pleasant land older white Britons might understand as their home.

But, this cuts both ways. While minorities argue that the British are not as open and tolerant as is often claimed, the white British majority believe many just don't make an effort to integrate. Part of this poor opinion of other groups is simply the lack of contact many have with each other.

Despite the fact that 13% of Britain is not white, half of the white population live in a district where less than one in twenty are an ethnic minority. A quarter of white Britons live in a district where less than one in fifty are an ethnic minority – effectively meaning one in four white Britons barely even see a black or Asian person in their neighbourhood.

This problem might appear insurmountable. How does any government or society prevent this from happening or go about solving it? Time helps.

More affluent minority groups, such as the British Indian population, have begun the transition that many white Britons make: with age they move out of the urban areas to the family friendly suburbs. Increasingly, they make decisions on where to live based on occupation and life stage that appear similar to the internal migration of many white Britons. But other groups have not yet made this transition, and poor prospects for many ethnic minorities mean this is unlikely to happen soon.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Our findings indicate the long process of Britain coming to terms with its increasing ethnic diversity has been disrupted. Where previously we saw tentative signs of steady progress, we now see Britain heavily divided.

Previously declining opinions of Britain as a prejudiced or racist society are steadily increasing, with ethnic minorities in particular more likely to believe that the UK has become a less tolerant place to live. All of us have noticed more racist incidents, with younger minorities seeing the biggest difference on social media and the internet.

To get back on track and continue the process of integration, we need to get beyond the current situation where all sides seem to blame each other.

Half of white Britons still think minorities don't make enough of an effort to integrate, while minorities think the majority are not accepting of their efforts to assimilate with wider society. The current war of words over the Referendum is not a helpful backdrop to this.

With a large minority population disconnected from the majority, part of the problem appears to be a simple lack of regular interaction and contact between ethnic minorities and most white Britons. We can partially improve this problem through better education and greater effort from different communities to familiarise themselves with each other.

In the long term, time is required for most minority groups to disperse from the small number of urban areas they predominantly reside in, and to reflect the wider living patterns that the majority of Britons would recognize. The prerequisite for this has to be that they have an equal opportunity to do so. Achieving this is the first of many hurdles that we need to get past on the long route to Britain becoming a successfully integrated society.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



James Crouch //

James works across a variety of fields including our social research division and is a member of the Opinium political polling team. James' experience has primarily been amongst consumer and secondary research, delivering cutting edge insight into the key drivers behind our changing behaviour and attitudes for clients, ranging from academic institutions to media outlets and think tanks.



Priya Minhas //

Priya works on a range of UK focused and international research as part of the thought leadership, political and social teams at Opinium. Priya has helped clients to understand some of the key socio-economic trends taking place, helping to inform their strategy and approach to communications.



What people
think, feel and do.

About Opinium

Opinium is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on the pulse of what people think, feel and do. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and resolve commercial issues, helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate, by ensuring we develop the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insight, targeted recommendations, and address specific business challenges.

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