



*Life in the UK today: The role and citizen impact of
Public Service Broadcasting*

**Report of research conducted by
The Social Issues Research Centre**

Commissioned by



2008

Contents

Executive summary	5
Background	5
Population changes	5
Diversity	5
Households and families	5
National identity	6
The democratic process	6
Crime and the fear of crime	6
Working life	7
Children and young people	7
Worries	7
Religion and faith	7
1 Introduction	8
Data sources	8
Approach	8
2 The UK population	10
Current population	10
Age of population	11
Gender of population	12
Implications for PSB	13
3 Diversity	14
Immigration	14
Ethnicity	15
The multiculturalism debate	16
Implications for PSB	16
4 Households and families	17
Size of household	17
Living alone	17
Lone-parent families	18
Fertility	18
Marriage and divorce	19
Cohabiting	20
Civil Partnerships	20
Implications for PSB	20
5 National identity	22
Britishness	22
Scottish and English identity	22
Welsh identity	23
Northern Irish identity	23
Ethnic Identity	23
Hierarchies of identity	23
The decline of Britishness?	24
Implications for PSB	24

6 The democratic process	26
Voter turnout	26
Interest in politics	27
Implications for PSB	27
7 Crime and the fear of crime	29
Trends in crime rates	29
Risks and perceptions	29
Geographical distribution of crime	30
Confidence in the criminal justice system	31
Race and crime	31
Implications for PSB	32
8 Working life	33
Employment in Britain	33
Workless households	33
Regional variations	33
Work and gender	33
Types of work	34
Working harder?	34
Flexible working	34
Income	34
Wealth	35
Implications for PSB	35
9 Growing up	36
The young population	36
Single parents	36
Education	37
Dependency	38
Young people in the digital age	39
Adults and young people: new kinds of identities?	40
Implications for PSB	40
10 The nation's worries	42
The generation of anxiety	42
What keeps us awake at night?	42
Where do our fears come from?	43
Television	44
Implications for PSB	44
11 Religion and faith	45
Declared religion	45
Church attendance	45
More practising Muslims than Christians?	46
Implications for PSB	46

Executive summary

Background

The BBC Trust commissioned this independent desk research from SIRC on life in the UK today as part of a programme of work supporting its submission to Ofcom's second review of Public Service Broadcasting.

As a complement to the extensive work contributed by other players on the rapid advances in technology and consumer behaviour, the work is designed to review and present the available data on broader social trends which may impact on PSB in the future. This includes such issues as population, family life, identity, work and money, children and young people.

The work has drawn on a wide range of statistical data, analysis and commentary. The aim has been to look beyond the numbers themselves to what they mean in terms of the everyday experiences of citizens in our society. We have also focused on the role of PSB in reflecting these changes and its responsibility to facilitate and encourage social cohesion. This duty is clearly mandated by Ofcom who noted in their *Second Public Service Broadcasting Review* the need for programmes to reflect 'the UK in all its facets' – this being 'essential to maintaining our cultural identity and social cohesion'. This is consistent with two of the four purposes of PSB as defined by Ofcom – 'to reflect and strengthen our cultural identity' and 'to make us aware of different cultures and alternative viewpoints'.

Looking at the BBC in particular, the BBC's Public Purposes also reflect the BBC's duties to sustain citizenship and civil society, including a requirement to engage a wide audience in news, current affairs and other topical issues, and to encourage conversation and debate in these areas.

The principal findings and their implications for PSB are summarised below. Our interpretation of the data and their potential implications for PSB is necessarily our own – others of course may well draw different conclusions from the same data.

Population changes

Recent trends in birth-rate and longevity have led to an increasingly ageing population. The ratio of people above retirement age to those aged under 16 has increased by 52% in the past three decades. Today there are 30 people over retirement age for every 100 of working age. Among those aged over 75, 62% are women, reflecting their lower mortality rate. Birth rates among immigrants and within some ethnic minorities are higher than for the rest of the UK and will, it is predicted, account for a quarter of all natural population change over the next 25 years.

These trends have significant implications for the demands on health care, pensions and welfare and the relative sizes of the ethnic communities. To counter the effects of an increasing proportion of UK society being economically inactive, increases in the retirement age are planned and further changes seem likely.

These factors impact not only on the structure of public service broadcasters' audiences but also on the issues that they will need to reflect in their provision. There may be a need for PSB's own staffing structures to respond to the ageing population. In the case of commercial PSBs, advertising spend may also need to reflect the population shifts, with implications for funding models.

Diversity

Net immigration into the UK has increased significantly over the past decade – the majority still coming from the Commonwealth but increasing numbers also from the EU, the large majority of whom are Polish. The trends indicate, however, that the recent influx of Central and Eastern Europeans will soon decline, leading to a concern in some quarters about potential shortages of labour in some industries and services.

The large majority of all immigrants and their descendants live in a relatively few areas of England – their numbers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are far less significant. Polish migrant workers, however, are much more widely dispersed across the UK.

This concentration of immigrants and members of ethnic minorities in certain regions may be a factor in the continuing high levels of prejudice expressed in the UK.

The multiculturalism debate is at a critical turning point. The key issue for debate is whether recognition or even celebration of diversity has potentially negative effects in encouraging separateness rather than integration and inclusion. Black and ethnic minorities remain disadvantaged in terms of jobs, especially those in the higher ranks of both public and private enterprise.

PSB has a critical role to play in reflecting the diversity of the UK in the shape of its provision and in the content of its output. It also has a role in facilitating new debate and fresh ideas concerning cultural diversity and its impacts in the UK and in countering prejudice by providing timely and accurate information about what is really happening in our communities.

Households and families

The number of households in Britain has increased by 30% over the past three decades but the average household size has

fallen by 17% to 2.4 persons. There has also been a steep rise in the number of single person households with nearly a third of all households now being of this size. We should note, however, that this accounts for only 13% of the UK population. The large majority of single occupants are the elderly, two thirds of whom are women, and their single status is most often due to the death of a spouse. While the number of single occupants rose between 1971 and 1998, the trend has now levelled and in the past two years there has been a slight decline.

Since 1972 the number of marriages has declined while the number of divorces has increased. The age at which people get married has also increased slightly over that period. These trends, however, again appear to be levelling. Even so, for every 100 marriages in 2006 there were 55 divorces.

The proportion of lone-parent families has trebled since 1972 and is currently 23% of all families.

In the past 20 years the number of couples choosing to cohabit rather than marry has doubled to around 25%. This trend, yet again, appears to have levelled and there are now some indications of a decline in the numbers of people cohabiting.

These trends in households and families will affect audiences and behaviours in complex ways and PSB will need to adapt its provision of services accordingly. There are implications also for portrayal of particular groups in society. In the case of lone parents, for example, it will be important to consider that only 2% are teenagers and that 57% are in work.

National identity

There has been a decline in the past 6 or 7 years in the number of people describing themselves as 'British' – rather than Scottish, English, etc. The decline is most marked among the Scots with 85% of them as describing themselves as 'Scottish' and only 43% as 'Scottish and British'. In Northern Ireland the majority of Catholics describe themselves as 'Irish' while most Protestants prefer 'British'. Roughly equal numbers of both communities (around 23%) describe themselves as 'Northern Irish'.

Despite the trend towards national rather than British identity, there remains a sense of pride in being British and more people (even the Scots and Welsh) feel that Britishness is important than say that it is not important. The large majority in the Black and ethnic communities prefer British over, say, English – as in 'Black British' and 'British Asian'.

The devolution of powers to the nations of the UK is undoubtedly linked to some of these trends. It is important to note, however, that national/British identity is not seen as the most important source of a sense of belonging – family and friendship networks are felt to be more significant in this

context and, for members of the Black and ethnic minorities, ethnicity is also a significant identifier.

There is a trend towards a new sense of Britishness – one that is more inclusive and less related to the traditional Anglo-Saxon image. PSB has an important role to play not only in reflecting these changes but also in fostering debate about Britain as an inclusive society. Far from abandoning the 'British' in BBC, the Corporation could look forward to a more modern characterisation of Britishness.

The democratic process

The number of people turning out to vote in general and other elections has fallen markedly since 1950. The decline accelerated between 1997 and 2001, rising only marginally in 2005. Young people, low wage earners and members of the Black and ethnic communities have the lowest voter turnout. The last three governments have been elected largely by the elderly White middle classes.

This raises serious issues for representative democracy in Britain. Without active belief and participation in the process, social cohesion and a sense of belonging may be eroded. Ways of involving those segments of society who are reluctant to vote need to be developed and PSB may have a role to play in this context. Opportunities for people to feel that they can have a genuine influence on the decisions that are made in their name might be realised through imaginative social, political and topical programmes that are more representative of the relatively self-disenfranchised groups in UK society.

Crime and the fear of crime

While rates of crime in general have fallen significantly, the fear of most types of crime has declined rather less – nearly two-thirds think that crime in the UK has actually risen in recent years. People's estimates of the risk of being the victim of certain types of crime tend to be around four to seven times higher than the objective risks. Confidence in the Criminal Justice System, however, remains quite high – especially among the Black and ethnic minority communities.

While members of most Black and ethnic communities suffer general victimisation rates not significantly above those of the White majority, people of Mixed race suffer substantially higher levels. People of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent are the most likely to be victims of racially motivated crimes.

The number of crimes detected committed by members of the Black community, as measured by arrests, imprisonment, etc., appears to be substantially higher than any other segments of society. There are, in terms of the proportions of total populations, three times as many Black people in prisons than Whites. The current debate centres around whether this is due

to 'Black culture', relative deprivation and disadvantage in the Black communities, or both.

PSB in these contexts has important roles to play. Firstly, there is a need to communicate crime issues in a way that enables people to make more informed estimates of the risks of being a victim of crime – to reduce fear of crime to more appropriate levels. Secondly, there is the potential for sensitive issues such as race and crime to be debated more openly.

Working life

Employment in Britain is at a level almost as high as the peaks in the early 1970s and well above the troughs of the mid 1980s and mid 1990s. Women have joined the workforce in steadily increasing numbers over the past thirty years. They remain, however, distinctly under-represented in the more highly paid jobs. The same applies to member of the Black and ethnic minorities. While salaries and disposable incomes have risen substantially in real terms over the past 30 years, the gap between the richest and the poorest in society has widened. Accumulated wealth shows a similar, increasing trend with 50% of the population now owning only 7% of the country's wealth while 1% own 21% of national wealth. Might PSB also foster wider debate about how such disparities could be reduced?.

Children and young people

The achievements of school students, as measured in terms of GCSE grades, etc. have been rising steadily over the past 10 years. Far more young people are also now going on to university and higher education than in the past – rising from 241,000 male and 173,000 female university entrants in 1971 to 561,000 and 701,000 respectively in 2006. Young women are now more likely than young men to go to university and they achieve significantly better degrees.

Perhaps due in part to this trend, young people remain dependent on their parents for a significantly longer period. Of males aged between 20 and 24, 58% are living at home with their parents (the figure for women of this age is 39%) and 22% remain at home into their late twenties.

This extended dependency, coupled with the fact that that younger children have grown up as 'digital natives' with access to a previously unparalleled range of media, has started to blur the traditional distinctions between child, adolescent and adult. Relationships between children and parents have become more 'democratic', eroding even further the boundaries between the age sets.

There are strong implications for PSB arising from these trends – not least the nature of children's programmes in the digital age. Traditional 'top down' media content may be less

important in the future. PSB has an important role to play in preparing young people for the new challenges and opportunities involved in 'growing up' in the modern UK – a rather different and more prolonged 'emergence' than in the past.

Worries

There is a substantial consensus that we are becoming a more anxious and fearful society than in the past. This is reflected in the media but also, in part, generated by it. Even though we live in the healthiest of times, worries about personal health and that of our families dominate our concerns. The data relating to fear of crime noted above are also relevant in this context.

It is important that PSB provides balanced and accurate coverage of health and related issues in order that citizens are able to make informed decisions about how they live their lives. The power of PSB and other media in this context has been evident in, for example, the withdrawal of children from vaccination programmes because of fears about MMR.

Religion and faith

Britain is increasingly becoming a secular society. Although over 70% of the UK population claims to be Christian, church attendance has fallen very significantly in recent years. Religious observance is higher among the Black and some ethnic minorities, but is also declining in line with the national trend. The number of active Muslims in Britain is predicted by some to overtake the number of practising Christians. If true, this might indicate a need for re-examination of both the role of PSB in providing religious programmes (ITV is no longer required to do so) and the nature of such programmes).

1 Introduction

The brief provided by the BBC Trust outlined clearly both the general and specific aims of the required research. It asked, firstly, for consideration of the important ways in which the United Kingdom is changing and the implications such changes have for public service broadcasting (PSB). Within this broad remit, particular emphasis was placed on addressing the following questions:

- What does it feel like to live in the United Kingdom today and how has Britain changed since the beginning of the 21st century?
- To what extent is the UK fragmenting, and in what ways – and does this matter?
- Conversely, in what ways is there the reality or potential of a shared cultural identity or shared set of values?
- What implications might changes in society have on the role of Public Service Broadcasting?

Reflecting the role of the Trust and the nature of the review being conducted by Ofcom, the work has also addressed the question 'what should PSB be?' More specifically, the brief required study of the extent to which PSB can contribute to an enduring sense of social cohesion in Britain – a purpose strongly emphasised by Ofcom ('maintaining our cultural identity and social cohesion') and enshrined in the BBC Charter ('sustaining citizenship and civil society').

In this context the research has, therefore, focused on both broad and specific social and cultural changes within the UK in recent years and their implications for PSB policy. These include population and migration, devolution, households and families, leisure and community participation, wealth and expenditure, technology, health, crime, etc.

Data relating to each of these areas are summarised in the various sections of the report. As stressed in the Foreword, however, raw numbers on their own rarely, if ever, provide a meaningful picture – they require interpretation and an assessment of their implications for both the present and for the future. This requires consideration not of a single, short-term trend but how each fits into a broader picture of the evolving landscape of the nation over a longer period of time. Inevitably, a degree of subjectivity is present here, reflecting implicit theoretical perspectives. The interpretations of the data are, therefore, those of the Social Issues Research Centre and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the BBC Trust. We have, however, conducted this desk research with as much care and impartiality as we can muster. The conclusions we have drawn will, we believe, contribute to a more informed debate about the role of PSB in modern society

and the impact it can have in sustaining social cohesion in a rapidly evolving world.

Data sources

The main data sources used in the study have been:

- Annual Population Survey
- British Crime Survey / Scottish Crime Survey
- British Social Attitudes Survey / Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey / Scottish Social Attitudes Survey / Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey / Young People's Social Attitudes
- Expenditure and Food Survey
- Family Expenditure Survey / Northern Ireland Family Expenditure Survey
- Family Resources Survey
- General Household Survey / Continuous Household Survey (Northern Ireland)
- Labour Force Survey / Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey
- National Food Survey
- National Travel Survey
- ONS Omnibus Survey
- Survey of English Housing
- United Kingdom Time Use Survey
- Vital Statistics for England and Wales

Additional relevant data have been taken from:

- British Election Studies
- Citizenship Survey
- International Passenger Survey
- National Diet and Nutrition Surveys
- National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles
- Offending, Crime and Justice Survey
- Scottish Household Survey
- Workplace Employee Relations Survey
- Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales

Further material has been derived from various books, journal articles, etc. which are referenced in footnotes throughout this report

These are, of course, vast stores of information available and even a modestly in-depth analysis of them would take, literally, a lifetime. We have, therefore, focused only on those data that we feel are directly relevant to public service broadcasting – not only in terms of its changing audiences but also in terms of the role that PSB plays in UK society as a whole.

Approach

In analysing social trends and their relevance to public service broadcasting we have borne in mind that relatively small changes over short periods of time often have little or no real

significance. We often encounter press stories that announce, for example, the rise in the number of people living alone and predict that Britain will become a 'nation of singletons' if this trend continues. We need in these cases, however, to know far more about the period of time over which the trend has been observed and what specific sections of society are living alone before we can assess their current and longer-term impact. If, for example, those living alone are largely elderly women whose husbands have recently died, we can attribute the trend to the impact of increasing life-expectancy and differential longevity between the sexes rather than to any significant change in lifestyles across the country as a whole.

The world around us – means of travel, communication, technology, etc. – is always changing. The UK today *looks* very different from, say the 1950s, or even just a decade ago. In many ways our everyday lives are also, on the surface, very different. But, we should remember, while the world around us evolves – new technologies and means of communication reshape traditional patterns of behaviour – we do not. We have the same basic needs as human beings as we had in the Stone Age – not just for physical survival but for social bonding and relationships, a sense of social identity within distinct communities, for shared beliefs, for shared customs and rituals, for pleasure and entertainment – for all of the those things that have been embodied in all human cultures for all time.

So, whatever the social and technological trends we observe, people, irrespective of their cultural background, and their primary needs remain much the same. This fundamental point leads us to look at social change in a rather different way from, say, that which verges on panic – the sensational headlines that often predict, on the basis of a few statistical 'blips', the imminent demise of society as we know it.

This is not to say that all kinds of social change are for the good or are *adaptive* in this evolutionary sense. Some are dysfunctional, especially those that create widening divisions in our society and, as a result, diminish social cohesion. It is in this context, however, that public service broadcasting has a very significant part to play – not by heightening our anxieties about such changes, but by offering channels through which their resolution can be achieved.

In examining the implications of social trends for PSB we assume that it has a responsibility not only to inform, educate and entertain but also to encourage the sense of social cohesion and integration on which the stability of our increasingly diverse society depends. This diversity is manifest not only in the numbers of UK citizens from other cultures and nations, but also in the contrasts between the most and the least advantaged in our communities, between the increasing number of elderly people and the young, between members of different faiths, between those who are active in the

democratic processes and between those who, perhaps of their own volition, are effectively disenfranchised. These are the areas that we explore in this report.

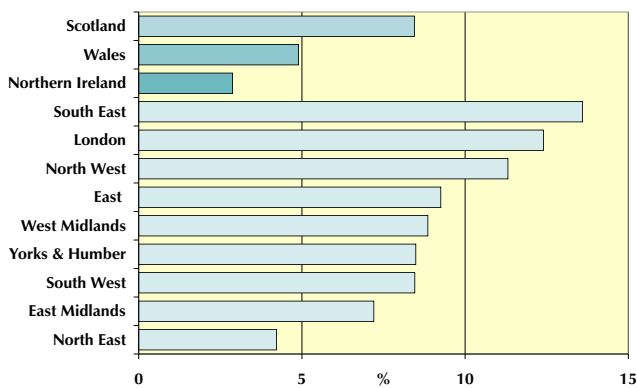
2 The UK population

The main data sources for population statistics in the UK, both actual and projected, come from the Office of National Statistics, the Government Actuary's Department, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. National population statistics for the European Union are available from Eurostat.

Current population

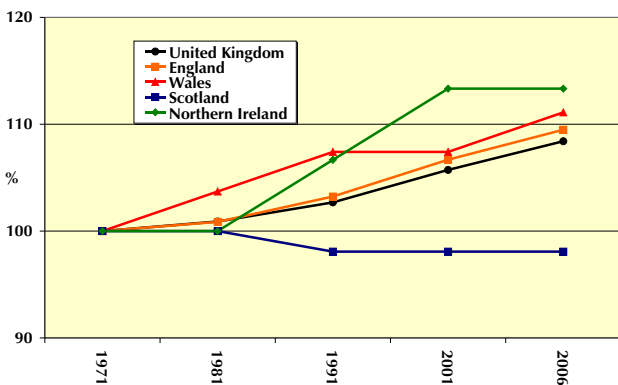
The population of the UK reached approximately 60.6 million in 2006. Eighty-four percent of the UK population are resident in England (50.8 million), 8.4% in Scotland (5.1 million), 4.9% in Wales (4 million) and 2.9% in Northern Ireland (1.7 million). Figure 2.1 shows population by country and, in England, by government region.

Figure 2.1 Percentage of UK Population – country / region, 2006



In the last 35 years the UK population has increased by 8% but there have been some variations between the constituent nations. Figure 2.2 shows that the largest percentage increase in population during this period occurred in Northern Ireland

Figure 2.2. Increases in UK population, 1971-2006



(13%). This represents an increase of approximately 200,000 people, all of which occurred in the 20 year period between 1981 and 2001. The populations of both England and Wales also increased, by 9.5% (4.4 million) and 11% (300,000) respectively. Only the population of Scotland fell during this period – by 2%, equivalent to 100,000 people.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the projected proportional increases in population from 2006 to 2031. The total population of the UK is predicted to increase by over 17% in the next 25 years when the total UK population will reach 71.1 million. Rises in population are anticipated in all of the constituent nations, with the biggest proportional increase likely to be experienced in England (19%) and Northern Ireland (17.6%).

Figure 2.3. Projected UK population increases, 2006-2031

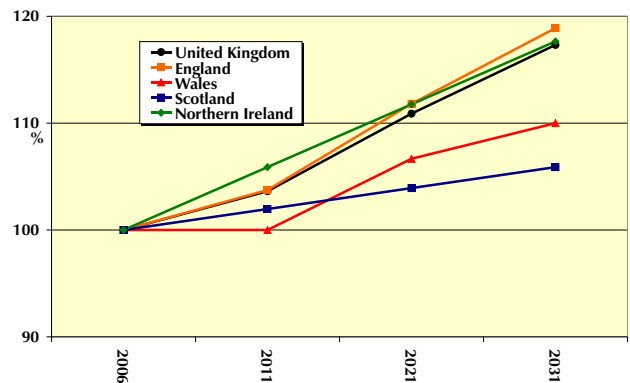
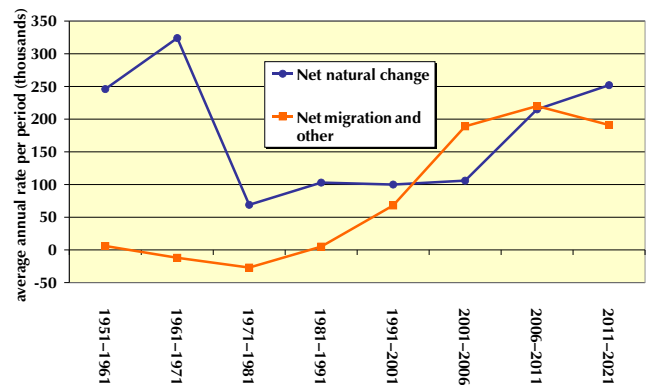


Figure 2.4 shows the components of population change from 1951 projected to 2021 – the balance between net migration and natural change (i.e. the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths in a given period). It is evident from these data that migration has become a significant positive component of population change in the last 25 years.

Figure 2.4. Components of UK Population change, 1951-2021, projected to 2021



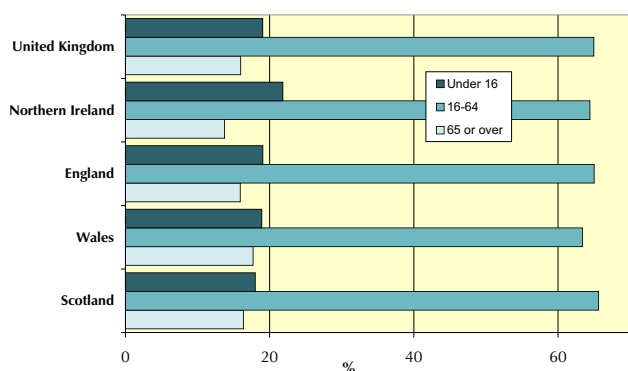
Between 1951 and 1981 net migration in the UK was minus 280,000 – more people left the UK than entered. During this period the population of the UK increased by just over 6 million. Between 1981 and 2006 the annual net natural change remained relatively constant, averaging an increase of 100,000 people per year. Net migration, however, increased significantly, averaging an increase of just 5,000 per year in the '80s and then rising to 189,000 per year for the period 2001-2006. Net migration and other changes exceeded natural change in 1998, a situation that has continued ever since. The peak rate of net migration occurred in 2005 reaching 262,000. Between 2005 and 2006, this decreased by 28% to 189,000 (more detailed analysis of aspects of migration is contained in Section 3).

ONS projections suggest that migration is likely to continue exerting a significant influence on population growth over the next 25 years, with births among immigrant families expected to account for up to 23% of all natural change from 2006 to 2031.

Age of population

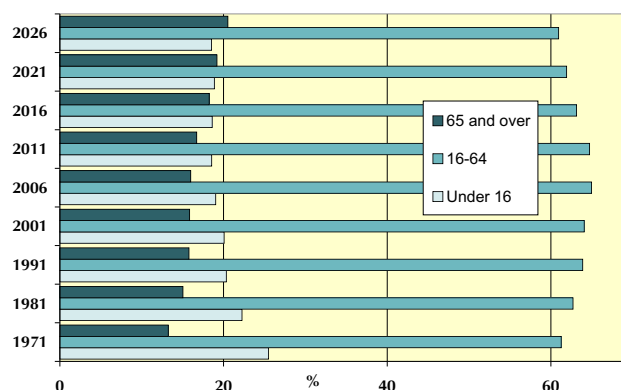
Figure 2.5 shows the structure of the UK population by age in 2006. The proportion of the population comprising 16 to 64 year olds varied by a little over 2% between the nations, with Scotland having the highest proportion of 16 to 64 year olds (65.6%) and Wales having the lowest (63.4%). This cohort represented 65% of the entire UK population. There were, however, more substantial national differences between the youngest and the oldest age bands. In 2006, for example, Northern Ireland, had the highest proportion of under 16s (21.8%) and the lowest proportion of those aged 65 and over (13.7%). Conversely, Wales had the highest proportion of 65 and overs (17.7%) and Scotland had the smallest proportion of under 16s (18%).

Figure 2.5. Percentage of population by age group, 2006



The eight percent increase in the UK population over the last 35 years has not been equally distributed across all age bands. The UK population is getting older. Figure 2.6 shows the changing age profile of the UK population from 1971 projected to 2026.

Figure 2.6. Percentage of UK population by age group, 1971-2026

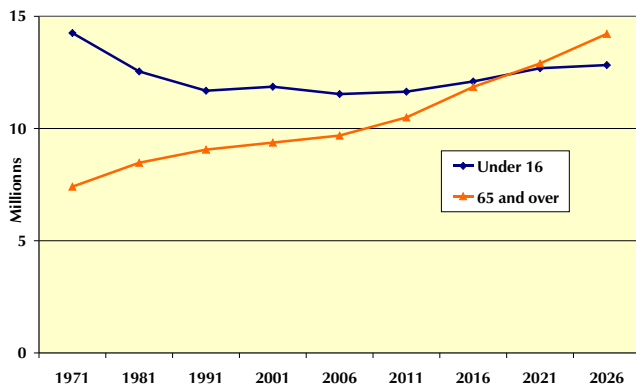


Between 1971 and 2006 the number of people in the UK aged 65 and over increased by nearly one third (31%) from 7.4 million to 9.7 million. In 1971 this age group accounted for just 13% of the UK population. By 2006 this had increased to 16%. By 2026 over one fifth (20.5%) of the UK population is expected to be aged 65 or over.

There were over 14.2 million under 16 year olds in the UK in 1971, representing over a quarter (25.5%) of the population at that time. Over the next 35 years the population of under 16s fell by nearly one fifth (19%) to 11.5 million in 2006. While the number of under 16s is predicted to rise in the next 20 years, by 11% from 11.5 million to 12.8 million, the rate of increase is less than that forecast for the 65 and overs. By 2021 it is anticipated that the number of over 65 year olds (12.9 million) will, for the first time, exceed the numbers of under 16s (12.7 million), as shown in Figure 2.7 below.

Among the older age groups, the increase in the number and proportion of people age 85 and over has been substantial. In 1971, there were approximately 500,000 people aged 85 or more, which at that time corresponded to 0.9% of the population. Over the next 25 years the number of people in this category more than doubled to 1.2 million, or 2% of the UK population. Furthermore, ONS projections predict that the percentage increase in the number of people aged 90 or more will be 360% for males and 190% for females over the next 20 years. While in 2006 there were 317,000 women aged 90 or more compared with 106,000 men, male mortality rates have improved more rapidly than those for females over the last 30 years and will be a key component of this change.

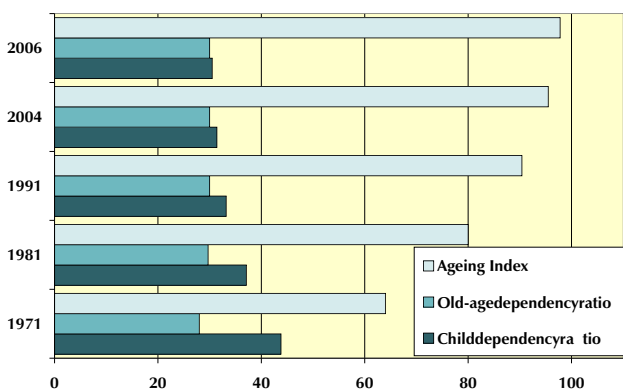
Figure 2.7. UK population by age group, 1971-2026



Looking at a number of age structure indicators it is possible to compare age groups, both old and young, in terms of their dependency on the population that are of working age.

Figure 2.8 shows three such measures: the child dependency ratio, the old age dependency ratio and the ageing index. It is the ageing index, the population above state pension age per 100 children aged 0-15, that shows the most dramatic change.

Figure 2.8. Age structure indicators, 1971-2006



Since 1971 the ageing index in the UK has risen by 52% from 64.0 to 97.8. The number of people of above state pension age relative to those of working age – the old age dependency ratio – increased 7% from 28 people above 65 per 100 of those of working age to 30 in the 20 year period from 1971 to 1991. This ratio has remained constant for the last 25 years. The movement in the child dependency ratio, however, has been more significant. In 1971 there were 44 under 16 year olds per hundred population of working age. In the last 35 years this has declined by over 30% to 30.5.

Declining fertility rates and significant improvements in mortality rates, which have a more significant impact on the older generations, are fuelling an ageing population. This

situation is by no means peculiar to the UK. In nine of the EU-27 countries the under 16 year olds were, by 2006, already outnumbered by those aged 65 and over.

In both Italy and Greece, where over 19 percent of their respective populations are aged 65 or more, the ratio of this cohort to under 16s is 1.3:1 and 1.25:1 respectively. Ireland has the youngest population of any EU country. In 2006 21.9% of its population were under 16 years of age, almost double the proportion (11.1%) that were 65 and above.

The UK has a higher than EU average proportion of under 16s (19.1%, EU average 17.2%) while at the same time having a smaller percentage of 16 to 64 year olds (64.9%, EU average 66.1%) and people 65 and over (16%, EU average 16.8%).

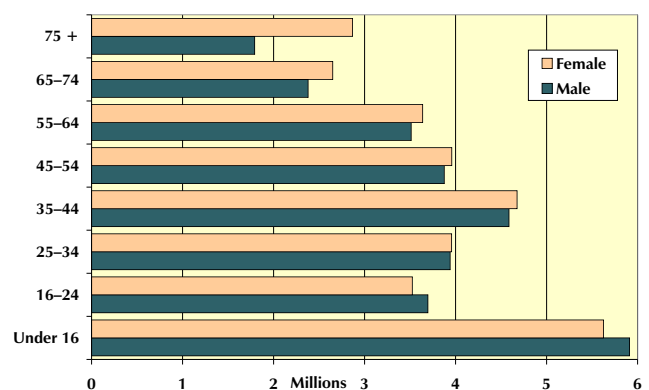
Projections indicate that by 2050 the EU-27 may have nearly twice the number of people aged 65 and over than those under 16.

The extent of this demographic shift towards an older population has significant social implications in a number of areas. As people live longer and remain more physically and economically active in later life, perceptions of ageing and retirement will need to change. Ageing Baby Boomers do not fit into the 'comfy' stereotype of retirement. Nor, however, are they accurately characterised by media reports of 'bungee-jumping grannies'. PSB has a role to play both in recognising this important demographic change but also in accurately reflecting the lived experiences of Britain's ageing population.

Gender of population

Of the total population of the UK, 51% (30.9 million) are female, 49% are male (29.7 million). Figure 2.9 presents a breakdown of the UK population, as of 2006, by age and gender.

Figure 2.9. UK Population 2006 – by age and gender



Over the last 85 years or so, male birth rates year-on-year have exceeded female births. The greater total number of females present in the UK, however, reflects both a longer life-expectancy for women but also patterns of net migration. Males outnumber females up to the 16-24 year age band. Among all older age groups there are more women than men. This is most apparent in the over 75 cohort in which, in 2006, women outnumbered men by 1.6:1.

Implications for PSB

- The ageing population has a number of significant implications for health, welfare and social support . In 2006, for every person of state pension age there were 3.3 people of working age. In the next 25 years it is predicted that this figure will fall to 2.9. This figure, however, takes into account reforms to the state pension age which will, within the next 18, years see women's state pension age rise from 60 to 65, shortly followed by an increase in state pension age to 66 by 2026 for both sexes. Without these revisions to state pension qualification, by 2031 there would be only 2.2 people of working age for every person of pensionable age. PSB may have an important educative role in explaining the rationale behind these legislative changes.
- Despite the predictions of a reduction in net migration over the next 25 years, the UK is likely to continue experiencing the indirect impact of long-term migration, with births to migrants expected to account for nearly a quarter of all natural population change over the next quarter of a century. This is likely to have a significant impact on the focus of future discussions concerning British identity, immigration and related policies. PSB will play a role in reflecting these debates.
- While the UK's economically dependent population is set to increase, it is forecast to do so at a slower rate than other European member states. This may lead to increased economic disparities within the EU with implications for our relationship with European partners. PSB will, again, need to reflect debates on this issue.
- An ageing population and the increase in retirement age will mean that the proportion of elderly people in the workforce will increase. Issues such as age discrimination in this context are already at the forefront of discussion. PSB will need to make sure that it stays abreast of this debate and reflects concerns via its output – for example, by providing appropriate representation on screen and by fostering balanced debate.
- The changing age structure of the British population has, and will continue to have, an impact on the nature of

PSB's potential audience. The BBC and other broadcasters, in wishing to cater for all sections of society, will need to take note of these trends. With increased diversification in this and other contexts, will PSB respond by tailoring content more narrowly? How will PSB respond to the challenge of making programmes and services which bring people together at times of national importance?

- What will happen to commercial broadcaster's advertising revenue as the population ages? Will advertising spend recognise the population shifts? What knock-on impact could this have on funding models?
- How will PSB's own staffing structures respond to an ageing population?

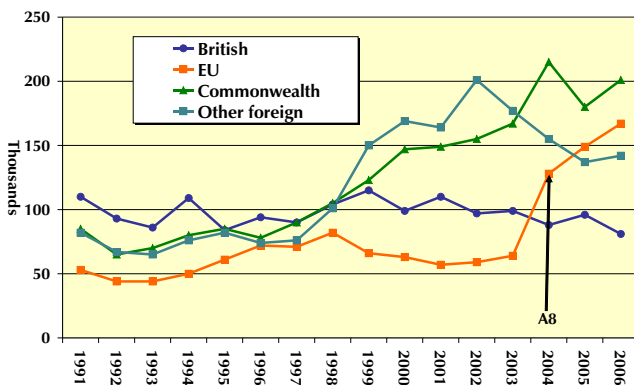
3 Diversity

The United Kingdom, it is frequently claimed, is a multicultural society, rich in or 'diluted' by (depending on one's philosophical viewpoint) diversity. This, it is also claimed, is largely due to patterns of immigration over the past 50 years from the Commonwealth and, more recently, parts of mainland Europe.

Immigration

Obtaining accurate information on immigration is not quite so simple as one might suppose. There are three primary sources of data: the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which samples about 250,000 people a year arriving and departing from 16 airports, 12 sea ports and using the Channel Tunnel; the Labour Force Survey, which provides data on where recent in-migrants have settled; and the Home Office administrative sources on asylum seekers. Integrating these data gives the picture of immigration (inflow) shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Migration inflow



Here we can see that immigration from Commonwealth countries has risen consistently since 1991 with over 200,000 citizens from those countries entering Britain in 2006. The number of people entering Britain to live and work from European Union countries stayed relatively stable until 2003 but then accelerated rapidly after the accession to the EU of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – the 'A8' countries.

Data from the Workers Registration Scheme show that of the A8 EU countries, by far the biggest number coming to work and live in the UK has been from Poland, as shown in Figure 3.2.

In addition to an inflow of citizens from other countries, there has also been an outflow from the UK, as shown in Figure 3.3. Here we can see that the biggest group is British citizens

Figure 3.2. Entrants from EU A8 countries

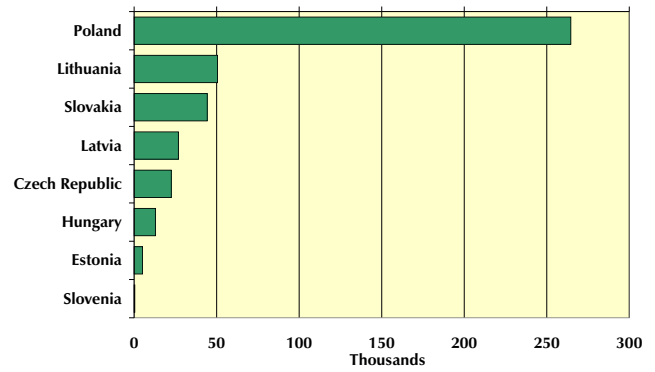
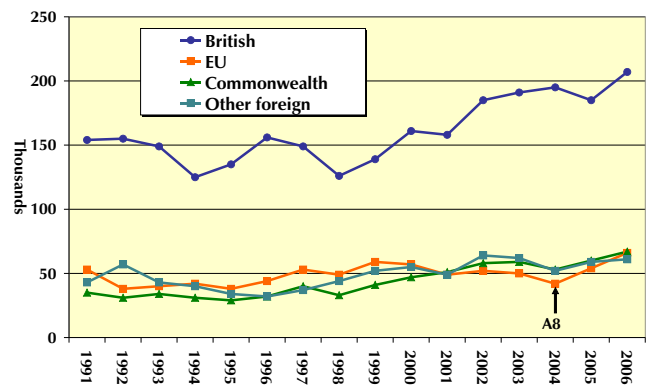


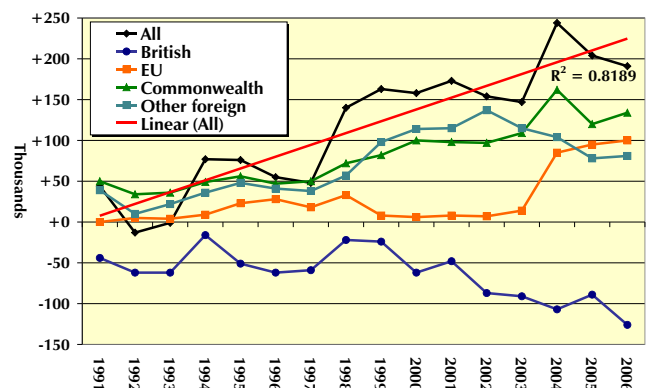
Figure 3.3. Migration outflow



leaving the country, but there are also signs of an increase in the return of other EU nationals after 2004.

Combining the inflow and outflow data results in the net balance of migration shown in Figure 3.4. Here we can see that there has been a very significant rise in the net level of immigration over the past 17 years, although the current trend

Figure 3.4. Migration balance



is now downwards. We can also see that although there was a sharp increase in the balance of migration from the EU in 2004, it almost levelled in the following two years. It is estimated now in 2008 that around half of the Polish people who came to work here have returned home. The increasing weakness of the British pound compared with the Euro may accelerate this process further.

Ethnicity

Although the UK is now viewed as a multicultural society with diverse ethnic groups within the population, it remains overwhelmingly White, as shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5. Ethnicity in the UK

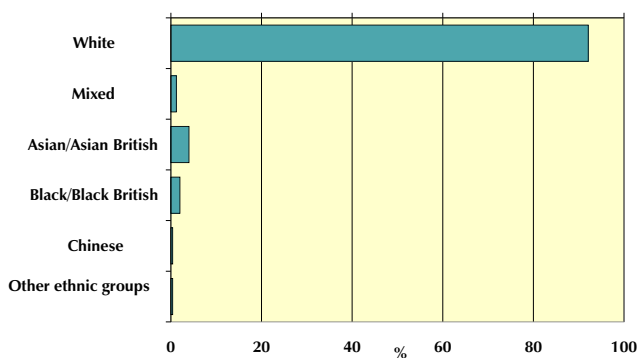
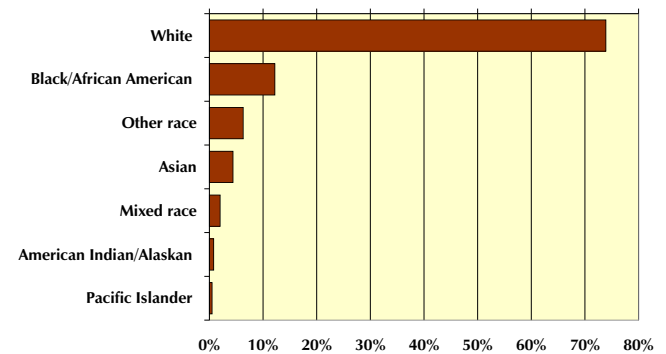


Figure 3.5 is derived from data supplied by the 2001 Census, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. We should note, of course, that these data are seven years old and the pattern may have changed slightly since 2001 given the levels of immigration shown above and the family sizes of some minority ethnic groups noted in the next section. In 2001, however, it was the case that over 92% of the UK population was White and that the largest other ethnic group was Asian/British Asian, accounting for 4% of the population. Black people constituted 2% of the population.

In this sense, the UK is significantly less ethnically diverse than the United States, as shown in Figure 3.6. In America 26% of the population is classified as 'non-white' with the biggest group being Black/African American (12% of the population). The pattern in the United States is further complicated by the fact that within the White and Black groups a further 18% are classified as Hispanic/Latino.

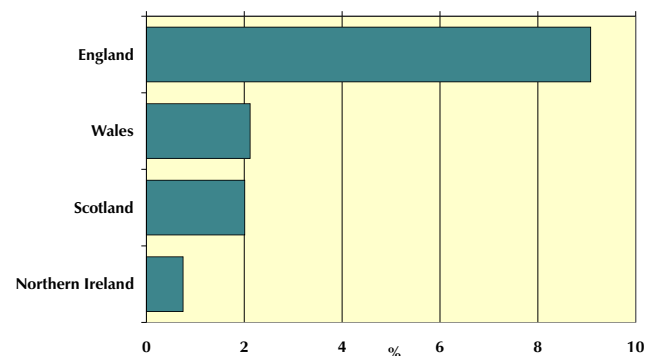
Despite the manifestly higher level of ethnic diversity in the US, however, data show that 90% of African-American children are in black-majority schools and 90% of whites live in areas where the black population is negligible.

Figure 3.6. Ethnicity in the USA



In the UK, the issue of diversity is essentially one for England only – the number of people in ethnic minorities living in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is very much smaller, as we can see from Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7. Ethnicity in the UK – by nation



While 9% of the English population is non-White, it is less than 1% in Northern Ireland. Even within England, the ethnic minority population is concentrated in just a few areas, as shown in Figure 3.8 below.

We should note here, of course, that while we have seen a growth in Black and ethnic minorities of 53% between 1991 and 2001, between 50% and 80% of Black and ethnic minorities were born in Britain – the rise has not simply been caused by immigration.

Nearly a half of all members of ethnic minorities in England live in London, with the West Midlands being home for a further 13%. It is this concentration of ethnic minorities that is thought to be responsible for enduring prejudice against them, rather than the total numbers in the population as a whole. Such prejudicial attitudes are highlighted in an Ipsos/MORI survey which found that in 2005, 54% of people agreed with

Figure 3.8. Ethnicity in England – by region



the statement 'Parts of this country don't feel like Britain any more because of immigration'. This proportion has now risen to 58%. Nearly 60% of people think that there are too many immigrants in the country altogether. Other data show that the proportion of people who describe themselves as 'very' or a 'little' prejudiced has changed hardly at all since 1985 – it stands, even in these times of political correctness and apparently increased tolerance, at around 30%.

The multiculturalism debate

The raw figures concerning immigration and cultural diversity can never, by themselves of course, account for social attitudes towards ethnic groups or specific immigrant populations. The post-2004 influx of Polish migrant workers resulted in extensive media commentary about Britain being 'swamped' or about jobs being lost by British workers. Now, of course, serious concerns are being expressed about the availability of such migrant workers 'drying up' in the near future, to the detriment of a number of industries and public services.

Neither can the numbers themselves tell whether there are 'too many' immigrants or members of ethnic minorities at any one time. These are philosophical and political issues which mean that the same statistics can be interpreted in many different ways. The proper monitoring of social trends, therefore, involves not only analysis of statistical data but assessment of the debates that surround them.

Central to the issue of immigration and diversity over the past decade or so has been the issue of multiculturalism – the extent to which expression of diversity should be encouraged or the degree to which integration and assimilation should be fostered.

This debate sharply changed course recently when Trevor Phillips, head of the Commission for Racial Equality (now the Equality and Human Rights Commission), argued strongly and provocatively in 2004 that the term 'multiculturalism' was no longer useful – it encouraged rather than deterred separateness. He also the point that "Britain has always been a multi-ethnic society. Even before the Romans, these islands were home to a range of tribes – all described as British. Cultural and ethnic differences once thought to mark people as foreigners are today part of the tapestry of our national life."¹

He went on to argue, even more provocatively perhaps, that multiculturalism results in 'have a nice day' racism – treating people from ethnic minorities with respect, but doing little to really include them. It is inclusion and integration that should, say he and an increasing number of others, be at the front of the debate. Celebrating diversity, but ignoring inequality, they argue, inevitably leads to entrenched segregation.

Such issues need to be taken into account in any consideration of social trends in Britain, particularly in the context of debate about the role of Public Service Broadcasting – the point being again that statistics on their own, do not get us very far.

Implications for PSB

- **There is a need for fresh debate about about diversity in the UK and the notion of multiculturalism. Public service broadcasting has a significant role to play in fostering and facilitating such debate.**
- **While the UK prides itself on being a tolerant nation in which diversity is seen as a positive attribute, members of the Black and ethnic communities are among the least advantaged in society. We have noted in other sections of this report specific areas of disadvantage in terms of work, income, crime, etc. Again, it could be argued, not only does PSB need to be part of a more 'level playing field', it should also actively seek to promote debate on ways of reducing disparities between ethnic groups in the UK.**
- **PSB can directly aid this debate by providing timely and accurate information about what is really happening in ethnic minority and immigrant communities – perhaps dispelling some of the myths that currently stand in the way of progress and foster the levels of prejudice that are still evident in the UK.**

¹ Multiculturalism's legacy is 'have a nice day' racism. *Guardian*, May 28 2004

4 Households and families

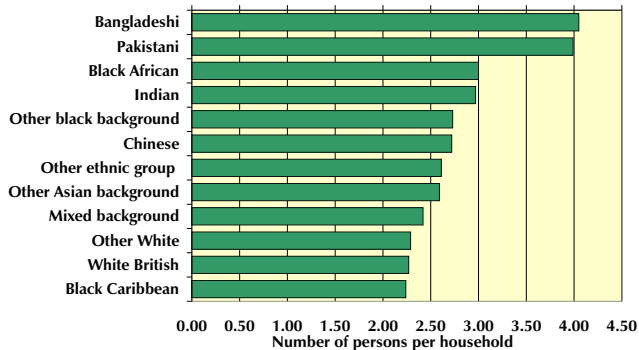
The main sources of data relating to trends in households and families in Britain are the General Household Survey (GHS), the 2001 Census, the British Panel Household Survey (BHPS) and the Labour Force Study (LFS). Data for Northern Ireland are available in the NI Continuous Household Survey.

Size of household

There are 24.4 million households in Great Britain, with an additional 672,000 in Northern Ireland (NI Department of Finance and Personnel). The number of households in Britain has increased by 31% since 1971. In the same period, however, the average size of household has decreased by 17%, from 2.9 to 2.4 persons per household.

Factors influencing these trends include an increase in one-person households, a rise in lone-parent families and a reduction in family size. Household size also varies according to ethnicity. Data from the 2006 General Household Survey show that Bangladeshi and Pakistani households are larger (4.05 and 3.99 persons per household respectively) than families in other ethnic groups, as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1. Household size by ethnic group



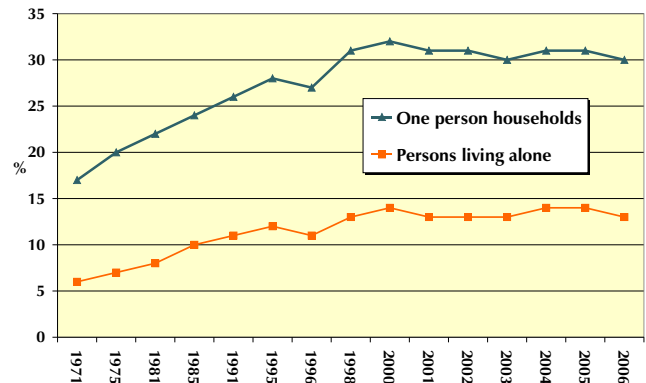
Living alone

In the last 35 years the percentage of one-person households, as a proportion of all households, has increased by 76% from 17% to 30%, as shown in Figure 4.2. Here we can see that the proportion of one-person households peaked in 2000 (32%) but has remained relatively constant since then.

While approaching a third of all UK homes are occupied by just one person, this does not mean that a third of the population live alone. The current figure is, in fact, 13% – 7.5 million people – as also shown in Figure 4.2.

While this proportion has doubled since 1971, the most significant rises occurring up to 1995, the large majority of

Figure 4.2. Proportions of single person households and persons living alone

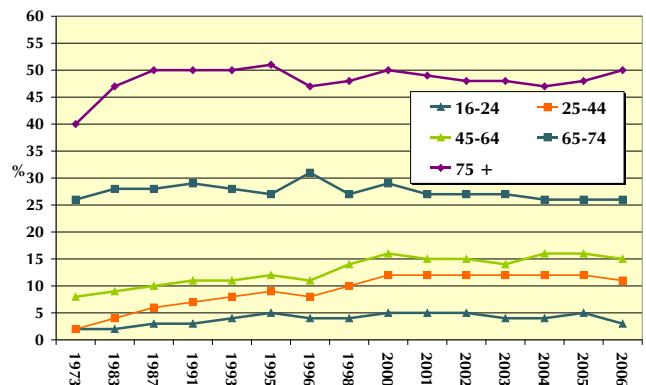


people in Britain do not live alone. Trends in this area have now been quite stable for the past six years.

Nearly three quarters (72%) of people in Britain still live in households comprising two (29%), three (20%) or four (23%) persons, although the proportion of the British population living in households of six or more has fallen by 62% since 1971.

More than three quarters (76%) of those living alone are over 64 years of age and a half are 75 years or older. The proportion of people living on their own that are in these age bands has increased by 25% (from 40%-50%) since 1973, as shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3. Persons living alone by age

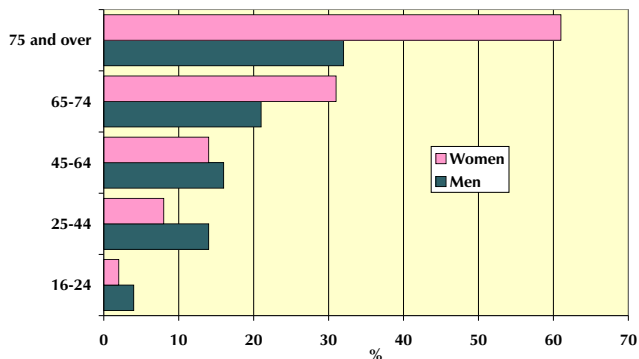


The fact that the largest group living alone is the elderly is no surprise – it is mainly due to the death of a spouse in an 'empty nest' home.

A significantly greater proportion of lone-householders over the age of 64 years are women. Below that age, males are more likely to live by themselves than their female

counterparts, as shown in Figure 4.4. Over 60% of women aged 75 or over live alone.

Figure 4.4. Persons living alone by gender



While the increases in the number of elderly people living alone are understandable – due mainly to increased life expectancy, particularly among women – there have been also increases in the proportion of single occupants who are below state pension age. In 1971 this cohort represented 6% of one person households – by 2006 it had more than doubled to 14%. The percentage of all those living alone who are aged between 25-44 increased six-fold between 1973 and 2000 – from 2% to 12%. This rise has attracted media interest. The *BBC Magazine*, for example, has referred to the 'meal for one' society and noted that "The increase in single-occupancy properties has naturally had an impact on housing supply."¹ Other coverage has been rather more sensational. We should remember, however, that the trends in this area have been relatively stable since 2000 and the numbers of people in their 20s to 50s living alone actually fell slightly between 2005 and 2006.

Lone-parent families

The proportion of children living in lone-parent families in Great Britain more than trebled between 1972 and 2007, from 7% to 23%. Of all children living with a lone parent today, 87% live with their mother, as shown in Figure 4.5. The proportion of dependent children living in lone-father families has remained relatively constant at a low level over the last 35 years.

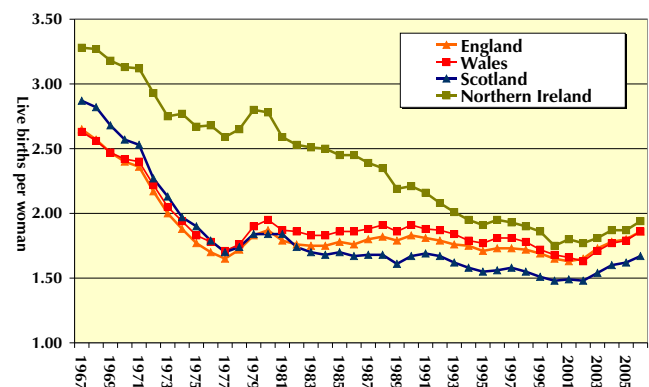
The dramatic rise in households headed by one parent has been accompanied by some shifts in attitude. Data from the British Social Attitudes Survey (2007/2008) indicate that over two-fifths (42%) of people in the UK now believe that a single

parent can bring up a child as well as two – an increase of 20% from the 35% recorded in 1994. A recent poll conducted by Populus and commissioned by the charity One Parent Families, however, shows that negative stereotyping of single mothers may still persist. The respondents estimated 31% of single mothers to be teenagers (the actual figure is 2%) and that only 41% were in work (the actual figure is 57%).

Fertility

The total fertility rate in 2006 was 1.84 children per woman. Since 2001, the year in which the total fertility rate in the UK reached a record low of 1.63 children per woman, fertility rates have been increasing steadily. Northern Ireland continues to have the highest fertility rate in the UK (1.94 children per woman) and Scotland the lowest (1.67 children per woman) as shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5. Fertility rates in the UK



Despite the recent increases, fertility rates have fallen by 38% since the end of the 'baby boom' peaks of the 1960s (2.95 births per woman). In 1973 the total fertility rate in the UK fell below 2.1 – the estimated level, for developed countries, 'at which a population would be exactly replacing itself in the long term, other things being equal' – and has remained below this level ever since.

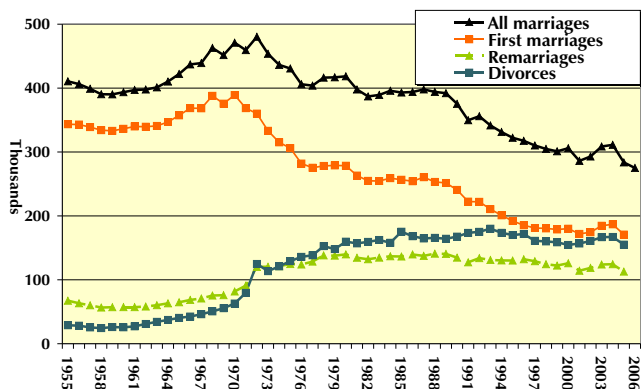
The average age at which women have a first child has increased from 23.7 in 1971 to 27.3 in 2005. The average age for giving birth in the UK in 2006 was 29.2 years, a 2% increase since 2001.

1 See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3445091.stm>

Marriage and divorce

Since 1972, a year in which 480,285 weddings took place in the UK, the trend in the number of marriages is one of decline, as shown in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6. Marriages per year

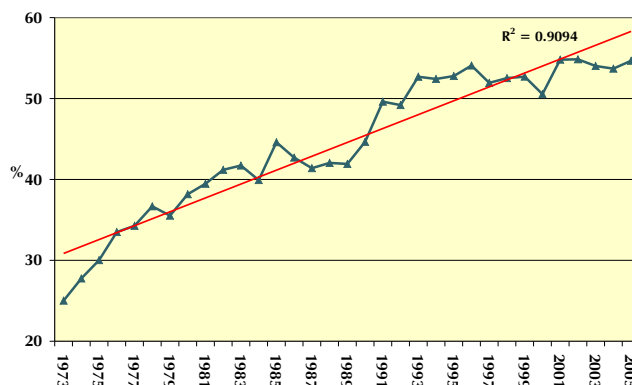


There were 275,140 weddings in the UK in 2006, 3% fewer than in 2005. In England and Wales the number of marriages fell by 4% in that year compared with the previous year to 236,980, the lowest figure since 1895. Similarly, in Scotland the number of marriages declined by 3% on the previous year to 29,898. Northern Ireland reversed the trend and experienced a 1% increase in weddings in 2006, but in this year also witnessed the country's highest recorded number of divorces.

The divorce rate in the UK as a whole has remained comparably stable since the mid 1980s, although the slight peak in 2004 caused the media, including the BBC, to see this as a significant trend.² The 2004 'blip' was immediately followed by two years of declining divorce rates, prompting the Office for National Statistics to issue a bulletin 'Divorces fall by 7 per cent in 2006', noting that it then amounted to 12 per year per 1,000 married population.³ This is a good illustration of the dangers, perhaps, of reading too much into short-term social trends.

Changes in the number of divorces is related, of course, to the number of marriages. If we calculate the ratio of divorces to marriages each year we obtain the picture shown in Figure 4.7. Here we can see that for every hundred marriages in 1973, there were 25 divorces. In 2005, for every 100 couples who got married, 55 got divorced. This is statistically a very significant increase.

Figure 4.7. Ratio of divorces to marriages



These trends in marriage and divorce are by no means peculiar to the UK – similar patterns are evident in data from other European countries. In 2005, for example, in ten member states the divorce rate reached 50% or more of the marriage rate. The highest rate of divorce compared to marriage was in Belgium (71%), while the lowest (excluding Malta where divorce is not possible) was in the Republic of Ireland (16%). The average for the EU-27 was 43%. The EU-27's highest number of divorces per 1,000 population was recorded in Lithuania (3.3 per 1,000), while Cypriots have highest rates of marriage (7.8 per 1,000).

Despite the general decline in the numbers of marriages noted above, marriage remains the most common type of partnership between men and women. In 2006, 70% of the 17.1 million families in the UK (approximately 12 million families) contained a married couple.

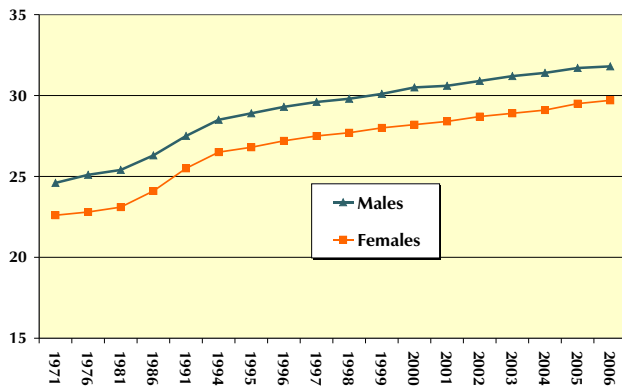
The average age at which people marry for the first time has increased significantly in the last 35 years. In England and Wales in 1971, for example, the average age of first marriages for men was 24.6 years and for women it was 22.6 years. By 2006, the average age of men getting married for the first time had risen to 31.8 years and for women to 29.7 years, as shown in Figure 4.8 below. The most significant increase in age, however, was between 1981 and 1994. Since then the rise has been more gradual.

In 1971, of men getting married for the first time, just over one tenth (10.1%) were under 20 years old. By 2006 men under 20 accounted for just 0.6% of first-time husbands. The proportion of teenage first-time brides also decreased significantly over the same period. In 1971, nearly one third of all women getting married for the first time were under 20

2 See, for example, 'Divorce rate highest since 1996' – <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4200410.stm>

3 <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=170>

Figure 4.8. Age of first marriage



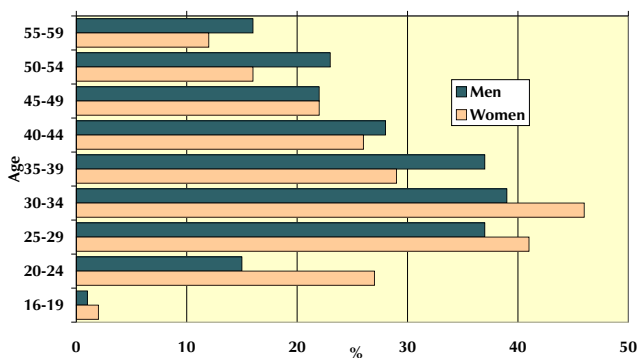
(31.1%). This proportion fell to just 2.2% by 2006 (see also Section 9 of this report).

Cohabiting

Since 1986 there has been a significant rise in the number of people in Britain who cohabit without being married. In that year, 11% of all unmarried men under 60 and 13% of all unmarried women under 60 were cohabiting. Over the next 20 years these proportions increased by more than twofold to 24% for men and 25% for women.

Figure 4.9 shows the percentage of non-married people cohabiting by age and sex derived from the General Household Survey 2006.

Figure 4.9. Percentages of men and women cohabiting



Forty-six percent of women aged between 30-34 and over two-fifths (41%) aged between 25-29 were cohabiting in 2006. Of the under 35s, women are more likely to cohabit than men. Of the cohorts aged 35 and over, men make up a greater proportion of cohabiters. Comparing data from the 2001 and the 2006 GHS, we observe that there has been a recent

decline in the proportion of under 25 year olds – both men and women – who were cohabiting.

Not only are young people choosing to marry later, they also appear to be delaying moving in together. The most notable change in this five year period was the decline in the proportion of 16-19 year old women that were cohabiting from 8% in 2001 to 2% in 2006.

Cohabiting couple families tend to be younger than married couple families. In 2001, 50% of cohabiting couple families in the UK were headed by an individual who was under 35 years of age. For married couple families this figure was one in ten.

Civil Partnerships

There were 18,059 civil partnerships formed in the UK between December 2005 and December 2006. A total of 16,173 took place in England with 1,131 in Scotland, 627 in Wales and 128 in Northern Ireland. In relation to the size of the populations of the nations England had the highest rate of civil partnerships (3.2 per 10,000 total population) and Northern Ireland had the lowest (0.7 per 10,000 total population). Males accounted for 60% of all civil partnerships during this period and 25% of all civil partnership ceremonies were conducted in London.

Implications for PSB

- **There have been significant changes in family structures and composition over the past three decades. There are also increasingly significant differences in family size between the different ethnic groups. One would expect these to be reflected in all areas of PSB programming.**
- **While we have become more accepting of lone parents, adverse stereotypes still exist. To what extent can PSB reduce such stereotypes by, for example, not featuring lone parents as young or teenagers – perhaps reflecting more accurately the average ages of such parents?**
- **The trends towards solo living among people below retirement age have been far less significant in recent years than we might have been led to believe. To what extent can/should PSB more accurately reflect the trends? To what extent are younger singletons portrayed negatively in PSB programming?**
- **The number of couples who choose to cohabit rather than getting married has doubled over the past two decades. Over 40% of people in their early to mid 30s choose this lifestyle. To what extent does PSB accurately reflect these patterns of living?**

- PSB will need to reflect different patterns of living for the gay and lesbian community and the uneven spread of those living in civil partnerships across the UK nations.

5 National identity

Debate on what it means to be British has been running for a long time but has grown much louder in the past few years – prompted in large part by Gordon Brown when he was Chancellor. It reflects and is often centered around issues such as the devolution of powers to the nations and the extent to which the UK is facing an imminent loss of cohesion. This is not, of course, a new issue – the Scottish political commentator Tom Nairn¹ forecast the increasing 'unsustainability' of the United Kingdom state and its probable fragmentation into a number of separate republics in the near future in his book *The Break-up of Britain* in 1977.

Discussion of British identity is also closely linked to debates on ethnicity, migration and diversity, which we explore in more detail in other sections of this report.

Britishness

Most UK think tanks have conducted some form of research exploring the dilemma of defining 'Britishness' in the 21st century. SIRC has also conducted original research, as yet unpublished, into notions of Britishness and belonging. Other useful and reliable sources of statistical data on national identity in the UK include the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA), a number of reports from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and related government sources. Statistics on their own, however, do not tell the whole story – they need careful interpretation. For this reason we have drawn on recent thinking from leading academic and political figures in the field.

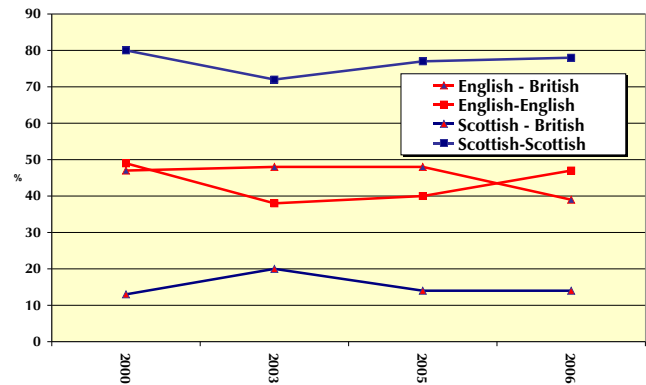
Current research shows that national identity (whether Scottish, Welsh, English, Northern Irish, and/or British) still remains a significant means of defining who we are (BSA 2006/7, BSA 2007-8, SIRC 2008, Ethnos/CRE 2005). It is, however, important to look at how questions of national identity and belonging are posed in order to get a better understanding of how British identity is changing in the UK today.

Scottish and English identity

When given just one choice of national identity – choosing between 'British' or 'English', or 'British' or 'Scottish' – BSA data indicate that most people in Britain opt for a country-specific identity over British identity, as shown in Figure 5.1.

Here we can see, for example, that the proportion of Scots choosing 'British' over 'Scottish' in 2007/8 is only 14%. This is

Figure 5.1. Forced choice of nationality

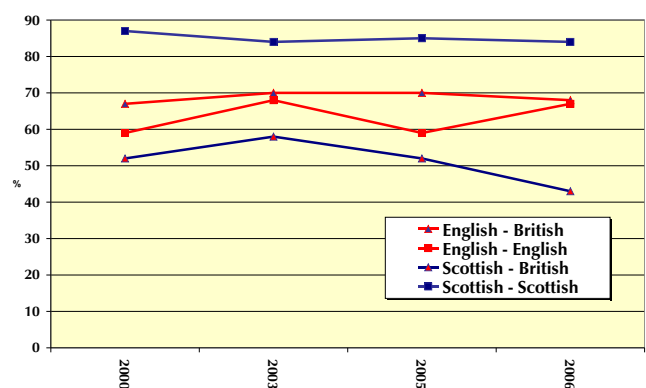


less than half the number of Scots describing themselves as British in 1974.

The trend towards national identity over British identity among the English is far less marked but it is still there – 47% say 'English', 38% say 'British'. This compares with 31% saying 'English' and 63% saying 'British' in 1992.

When people are given a multiple choice of identities – e.g. they can choose 'British' and 'English' or 'Scottish' – a slightly more complex picture emerges. As we can see from Figure 5.2, around 85% Scots have resolutely described themselves as Scottish over the past few years while the number saying that they also feel British has declined to 43%. Among the English, however, just under 70% describe themselves as British as well as English.

Figure 5.2. Multiple choice of nationality

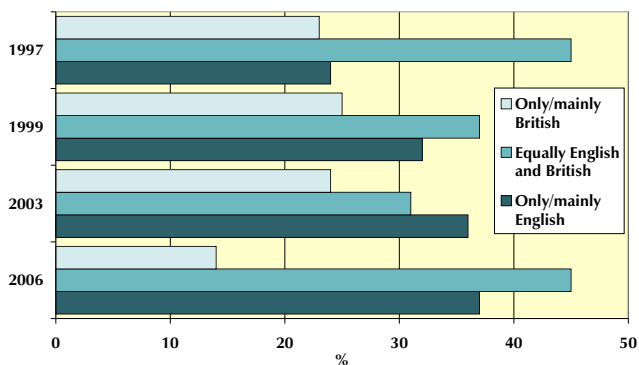


Using what is known as the Moreno method, people are given a choice of describing themselves as 'Only or Mainly English', 'Equally British and English', 'Only or Mainly British', the proportion of English people describing themselves as only or

1 Nairn, T. (1977) *The Break-up of Britain : Crisis and neonationalism*, London: New Left Books.

mainly British has declined since 1999 – down now to only 14%, as shown in Figure 5.3. The proportion seeing themselves as equally English and British, however, is now the same as it was in 1997. This more inclusive sense of 'dual' or 'multiple' national identities is an important and enduring aspect of how we define British identity. The difference now, it would appear, is that people are more comfortable with the idea of being British *and* Scottish, or British *and* English. These identities are placed in a hierarchy of social importance, but they are not mutually exclusive.

Figure 5.3. Identity – Moreno method



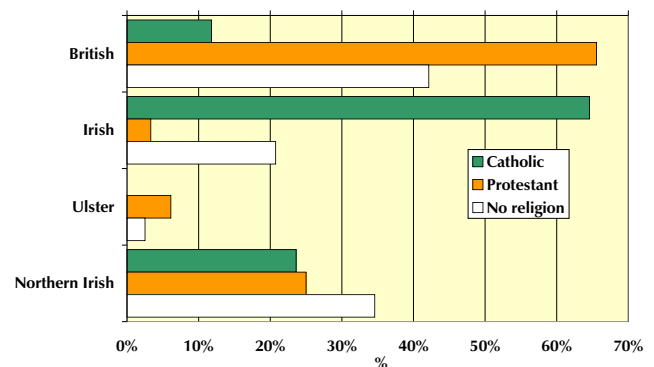
Welsh identity

Less detailed information is available concerning Welsh identity. In the 2001 National Labour Survey respondents were asked if they considered their national identity to be Welsh, English, Scottish, Irish, British or another national identity. They could choose as many or as few options as they wished. Sixty per cent of adults in Wales stated their national identity as Welsh only. A further 7 per cent described their national identity as Welsh but included another identity, most commonly British, in their answer. Dominant among the 'other' category was British. While this suggests that a Welsh national identity is more important than being British, it is important to note that these data provide no indication of what the 'other' identity consists of. Better data are needed to get a clearer picture of changes to national identity in Wales.

Northern Irish identity

In Northern Ireland there was a predictable difference, shown in Figure 5.4, between Catholic and Protestant respondents to questions about national identity in the most recent Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2006). It is worth noting, however, that a significant proportion of both Catholics and Protestants claim 'Northern Irish' as their identity as well as being 'Irish' or 'British', respectively.

Figure 5.4. Identity in Northern Ireland



Ethnic Identity

It is important to note here that government surveys rarely report specific ethnic differences in the context of national identity choice within the UK. It is clear, however, from our own data, the 2001 Census and the ONS *Focus on Ethnicity and Identity* (2004) that among Black and Asian communities there is a much stronger preference for British over English or other country-specific identities – the increasing use of 'Black British' and 'British Asian' terms indicating almost equal identification with British identity and with ethnicity.

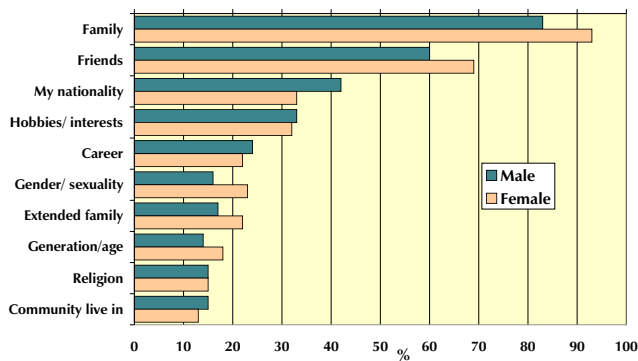
Among Bangladeshi living in Britain in 2001, for example, 76% claim British rather than a country-specific identity. As with co-existent English and British, or Northern Irish and British identities, the existence of dual national and ethnic identities highlights the complexities of Britishness in the 21st century.

Hierarchies of identity

Another important aspect of national identity emerging from the research is the fact that it is contextual. It is not so much a question of whether or not people in the UK 'feel' British (at some point, most do), but rather where and when these feelings are strongest. A sense of national identity is not necessarily of primary importance in our everyday lives but instead comes to the surface on particular occasions, such as when travelling overseas, during international sporting events, or on days of national remembrance or celebration.

SIRC's own research data also indicate that national identity is significantly less important than other markers of social identity, the most popular of which are related to family and social network, as we can see from Figure 5.5 below. National identity comes third in importance and only just above aspects of lifestyle such as hobbies and interests shared with like-minded people. The most recent British Social Attitudes

Figure 5.5. Sources of social identity – by gender

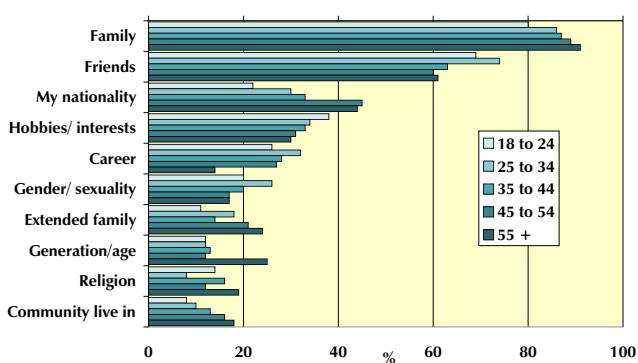


Survey also indicates that parenthood and being a partner (both social identities related to the family) are among the three most salient forms of social identity.

It should be noted here that ethnicity is not shown on the chart because it does not feature on the top 10 sources of identity for the UK as a whole – it is down in 11th place with less than 12% of the UK population seeing this as important. However, among members of ethnic minorities it is a much more important issue – 30% say that it is a significant aspect of their identity – but ethnicity is still outweighed by reference to family and social networks.

If we examine age differences within these data we find that national identity is even less important for young people compared with their elders, as shown in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6. Sources of social identity – by age



From Figure 5.6 we can see that nationality was important for only 22% of adults aged under 25, compared with 45% of

people over the age of 45. For young people their shared lifestyle interests are of greater significance.

The decline of Britishness?

Given the cultural reference points most commonly associated with 'British' identity, such as the Royal Family and the British Empire, there is evidence that traditional notions of British identity – that is, the static, White, Anglo-Saxon stereotype of what being British means – are indeed in decline, because fewer people associate with this image of what life is like in modern the modern UK. Understanding Britishness as a more organic, inclusive social category, however suggests a more complex picture. The diverse nature of UK society makes defining Britishness an ongoing process, as the political commentator Bhikhu Parekh² noted in his article entitled *Defining British National Identity*:

"The search for national identity is an unending process, both because a rich and complex society cannot be reduced to a crisp definition and because new circumstances constantly call for new definitions."

Some people may not identify with a traditional sense of being British, but this does not mean that they are unable to construct their own version of Britishness in a way that is relevant to their particular social and cultural experiences. People embrace a sense of Britishness that also allows them to be Asian *and* from London *and* a Barcelona FC supporter. Arguably, strictly defined, traditional notions of British identity do not allow for this kind of flexibility in defining oneself.

Implications for PSB

PSB can play a very useful role in changing public perceptions of what being British means – broadening the 'Britishness' debate and re-shaping the questions being asked.

- **The divide between traditional perceptions of Britishness and the lived experiences of modern UK citizens has very important implications for the BBC in particular. In free word association exercises with participants both from the UK and other countries, SIRC research showed that people strongly associate the BBC with a traditional sense of British identity. People will clearly look to the Corporation for a new sense of British inclusiveness and for a new definition of what Britishness really means today.**
- **The tendencies towards claiming national over British identities (especially marked in the case of the Scots) has implications for the delivery of PSB across the UK. Given,**

2 Bhikhu Parekh (2004) 'Defining British National Identity'. *The Political Quarterly* 71 (1), 4–14.

however, that SIRC's own research indicates that a sense of pride in Britishness remains evident among many Scots and Welsh as well as the English, and that other sources of social identity take precedence over national identity, it might be unwise to lose sight of the 'British' element in the 'BBC'.

- There is also the need for PSB to be able to bring together people from all constituent nations at times of national (i.e. UK-wide) importance.

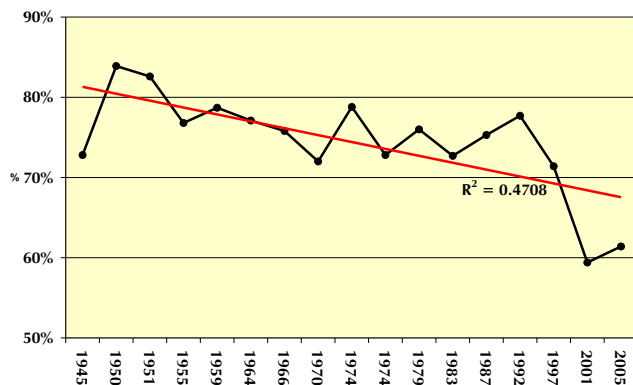
6 The democratic process

A focus on voting and attitudes towards the democratic process in the UK has been included in our review of the data because it provides a direct indicator of the extent to which people feel they belong to society – a measure of attachment and cohesion. A reluctance to vote, particularly in general elections, by society as a whole or sections of it, might reflect a lack of trust in the democratic process or a perceived inability to influence how the country is governed.

Voter turnout

From Figure 6.1 we can see that there has been a significant decline in voter turnout since the 1950s in the United Kingdom as a whole – down from 84% to less than 60% in 2001, picking up only slightly to 61% in 2005.

Figure 6.1. Voter turnout in the UK



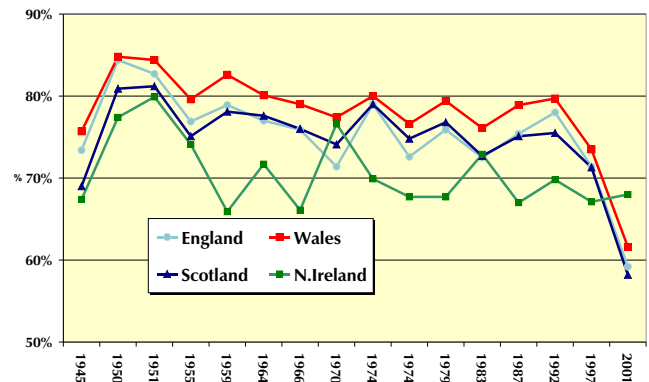
Among Black and minority ethnics, the figures have been substantially lower. In 2001 only 48% of those registered to vote did so. The problem is compounded by the fact that only 75% of those entitled to vote are registered to do so.

People in Northern Ireland, traditionally the least likely part of the UK to vote, now rank above the Scots, English and Welsh in this context – the latter being the most likely to vote in general elections in the past. This is illustrated in Figure 6.2

The report of the 2005 British Election Study (BES)¹ suggested that the decline was, perhaps, less serious than we might imagine:

"It seems likely that at least a part of the turnout decline between 1997 and 2001 was the result of the widely perceived one-sided nature of the contest between the major parties competing for government. Almost

Figure 6.2. Voter turnout in the UK constituent nations



continuously throughout the 1997 parliament, Labour had held a clear opinion poll lead over its main Westminster rivals. Indeed, according to the 'poll of polls', in the six months immediately before the general election, Labour averaged a 12-point lead over the Conservatives. Unsurprisingly in these circumstances, some voters – aware of the general picture if not of the precise opinion poll gap – concluded that the outcome of the election was a forgone conclusion and opted not to vote at all, thereby depressing turnout."

While there is much merit in this analysis it is also the case that our own analysis of the data shows that there was a statistically significant fall in voter turnout in the period prior to 1997 – $R^2 = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$. While this accelerated markedly after Labour's victory in 1997, the overall trend since 1950 is clearly apparent. The 'forgone conclusion' argument also does not explain the markedly different trends in voting across the UK nations.

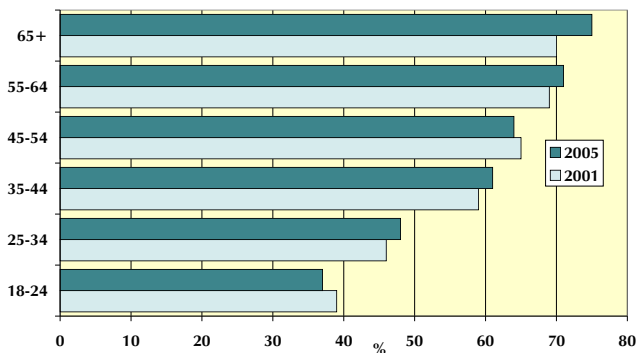
While just over 60% of those eligible voted in the last general election, there were large variations not only in terms of ethnicity and nationality but also in terms of age, as shown in Figure 6.3 below. Here we can see that 70% of those eligible to vote in 2001 and aged over 65 did so. This proportion rose to 75% in the 2005 general election. Among young people under the age of 25, however, only 39% voted in the 2001 election and this proportion fell further to 37% in 2005.

Among people in their mid 20s to mid 30s, levels of voter turnout were also well below the UK average – 46% in 2001 and 48% in 2005.

This, in our view, presents a serious issue. The only conclusion that can we can draw from the data is that in the last two

¹ Sanders, D., Clarke, H, Stewart, M. and Whiteley, P. (2005) *The 2005 General Election in Great Britain*. Report for the Electoral Commission.

Figure 6.3. Voter turnout by age.



elections the government has been elected largely by people over the age of 45 and cannot claim in any convincing way to represent the views of younger people.

The decline in voter turnout cannot be explained solely by the relative sizes of the age groups in the UK population. We have seen in Section 2 that older people constitute an increasing percentage of the country as a whole. The BES data also show, however, differential rates of voting within the various age segments. For example, in the 2005 election, of those aged between 18 and 24 and eligible to vote, 45% were voters and 55% were non-voters. Among those aged over 45, 82% were voters and 18% were non-voters – a very stark difference.

Further variations in the level of voter turnout are evident between the social classes. In the last general election 71% of non-manual workers voted, compared with only 57% of those in manual occupations. Similarly, turnout among those earning under £15,000 per year was 49%, compared with 68% of those on higher incomes.

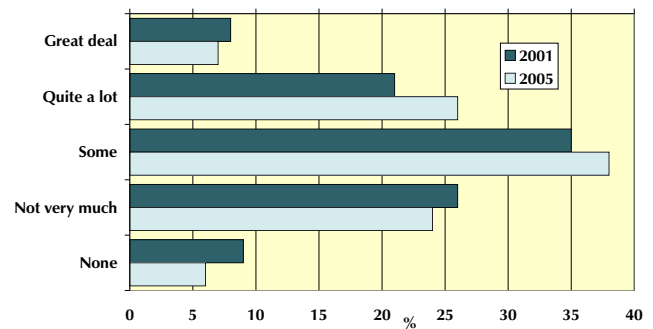
The decline in working class voter turnout may be reflective of a decline in trades union membership. In 1983, almost a half of all employees working 10 hours or more a week were members of a union. Today that figure is less than 30%.

The decline in voter turnout, we might suppose, reflects a decline in interest in politics generally. This, however, does not seem to be the case.

Interest in politics

Both The British Elections Studies (BES) and the British Social Attitudes Surveys (BSA) periodically ask questions such as 'How much interest do you have in what is going on in politics?' The results for 2001 and 2005 are illustrated in Figure 6.4. Here we can see that the majority of people in the UK have at least some interest in politics and that this increased slightly between 2001 and 2005. These levels are also higher than they were in 1974 – up from 62% to 71% in 2005.

Figure 6.4. Levels of interest in politics



Given these data, it is clear that better ways need to be found to involve people – the young, members of ethnic minorities and the relatively disadvantaged in particular – in the process of representative democracy. It is possible that proper engagement is no longer achieved through a system in which citizens simply put a cross on a piece of paper once every five years or so. Currently, people can do their shopping, book holidays and travel and organise almost all aspects of their lives via secure sites on the Internet. They cannot, however, in the digital age, express their political preferences or choose who will represent them at any level of government. In this context, public service broadcasting may have a very important role to play in ensuring that all citizens can make their views heard more effectively.

Implications for PSB

- **Public service broadcasting, in fostering social cohesion and a sense of common belonging in British society, has a clear duty to increase understanding of the democratic process – especially among those who are currently under-represented.**
- **While phone-ins, 'have your say' style programmes and user-generated content online may appear to allow a degree of engagement, care needs to be taken to ensure that young people, ethnic minorities and less advantaged members of society feel that their voices are heard by decision makers and that their engagement is recognised, both within PSB and more widely.**
- **To what extent are 'political' programmes – e.g. those such as *Any Questions* that invite discussion of topical social issues – truly representative of British people in general? To what extent could PSBs encourage greater participation from people who, even by choice, are relatively disenfranchised?**

- Can PSB play a role in exploring in greater depth why sections of the British population have increasingly not bothered to vote? Could, for example, election night programmes try to reflect more fully those sections of the population who tend to be non-voters, in addition to the usual array of politicians and spokespersons?

7 Crime and the fear of crime

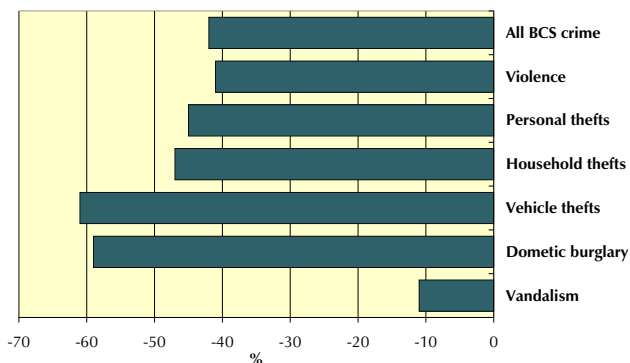
The main source of data on crime and perceptions of crime is the annual British Crime Survey (BCS). This annual survey involves interviews with a representative sample of over 28,000 citizens in England and Wales. Additional survey data are available for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Data recorded by Police services across the country are also available in the form of arrest and similar statistics. These, however, reflect not only levels of different crimes and their trends over time but also changes in police policy, staffing levels and recording procedures. The introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in 2002, which re-classified certain types of violent and sexual crime, makes comparisons over time particularly difficult. For these reasons the BCS is normally the preferred database. It also includes data on people's perceptions of crime and their principal worries.

Trends in crime rates

Overall, crime has fallen by 42% since 1995. The greatest reductions have been in vehicle theft, domestic burglary and violence, as can be seen from Figure 7.1.¹

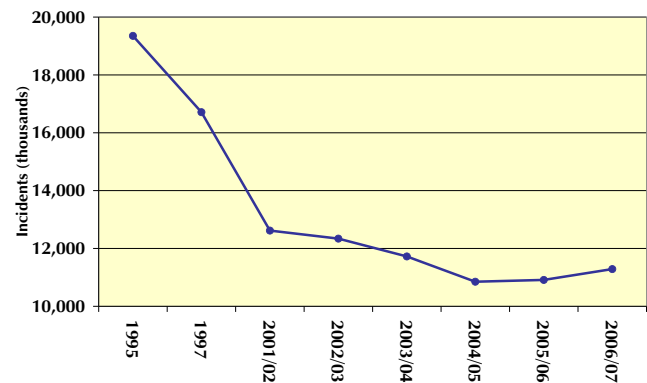
Figure 7.1. Reductions in crime – 1995-2006/07



The falls in crime, however, were most dramatic between 1995 and 2001/02. Since then the decline has been much less steep, as shown in Figure 7.2. There was, in fact, a very small increase in overall crime between 2005/06 and 2006/07.

Comparing 2006/07 data with that from the previous year, there were modest increases in vandalism (10%) and in drug offences (9%). The general trends in all crimes over the past 12 years, however, remain downwards. The number of crimes recorded by the police in 2006/07 was 5.4 million – a fall of 2% compared with the previous year.

Figure 7.2. Trends in all Crime (England and Wales)



In Northern Ireland, comparable reductions in crime are evident from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) – from 23% of households experiencing any type of crime in 1998 to 17% in 2005. In Scotland, however, the picture is rather different. The Scottish Crime Survey (SCS) indicates a fall in all types of crime between 1992 and 1999 but a sharp increase of around 30% back up to 1992 levels in 2002. This increase is mainly due to rises in vandalism, household theft and violence. Violent crime in Scotland has risen steadily since 1992 from 411 crimes per 10,000 adults to 599 in 2002.

Risks and perceptions

The risk of being a victim of violent crime in England and Wales in 2006/07 was 3.6%. Young men aged 16 to 24 experience significantly higher risks (13.8%). A half of all such crimes, however, involve no injury.

The risk of being a victim of burglary across England and Wales in any one year is currently 2.5%. This, however, varies considerably with the type of household. Social renters experience a 4.1% risk while nearly a quarter of those with no home security measures can expect to be burgled in a period of one year.

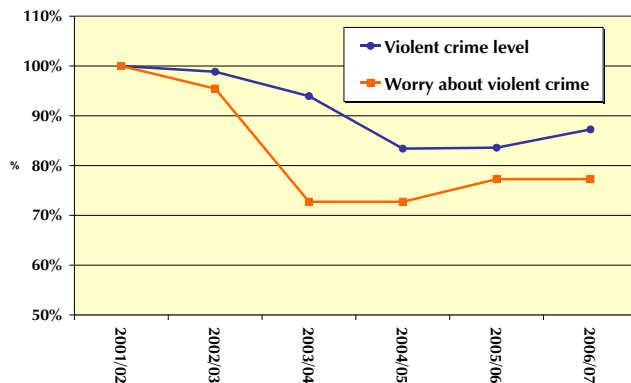
While crime levels have fallen significantly in past decade and more, the numbers of people feeling that crime is on the increase has declined less than dramatically. In 2006/07, 65% of people thought that crime in the country as a whole had increased while 41% felt the same about their local area. The figures for 1996 were 75% and 55% respectively.

Worry about crime has also declined more modestly than crime itself and the reductions vary with the type of crime.

1 Within the category of 'violence' the greatest reduction has been in domestic violence (59%)

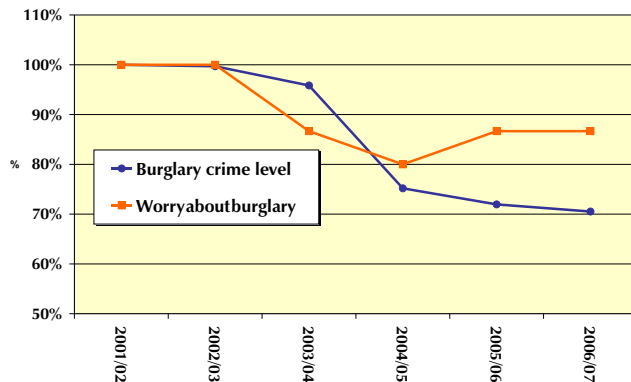
We can see from Figure 7.3, for example, that fears about being the victim of a violent crime have fallen more sharply than the rate of violent crime itself. In this illustration, the levels of both crime rate and proportion of people expressing worries are shown as percentage reductions since 2001/02.

Figure 7.3. Worry about violence and violent crime rates



In Figure 7.4, however, we can see that fears of burglary have fallen considerably less than the decline in the number of burglaries. A similar picture is evident in the case of car theft.

Figure 7.4. Worry about burglary and burglary rates



Estimates of the likelihood of being a victim of a particular type of crime in England and Wales in 2006/07 ranged from 15% for burglary to 25% for vehicle crime. These compare with the actual risks of 4% and 7% respectively. The perceived risks, then, are over three times the actual risks. Women are more likely than men to have higher levels of worry about crime. Younger people are more likely to have higher levels of worry about violent crime than older people – 13% for those under 25 compared with 8% for those aged 65-74.

The impact of crime and fear of crime on the quality of life was rated as high or moderate by 44% of people for fear of crime and by 33% of people for crime in general in 2000. These figures fell to 37% and 27% respectively in 2006/07. Victims of crime were more likely to rate the impact of fear of crime higher than those who had not experienced any crime personally.

Young people feature prominently in popular perceptions of criminal activity, and anti-social behaviour in particular. As noted in Section 9 of this report, there continues to be public anxiety about the state of Britain's young people who are often seen either as children to be protected, or teenagers to be protected against. In the latter case, the extent to which young people have been criminalized as a demographic group is reflected by the fact that the most recent British Crime Survey uses 'teenagers hanging around on the streets' as a primary indicator of anti-social behaviour. A third of respondents agreed that this rather broad category of public social interaction between young people was the most troubling form of anti-social behaviour in 2006/7 – followed closely by 'rubbish or litter lying around'.

Whether or not these fears are relative to the actual levels of 'teenagers hanging around' is perhaps irrelevant given that 'anti-social behaviour' is measured in terms of the perceived negative effect that it has on the quality of people's lives.² This leads logically to a number of important questions about public perceptions of crime, and of the role of young people in criminal activity in particular. Do 'teenagers hanging around' actually impact negatively on the lives of others in the community and, if so, why is it that young people are seen in such a negative light? What role could PSB have in this issue, either in terms of allaying public fears about the ingrained criminality of young people in public spaces, or in terms of providing productive outlets for young people that take them beyond simply 'hanging around on the streets'?

Geographical distribution of crime

The risk of being a victim of violent crime is twice as high in urban areas compared with rural settings (4% per year compared with 2% per year). Of all robberies in England and Wales in 2006/07, 45% were committed in London. Rural/urban differences are evident for most other types of crime.

The risk of crime also varies in a predictable way with levels of deprivation. Vandalism, for example, is 50% higher in areas of low income, high unemployment, etc. than in areas with a low index of deprivation.

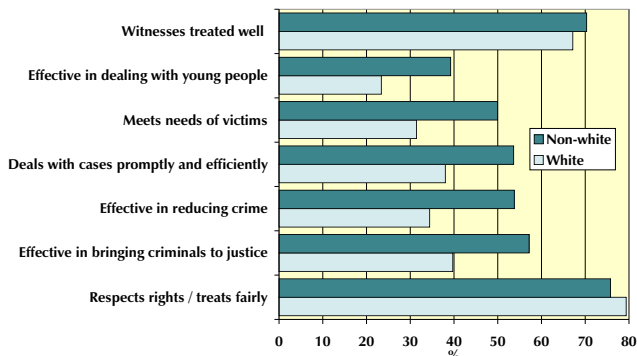
² See, for example, Ipsos/Mori (2007) *Anti-Social Behaviour: People, Place and Perceptions*.

Confidence in the criminal justice system

Public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) has changed little since 2001/02. Nearly 80% of people feel that the CJS respects the rights of people accused of committing a crime but fewer are confident that it deals effectively with young people accused of crime (25%).

Confidence in the CJS is generally greater among members of minority ethnic communities, as shown in Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.5. Confidence in the CJS



Only when considering the extent to which the CJS respects rights and treats all people fairly is more confidence expressed by white citizens in England and Wales compared with non-whites.

The levels of confidence are generally higher for younger people than older people but there is little difference between men and women.

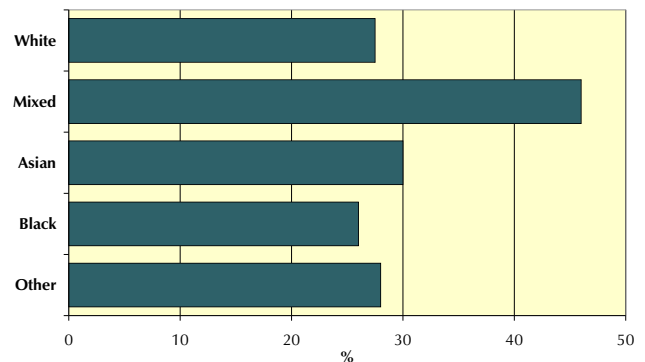
Of people who were victims of crime in 2006/07, 58% expressed satisfaction with the way the incidents were handled by the police – unchanged since 2005/06.

Race and crime

The British Crime Survey identifies people of mixed race as being the most likely to be victims of crime in England and Wales. We can see from Figure 7.6 that while Black and Asian people had victimisation rates not significantly different from the white population (around 30% per year) those of Mixed race experienced a much higher rate (46%). This difference, however, may be partly explained by differences in the age structure of the populations. Young people are significantly more likely to be victims of crime than older people and the Mixed race population has a relatively higher proportion of young people than other groups.

Of the Asian group who were victims of racially motivated crime, Pakistani/Bangladeshi people were most at risk (4.2%), followed by Indian people (3.6%) and Black people (2.2%).

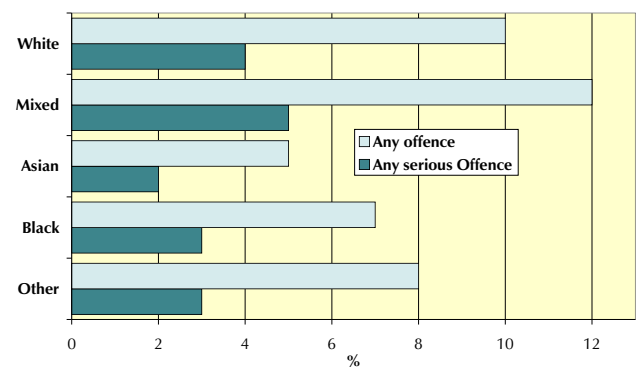
Figure 7.6. Victims of crime



The number of White people at risk of a racially motivated attack is a mere 0.3%.

The Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OJCS), like the BCS, uses self-report methods and seeks to determine levels of offending, anti-social and related behaviour among a national sample of around 12,000. The 2003 report focuses specifically on differences between ethnic groups and reveals a distribution of offending across the groups, as shown in Figure 7.7. Here we can see that the reported offending rates are highest among Mixed race groups, perhaps for the reasons noted above, while Asian and Black people reported significantly fewer criminal acts than White people.

Figure 7.7. OJCS data for offending (2006/07)

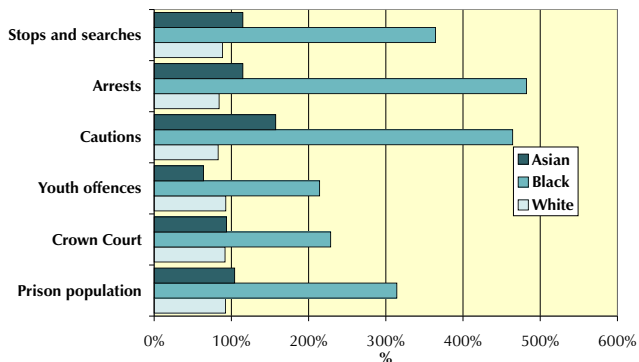


These data are the most commonly quoted in government reports and other documents – especially those that aim to counter prejudice against members of ethnic minority communities. There is, however, a second set of data contained in the Home Office *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System – 2005*. This is a response to the requirements of Section 95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 which, among other things, requires that the Secretary of State publishes material to facilitate "the performance of such

persons of their duty to avoid discriminating against any persons on the ground of race or sex or any other improper ground."

Figure 7.8 is based on data from that report and shows the relative under- or over-representation of people in the various ethnic groups in various stages of the Criminal Justice System in 2004/05.

Figure 7.8. Representation of ethnic groups in the CJS



Without any variation between ethnic groups, all should have an equal representation of 100% – the number of individuals from each group in relation to their percentage in the population as a whole. We see, however, a very different picture. White people are under-represented at all stages of the CJS, from stops and searches to being part of a prison population. In contrast, Black people are substantially over-represented at all stages. They are over three times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police, nearly five times more likely to be arrested and are three times over-represented in the prison population. than White people.

The disparity between the BCS and the OJJS statistics raises very controversial issues that are reflected in press coverage of, for example, 'Black on Black' crime.³ There is a need for very sensitive handling by the media here – not least by public service broadcasters – in their reporting and interpretation of the various sources of evidence and their implications.

Implications for PSB

- **While both crime and fear of crime in the UK have decreased in recent years people continue to feel more at risk of being a victim than they actually are. To what extent can PSB allay these 'false' fears while still alerting them to the real risks that they might face? Could news, current affairs and documentary programmes highlight**

what are the real levels of risk and how they vary demographically and geographically? Could they also seek to provide some solutions – e.g. the best ways of avoiding, say, burglary or violent crime?

- **Confidence in the Criminal Justice System as a whole has not declined significantly in the last decade or so and ethnic minorities are among the strongest supporters of the CJS. People are, however, much less confident about the system's ability to deal with young criminals. There is clearly a need for open debate on this issue and PSB could play a valuable role in this context.**
- **The issue of race and crime is an extremely sensitive one. A more informed debate about the reasons why Black people feature more significantly than White people among those arrested and imprisoned in Britain is required and PSB, again, may have a valuable role in facilitating such debate. Great care, however, will need to be taken in this context to ensure that the purpose of PSB to contribute to social cohesion is not undermined.**

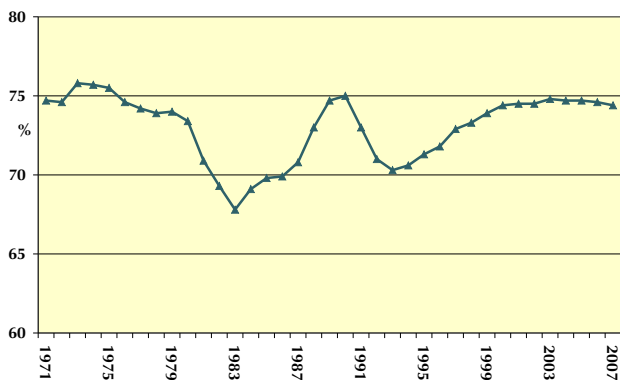
³ See, for example, The truth about black on black crime. *Independent*, 15 April 2007

8 Working life

Employment in Britain

According to the government Labour Force Surveys, which cover England, Wales and Scotland, the economically active population of Britain (those aged over 16 in employment or seeking work) has increased from 25.6 million to 30.7 million. The economic activity rate, however – the percentage of the population in the various age groups who are economically active – has stayed much the same, at around 78%. Employment rates, the ratio of those employed to those unemployed within the economically active population, has varied very significantly over the same period, as shown in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1. Employment in Britain



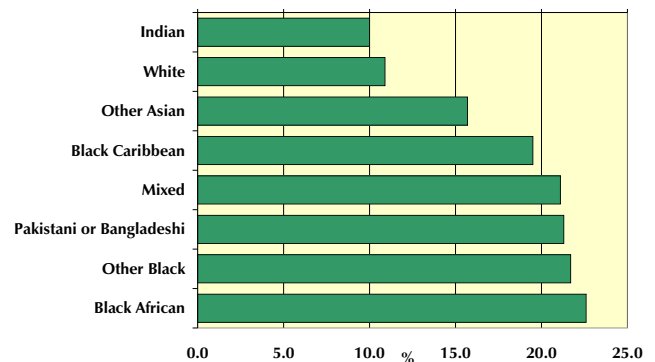
Unemployment reached a peak in the mid 1980s of almost 12% and a low of people in employment of 68%. There was a further peak in unemployment in the mid 1990s of 10.4%, and a consequent employment rate of 70%. Since that time, unemployment levels have fallen steadily, reaching a low of 4.8% in 2005. The current level of unemployment is 5.4% and 74% of the population of working age are employed. The unemployment figure for Northern Ireland is lower than the rest of the UK at 4.3%.

These figures compare favourably with employment and unemployment levels across the European Union. Eurostat, the European statistics agency, estimates the average EU level of unemployment as being 8.6%.

Workless households

In 2007 there were, however, 3 million workless households – i.e. those containing at least one person of working age but where no one was in employment. Such households are significantly more common among Black and some ethnic minority groups, as shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2. Percent of workless households by ethnic group



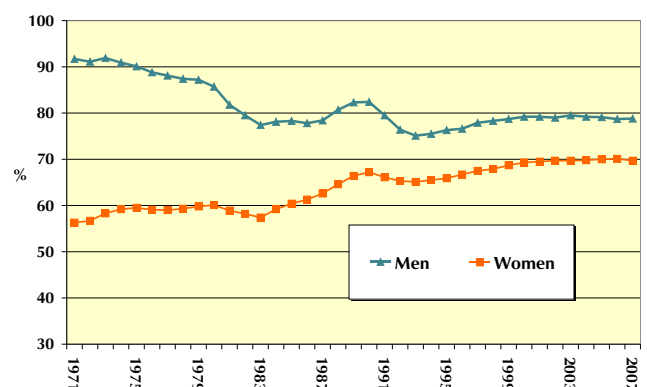
Regional variations

There are also substantial national and regional variations in employment levels. Employment rates are highest in the South East of England (78%) and lowest in Wales (71%). In particular boroughs of London such as Tower Hamlets, employment rates are as low as 53%. The level in Liverpool is 63%.

Work and gender

While employment rates have generally risen since 1971 the proportion of men in employment has fallen, remaining relatively stable since the late 1990s, as shown in Figure 8.3. The increase in the total number of people employed is due to the fact that more women have joined the potential labour force. The gap between men and women in 1971 was 46%. Today it is down to 9%.

Figure 8.3. Employment in Britain by gender

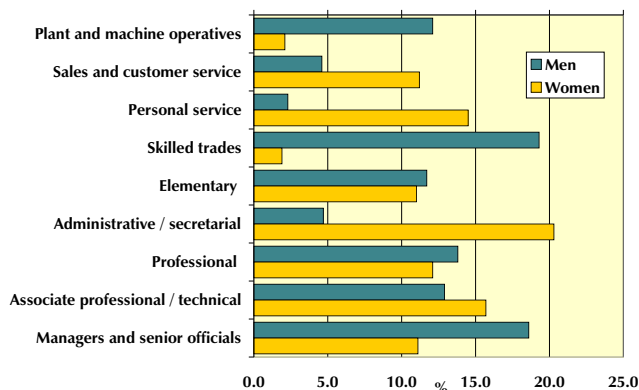


This substantial reduction in the imbalance between men and women in the working environment has had major impacts on all areas of British life – not least in child care arrangements and other areas of domestic activity. The employment rate for

mothers of dependent children is now 72% and even among single parents it is 57% – an increase of 4% since 2003.

This increase in the number of women in employment, however, does not mean that the gender gap within certain types of profession has necessarily been eroded. Figure 8.4 shows the proportion of men and women employed in different categories of work. We can see here that while the most frequent type of employment for women is administrative or secretarial, for men it is a skilled trade or managerial/professional. Women also continue to dominate in sales and customer service, personal services and at associate professional and technical levels.

Figure 8.4. Proportions of men and women in various categories of work



Types of work

The types of work we do in Britain have changed markedly over the past thirty years. In 1978, for example, 29% of all jobs were in manufacturing. Today, that figure is down to less than 11%. This decrease has been most marked in the case of female workers – down from 21% of all jobs to just 5%. Work in public administration, education and the National Health Service has risen from 21% of all jobs thirty years ago to 27% today. The biggest change, however, has been in the finance and business services sector – rising from 10% of all jobs in 1978 to 22% in 2007.

Working harder?

The number of hours that employees work per week has changed only slightly since 1992. The proportion of people working between 31 and 45 hours per week was 60% for men and 49% for women in 1992 – today the figures are 61% and 49% respectively. The number of employees working more than 45 hours per week, however, has fallen slightly overall – from 33% of men and 8% of women to 25% of men and 9% of women over the same period.

Self-employed people generally work longer hours than employees. The numbers working long hours every week, however, has dropped significantly in the past 15 years. In 1992, 53% of men and 26% of women who were self employed were working more than 45 hours per week. In 2007 these proportions had fallen to 39% and 16% respectively.

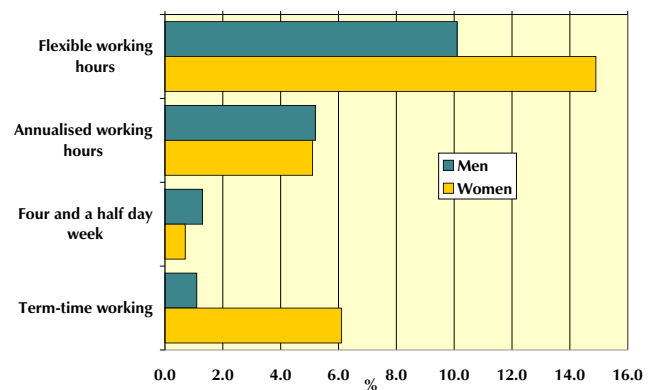
Flexible working

Since 2003 legislation has allowed parents with young children to seek flexible working arrangements with their employers. While employers have a legal obligation to consider such requests, they can still decline them on 'business' grounds.

From Figure 8.5 we can see that over 10% of men and nearly 15% of women in full-time employment now have flexible working hours arrangements. A further 5% of both men and women are able to spread their work commitment over the year – normally working less in school holidays and more in term-time. Six per cent of women only work during term time.

The figures for part-time workers are fairly similar but proportionally more of these, and men in particular, work only during term time.

Figure 8.5. Flexible working arrangements – full-time employees



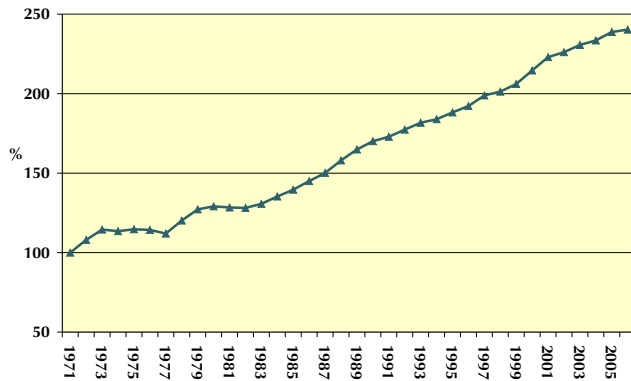
Flexible working arrangements have had a number of benefits according to the Work-Life Balance Employee Survey in 2006 with a third of respondents saying that they were able to spend more time with their children. Less than 20% felt that there had been a negative impact – usually lower pay or loss of bonus. The same survey found that almost 90% of employees were happy with their jobs and almost 70% were happy with their level of pay.

Income

As a result of economic growth over the past three decades, people in general are much better off financially today than in

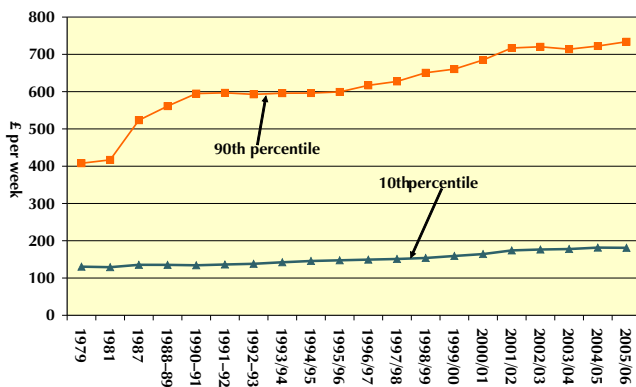
the past. We can see from Figure 8.6 that disposable income per household has more than doubled in real terms since 1971.

Figure 8.6. Real disposable household income in the UK



This increased wealth in Britain, however, has not been distributed uniformly. If we look at the bottom 10% of wage earners and compare them with the top 10% we see the picture illustrated in Figure 8.7.

Figure 8.7. Distribution of real disposable income per head in the UK



These figures are standardised to 2005/2006 prices and show that while earnings among the top 10% of income levels have increased quite sharply since 1979, those of the lowest wage earners have risen much less. The gap between the top 10% and bottom 10% has widened from the top 10% and bottom 10% has widened from £278 per week (in today's terms) to £553 per week. In 1979, the income of the those in the 90th percentile of earnings was 3.1 times as big as those in the bottom 10th percentile. In 2005/06 the level was over four times as high.

Wealth

Not only is the growth of household income distributed in a far from uniform way, so too is the growth of wealth – particularly influenced by the trebling of house prices in real terms over the past 12 years.

Data from HM Revenue show that in 2003 (the latest figures available) one-half of the population owned 93% of total wealth. This proportion was virtually unchanged since 1991. The wealthiest 1% per cent of the population own 21% of the total UK wealth – an increase from 17% in 1991, or a relative rise of nearly a quarter.

Implications for PSB

- While there has been a sustained pattern of economic growth in Britain over the past few decades, and unemployment levels are now among the lowest in Europe, very substantial disparities exist in the distribution of the overall wealth that has accrued. The gap between the richest and poorest people in Britain has widened significantly over this period when it might have been expected to narrow. Such levels of inequity need to be highlighted and debated and PSB has a clear role to play in this context.
- While women have entered the workforce in increasing numbers since the 1980s, they are still very under-represented in the more prestigious and highly paid jobs. A new debate on the obstacles to achievement of women in the workplace needs to be fostered and PSB could have an important role to play in this context.
- More flexible working arrangements for parents and carers of young children are now in place and over a quarter of working women are taking advantage of the new statutory requirements in one way or another. To what extent is a new work/family/life balance being established and to what extent is this new 'reality' reflected in PSB programming? To what extent might both children's and adult programming need to take into account the impact of changing work patterns on viewing and listening behaviours and parenting styles?

9 Growing up

The evidence strongly indicates that the experiences of young people and young adults in Britain have changed significantly in recent decades. The American social psychologist Jeffrey Arnett¹, for example, has developed the concept of 'emerging adulthood' to describe the changes that are taking place in the life courses of young people as they move from their teenage years into their early 20s. 'Emerging adults', Arnett argues, reach the traditional benchmarks of adulthood such as marriage, childbirth, developing a career or buying a home at later chronological ages than previous generations. This has significant implications not only for the social identities of young people, but also for the lives of those who are likely to support them through this 'adolescence-plus' phase.

Academic debate in sociology and social anthropology about the nature of childhood and adolescence increasingly points to the fact that these are essentially social phenomena, and as such are likely to change according to social contexts. There exists an adult 'ideal' of what it means to be a child or a young person that fits uncomfortably with the realities of being young in the 21st century. Changing access to information and new digital technologies, the rise of consumer culture, changing patterns of consumption and changing family structures all suggest that being a young person today is often very different from how it is imagined by adults.

The young population

Data relating to the number of children and young people in the UK population come from the Office for National Statistics, the Government Actuary's Department, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

From these data it is evident that the numbers of children and young people in Britain declined quite sharply between 1971 and 1991. The size of the population aged between 16 and 24 continued to fall until 2001, as shown in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1 also shows the projected sizes of the populations up to the year 2026. Here we can see that the population of children under the age of 16 is likely to increase over the next 20 years while the population aged between 16 and 24 is likely to remain relatively stable. These trends need to be contrasted with more general data on the 'ageing' of the UK population discussed in Section 2.

The distributions of children within the population vary considerably with ethnic group. We can see from Figure 9.2 that while children account for 19% of the White British

Figure 9.1. Population of children and young people 1971-2006

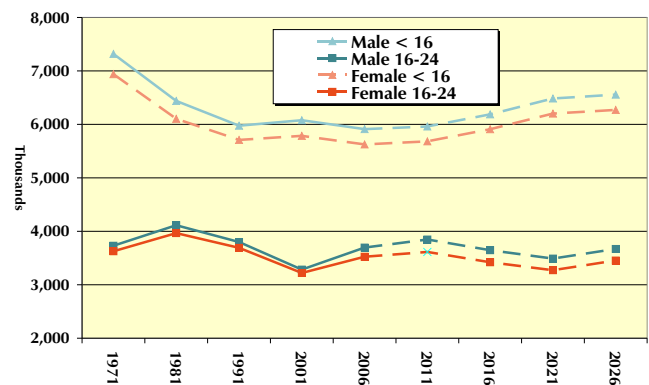
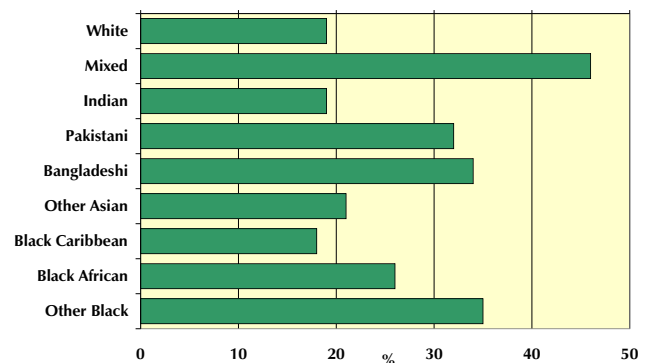


Figure 9.2. Percentages of children by ethnic group



population, they account for 46% of all people of Mixed race and are also more highly represented within Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities.

Single parents

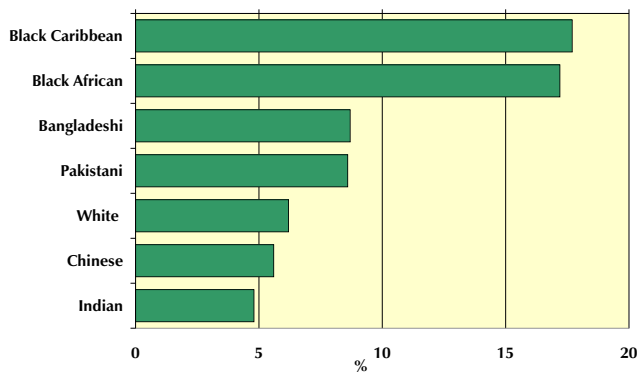
There has been a steady and significant rise in the number of children from all backgrounds living in single-parent households across Britain as a whole. Data from the General Household Survey, Census, Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics indicate that In 1971, 6% of all children had a lone mother and 1% a lone father. In 2006, these proportions had increased to 22% and 2% respectively.

It is also the case that more than 10 per cent of all families with dependent children in Britain are step-families, 86% of which consist of a natural mother and a stepfather. The large majority, however, still live in households with two parents.

1 Arnett, J. (2007) *Emerging Adulthood: The winding road from the late teens to the early twenties*. Oxford University Press

The number of single parent households varies significantly across the ethnic groups. As we can see from Figure 9.3, the proportion of single parent families among Black Caribbean households in Britain in 2001 (the latest available data) was nearly 18%. This compares with 9% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi, 6% of White and 5% of Indian families. Note that these data are for households rather than children.

Figure 9.3. Percentage of lone parent households by ethnic group



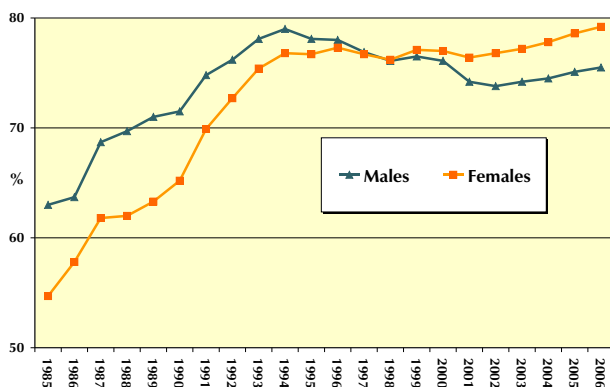
Education

Data from the Department for Education and Skills; Welsh Assembly Government; Scottish Executive and the Northern Ireland Department of Education show that the proportion of children aged 3 and 4 enrolled in schools rose from 21% in 1970/71 to 64% in 2005/06.

At the other end of the scale, the number of young people aged between 16 and 18 in full-time education in England rose sharply between 1985 and 1994. Since then the rise has seemingly been less dramatic, as shown in Figure 9.4.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families who provide these data, however, caution that from 1994 there

Figure 9.4. 16-18 year olds in full-time education



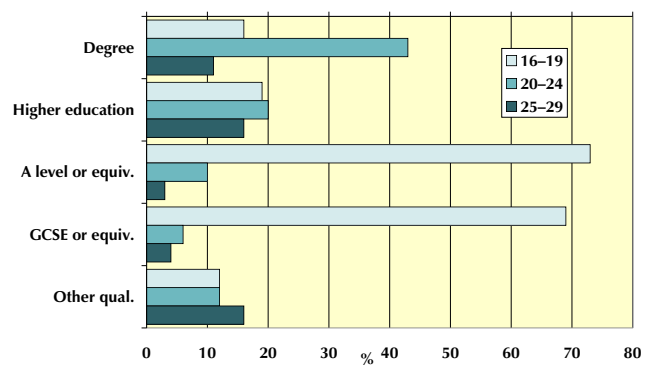
were changes in the source of further and higher education statistics. Participation estimates may be slightly underestimated for 16-year-olds between 1999 and 2000, 17-year-olds between 2000 and 2001 and 18-year-olds between 2001 and 2002.

Noting these caveats, it is still clear that girls and young women have now overtaken boys and young men in terms of their 'consumption' of education after the age of 16.

Data from the Department of Education and skills show that permanent exclusions from schools are significantly higher among Black Caribbean pupils than among their White contemporaries – 30 per 10,000 compared with 13 per 10,000. The lowest levels of such exclusions are to be found among Asian pupils – 4 per 10,000 among Indian pupils and 8% among Pakistanis.

Separate data from the Labour Force Survey and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that nearly three quarters of all young people aged between 16 and 19 are studying for GCSE or their equivalent and nearly 70% are seeking other types of qualification, as shown in Figure 9.5. Sixteen percent of all those aged under 19 are pursuing a degree level course with a further 19% in other forms of Higher Education.

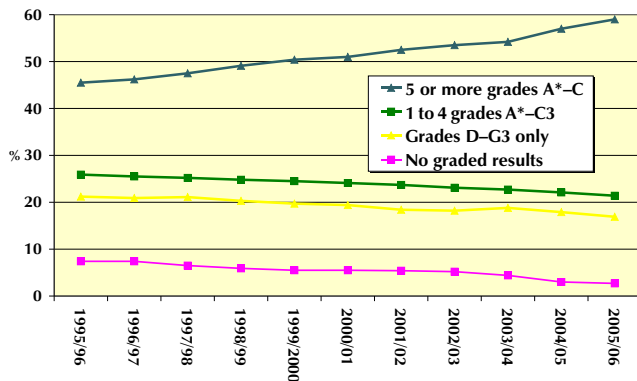
Figure 9.5. Proportions of young people pursuing qualifications (2007)



Further data from the Department for Children, Schools and Families; Welsh Assembly Government; Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Department of Education, reveal trends in the grades achieved by school students in GCSE or equivalents.

From Figure 9.6 below we can see that there has been a substantial increase in the numbers achieving 5 or more grades from C to A* – from 46% in 1996/98 to 59% in 2005/06. The proportions obtaining no grades has fallen from over 7% to less than 2.5% in the same period.

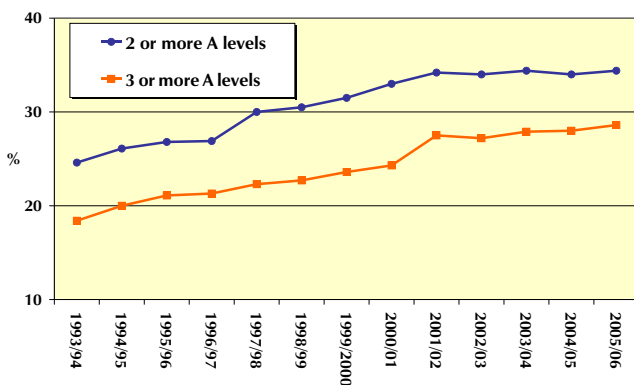
Figure 9.6. School attainments



While there has been some debate in the past few years over the extent to which GCSE exams and assessments have become 'easier', there is no doubt that today's school leavers are more highly qualified than in the past. At the same time, however, data from Department for Children, Schools and Families indicate that the number of children with statements of special educational needs (SEN) rose from 100,600 in 1994 to 131,100 in 2007 – an increase of over 30%. This may, in large part, be due to an increased public awareness of SEN rather than a rise in special needs.

The number of secondary school students gaining two or more A levels rose steadily between 1993 and 2001 but has remained relatively stable in recent years, as shown in Figure 9.7.

Figure 9.7. Proportion of school students attaining 2 or more A levels



The rise in university admissions over the past three decades has been quite dramatic. In 1970/71 there were 241,000 male and 173,000 female full-time undergraduates in the UK. In 2005/06 these figures had risen to 561,000 and 701,000 respectively.² The proportion of women university students increased from a minority of 42% to a majority of 56% over the same period.

Women are also performing rather better than men at university. In 2005/06, while 11% of both men and women gained first class degrees, the proportions gaining upper seconds were 47% of females and 39% of males. Of those attaining lower second or third/pass degrees, 41% were male and 34% female.

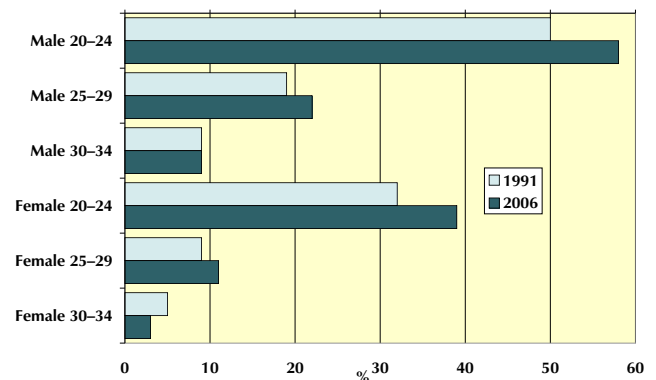
Similar increases in postgraduate level education are also evident with the most dramatic increase being in female postgraduates – rising from 10,000 in 1970/71 to 119,000 in 2005/06. The equivalent figures for males were 33,000 and 116,000.

Dependency

The increased number of young people in full-time higher education is undoubtedly a factor in the delayed 'emergence of adulthood' and extended dependency on parents. This is reflected in the number of young people who continue to live in the parental home until their mid 20s and beyond.

We can see from Figure 9.8 that the proportion of young men aged between 20 and 24 living at home with their parents in England in 2006 was 58% – an increase from 50% in 1991. For young women of that age the proportion rose from 32% to 38% over the same period.³

Figure 9.8. Young people living in parental home



2 Sources: Department for Children, Schools and Families; Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills; Welsh Assembly Government; Scottish Government; Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning

3 Sources: Survey of English Housing, Communities and Local Government, Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Even when they are in their early- to mid-30s, a significant number of men are still living at home with their parents (11%). Only 3% of women are still living at home at that age.

SIRC's own research has shown that children and young people now expect their parents to provide them with financial support after the age of 18. Parents also accept that this will inevitably be the case and identify university education as being the most significant reason for continuing dependence.⁴ In response to the statement "My child will be unable to go to university without my financial support", 68% of parents expressed agreement while only 14% disagreed.

Despite their expectation of enduring financial dependence, this study showed that young people remained optimistic about when they would be in a position to leave the parental home. Around a fifth thought that this would happen between the ages of 16 and 18 while a larger group (around 43%) said that they would leave between 19 and 21. Only about 17% said between 22 and 24 and even fewer (5%) between 25 and 27. Given the numbers of young people remaining in the parental home until well into their 20s and even 30s, as shown earlier in Figure 9.8, these expectations may well not be met.

Similarly unrealistic expectations were evident in the context of first home purchase. A third of all young people predicted that they would be able to buy a home between the ages of 22 and 24. A further 22% thought that they would be aged between 25 and 27 when this occurred. Less than 1% felt that first home purchase would be delayed until they were older than 34. The average age of first-time home buyers in Britain is, in fact, now 34 and this is likely to rise further.

A further consequence of the extended dependence of young people on their parents is the increasing age at which they get married. In 1971 the average age of marriage for men was 25 and for women 23. Today it is 32 for men and 29 for women – substantial increases of seven and six years respectively. Again, however, the expectations of young people are that this milestone in emerging adulthood will be reached much earlier. The SIRC study showed that two thirds of girls expected to be married before the age of 28. Boys were a little more conservative, but only about 7% of them thought that they would be into their thirties before they got married – well below the current national averages.

Girls and young women were rather more realistic about the age at which they would have their first child. The majority

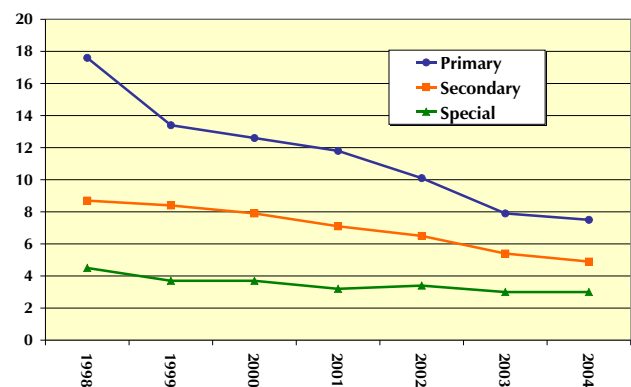
thought that this would happen in their lives between the ages of 25 and 30. This is quite closely in line with current peaks in the fertility rates. Only about 4%, however, thought that they would wait until their late thirties and forties before having children. In fact, 50,000 women delay their first birth until this age every year – 7% of the total number of births.

Young people in the digital age

Today's children are often referred to as 'digital natives'. They have grown up in an age where access to computers and related technology and the Internet is routine. A half of all homes in the UK have broadband IT connections and data show that 88% of primary school children and 95% of 11-18 year olds are using the Internet at home.⁵ Other data, however, indicate that around 1 million children do not have Internet access of any kind at home.

Access to computers in school has increased steadily in the past 10 years. As can be seen from Figure 9.9, the number of pupils per computer in secondary schools was 9 in 1998. This had fallen to 5 in 2004 (the latest available data).⁶ In primary schools the ratio has fallen from 1:18 to 1:8. Projecting these trends forward, we would expect the ratios to be now much smaller.

Figure 9.9. Ratio of school students to computers



A recently announced government initiative aims to ensure that all children and young people have similar access to IT and Internet at home.⁷ The underlying assumption of this initiative is that computers and the Internet are primarily educational and that universal access will improve learning and also provide parents with better ways of supporting their

4 Social Issues Research Centre (2007) *The Trust Fund Generation*. Available at http://www.sirc.org/publik/trust_fund_generation.shtml

5 Panlogic study 2007

6 Source: ICT in Schools Survey, Department for Education and Skills/British Educational Communications and Technology Agency

7 See, for example, *The Guardian*, Friday January 4 2008.

children in this context. It is certainly the case that the most frequent use of home Internet access by school students is for homework.

While there have been fears expressed about allowing children unfettered access to the web for some time – especially to online communities which have, according to some high-profile news reports, been infiltrated by paedophiles – a more recent trend in the debate focuses on the potentially negative long-term impacts of such technologies. The eminent professor of pharmacology, Baroness Susan Greenfield, has recently argued that digital technologies, and digital and online gaming in particular, can blur the distinction between the cyber world and reality.

While such analyses have yet to become 'mainstream', the social and psychological impacts of new technologies will, we believe, remain a focus of continuing concern and may impact in some areas on the acceptance of further innovations in this field. The theoretical perspectives outlined below are also of significant relevance in this context.

Adults and young people: new kinds of identities?

The British sociologist Alan Prout⁸ explores the ways in which the social construction of childhood and adulthood fits uncomfortably with the complex realities to which it is applied in contemporary British society. The Professor of education, David Buckingham, argues that this is primarily the result of developments in digital and electronic media: "... it is impossible to understand contemporary childhood without taking account of the media. Indeed, it could be argued that children today are living 'media childhoods' – that children's experiences, and indeed the meanings of childhood itself, are largely defined and determined by electronic media ... media use is inextricably tied up with the process of identity formation."⁹

Buckingham continues by arguing that increased access to the internet, television and other media has allowed children and adolescents to access 'adult' domains which would otherwise be far more difficult to enter. With this expanded repertoire of cultural knowledge children and adolescents are able to subvert the supposed divide between adults and themselves, blurring the boundaries of identity on both sides. Conversely, in order to accommodate this increased cultural repertoire, products and entertainment programming supposedly geared

at young people are accessible to adult audiences as well. British children can be adults online, while their parents watch *The Simpsons*.

The effects of late modernity are, of course, felt by adults as well. The educationalist Nick Lee also suggests that, "With regard to being a 'grown up', we have entered an age of uncertainty, an age in which adult life is newly unpredictable and in which whatever stabilities we manage to produce cannot be expected to last our whole lives".¹⁰ Lee points principally to shifts in the stability of both employment and intimate relations for adults when characterising the current 'age of uncertainty'. Prout suggests the same: "It is no longer expected that adults will necessarily enter into one lifelong marriage or pursue a career until retirement. We live in the era of 'reconstituted families', 'lifelong partners', and 'reskilling'. These have made the 'unfinished' character of adult lives as visible as those of children."¹¹

The possibility for rapid, disruptive change has eroded the notion of adulthood as a stable, completed identity and the "end result" of childhood is therefore removed – there is no perfectly formed adult inside the adolescent cocoon. Lee goes on to suggest that the notion of the "unfinished" adult has significant implications for the authority of adults in contemporary Western societies. As they are no longer willing or able to uphold the traditional distinctions between parents and children that their own parents maintained, contemporary adults are unable to present themselves as the unquestionable, expert superiors of their children. While parents remain more knowledgeable and experienced than their children, hierarchical family structures of authority and control are in some ways developing into more democratic systems where negotiation and participation are key.

Implications for PSB

- **The boundaries between the social and cultural worlds of adults and young people are now less fixed than in the past. The traditional distinctions between what it means to be a grown-up, a teenager or a child have been eroded. Given the ongoing public anxiety about the well-being of the nation's young people, PSB has a role to play in exploring the social realities of what it means to be young in modern Britain.**

8 Prout, A. (2005) *The Future of Childhood*. London: Routledge

9 Buckingham, D. (2003) *Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture*. Polity

10 Lee, N. (2001) *Childhood and Society: growing up in an age of uncertainty*. Open University Press

11 Prout, A. (2005) *The Future of Childhood: Towards the Interdisciplinary Study of Children*. Routledge

- The importance of new digital technologies and media in the lives of young people has significant implications for how PSB is conceptualised. Having grown up with unprecedented access to information and entertainment, most young people are now equipped with the levels of technological competence and media literacy necessary to be both active consumers and producers of media content. This suggests that PSB can no longer be seen as a strictly 'top-down' form of public engagement.
- The changing social identities of adults and young people, when combined with an increasing awareness of the means and ends of media production, also have implications for the notion of programming for 'adults' and 'children'. If young people and adults increasingly have similar points of cultural reference – programmes with cross-generation appeal such as *The Simpsons*, for example – how can programme makers accurately or legitimately divide viewers according to age-related categories? What are the implications here for the PSB objective of serving all audiences?
- There is a real need for PSB to engage with the issue of the new phase of 'emerging' adulthood for young people, coupled with extended dependence, which marks a departure from traditional pathways from child to adult. PSB has an important role to play in preparing young people for the new challenges and opportunities involved in 'growing up' in modern Britain.

10 The nation's worries

The past two decades have seen a steady trend towards risk-aversion in UK society – a trend even more marked in the United States. As the sociologist Frank Furedi has highlighted:¹

"The rise of catchphrases such as the 'politics of fear', 'fear of crime' and 'fear of the future' is testimony to the cultural significance of fear today. Many of us seem to make sense of our experiences through the narrative of fear. Fear is not simply associated with high-profile catastrophic threats such as terrorist attacks, global warming, AIDS or a potential flu pandemic; rather, as many academics have pointed out, there are also the 'quiet fears' of everyday life."

He traces the origin of this trend back to the early 1990s – what he describes as the 'age of anxiety'. Now, such anxieties have become more clearly defined and specific fears have been cultivated.

In the late 1990s the German sociologist Ulrich Beck² developed the notion of a 'risk society' to describe the important role that popular fears and insecurities have to play in shaping modern, developed societies such as the UK. Along with other prominent social thinkers, such as Anthony Giddens, Beck highlights the fact that we live in an age where 'manufactured', man-made risks (as opposed to 'external', natural risks) play an integral part in how we see the world. Whether or not the risk of supposed threats to our security are real or imagined is debatable, but in either case our fears have a very real impact on social life.

The generation of anxiety

We view this issue as being of significant importance in the context of the debate about the role of Public Service Broadcasting in the 21st century. Our fears are generated in large part not by personal experience but by what we read in the popular press or watch on television. Increasingly, certain sections of the popular media have emphasised the risks we might run in our everyday lives – from electromagnetic fields around power lines (and even WiFi routers) to the health risks of any food that is not organically grown.

There are two issues here. The first concerns the role of PSB in ensuring accurate and balanced coverage of health and science issues and providing people with relevant and

comprehensible information about risks to their health, safety and well-being.

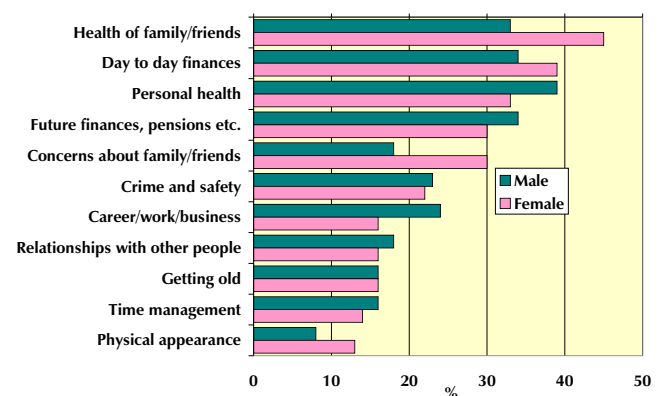
The second issue concerns information about what people are *really* worried about. If PSB is to be sensitive to people's real concerns then clearly it needs to know what they are, and how salient they are. It is here that we find a surprising lack of data. We know that people have a fear of crime – see Section 7 of this report – and that this is out of proportion to the actual risks they have of being a victim of crime. We do not know, however, where fear of crime sits in the hierarchy of their worries. There is little in government research, such as the British Attitudes Surveys, that addresses this issue.

What keeps us awake at night?

Given such lacunae, we are obliged to rely mostly on data obtained at SIRC in 2005 through a YouGov poll of just under 2,000 representative adults in the UK. The design of the poll was informed by material from in-depth focus groups.

We asked respondents firstly about their personal worries. The results are summarised in Figure 10.1.

Figure 10.1. Personal worries



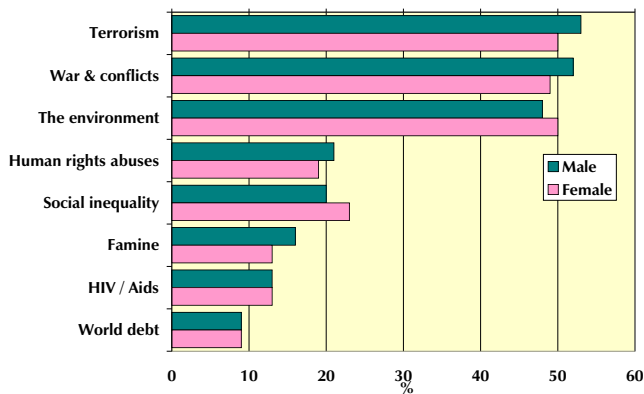
We can see that uppermost in women's personal concerns is the health of their family and friends and day-to-day financial matters. Personal health was the most significant concern for men. Longer term financial concerns ranked third for both sexes.

The second set of questions in the poll explored worries about global issues. The responses are summarised in Figure 10.2. Here we can see that concerns about terrorism, war and conflict were the most dominant for both men and women. Environmental issues ranked third. Some way down in the

1 Furedi, F. (2007) The only thing we have to fear is the 'culture of fear' itself. *Spiked*

2 Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Sage Publications.

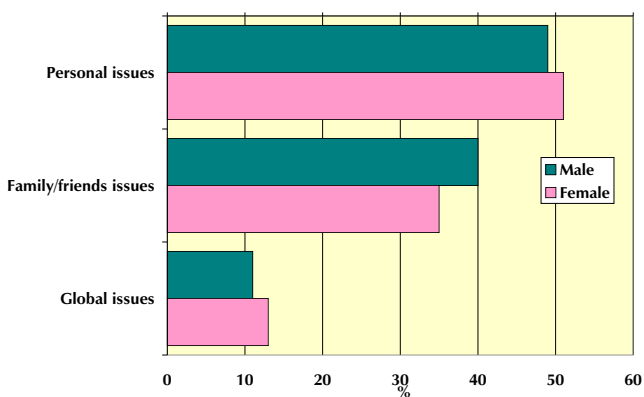
Figure 10.2. 'Global' worries



hierarchy of worry came human rights abuses and social inequality.

To what extent, however, were these global concerns more or less significant than people's personal worries or worries about their families and friends? Figure 10.3 shows the responses to a question that asked people to assess the relative importance of the three types of worry.

Figure 10.3. Relative salience of different types of worry

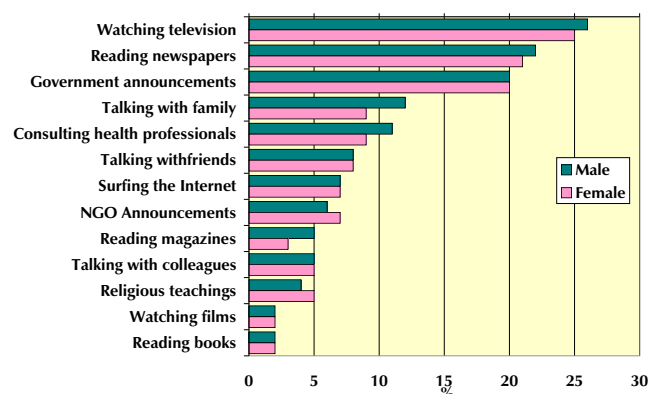


It is immediately clear from Figure 10.3 that people worry most about personal issues (health, finance, etc.) and have similar concerns about these issues among their family and friends. While they do express worries about global issues, when asked, it is clear that these are far less uppermost in the minds on an everyday basis.

Where do our fears come from?

Respondents in the poll were also asked to indicate what had caused them to worry more about any issue – what had increased their anxieties? The results are summarised in Figure 10.4. The most common response that their worries were not directly related to any particular source of information (36%).

Figure 10.4. Sources of anxiety



For the rest, however the most dominant response was that anxieties had been aroused by watching television, followed by reading newspapers. Announcements from government departments came third in this hierarchy.

Newspapers are, of course, a primary source of public information, as well as a platform for establishing or debunking popular fears and concerns. Readership of national newspapers is declining, doubtless due in part to the rise of new digital media that provide a wider range of sources and types of information and entertainment. Figures for newspaper readership, however, still remain quite high, suggesting that they continue to be a significant focus for public opinion and public fears.

According to the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, the proportion of people reading a morning paper at least three days a week has reduced from 77% in 1983 to 50% in 2006. This represents a fall from 57% to 33% of those reading 'popular' newspapers (i.e. tabloids) and an increase from 10% to 12% reading 'quality' or broadsheet papers. At the same time it is worth bearing in mind that the readership for tabloid newspapers far outweighs the numbers reading 'broadsheets', meaning the former still has a much wider reach than the latter.

According to the British Crime Survey 2006/7, people reading tabloid newspapers were twice as likely (43%) as those reading broadsheets (21%) to think the crime rate in the country was increasing. Of tabloid readers, 18% agreed that crime had increased 'a lot' in their local area in the last 2 years compared with 9% of broadsheet readers.

There are of course a number of socio-economic and political issues involved here, but the disparities in these figures shed some light on the kinds of information that different demographic groups are likely to access, and the effect that this has on their perceptions of certain risks.

Television

While the print media play a significant role in heightening levels of anxiety, it is undoubtedly television that has the major impact, consistent with what we have seen in Figure 10.4 above. In a recent YouGov poll of more than 11,000 people, 82% said that they regularly watched national news on television, compared with 51% who regularly read about national news in a newspaper. In the same poll, TV was also considered to be the least biased and highest quality source of news coverage. Almost half (49%) of participants said that they trusted television more than other media platforms.

Further evidence of the influence of television was provided by a BBC/Reuters/Media Centre poll on public trust in the media, showing that most people (86%) in the UK trust national television as a source of news and information above newspapers or online media.

A recent Eurobarometer report on public opinion in the EU also suggests that television is the most trusted media platform, with 51% of people trusting television as opposed to 18% trusting the printed press and 32% trusting the Internet.

Implications for PSB

- **Britain is an increasingly fretful nation. This heightened anxiety has been generated, at least in part, not through personal experience but by what people watch on television or read in the newspapers. While 'scary' programmes – those that focus, for example, on potential risks to our health or personal security – attract large audiences, they often do little to provide people with balanced information on the basis of which they can make intelligent choices. PSB has a clear duty to provide its audiences with balanced and neutral coverage in order to maintain the impartiality and trustworthiness that are so important in this context.**
- **Guidelines on science and health communication have been available for some time and PSBs should be mindful of the issues and responsibilities here in order maintain their role as trusted providers.³**

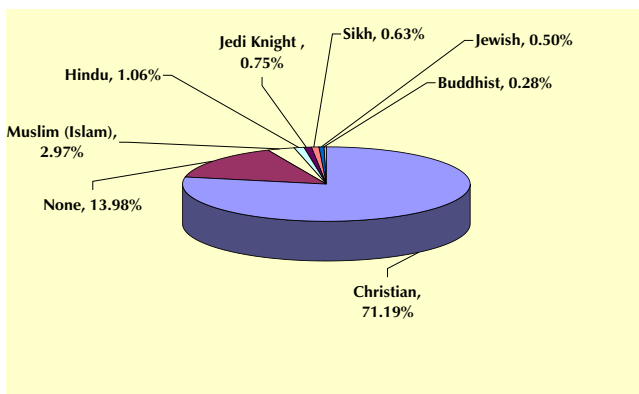
3 See *Guidelines on Science and Health Communication*, developed by SIRC in partnership with the Royal Institution and Royal Society – available at http://www.sirc.org/publik/revised_guidelines.shtml and Harrabin, R., Coote, A. & Alle, J. (2003) *Health in the News: Risk, Reporting and Media Influence*. London: King's Fund Publications

11 Religion and faith

Declared religion

The National Census for England and Wales requires respondents to answer the question "What is your religion?" In the 2001 census, 71% replied that they were Christian, as shown in Figure 11.1. Adding in those who mentioned a specific type of Christian church – e.g. Roman Catholic – brings the total number of declared Christians up to 72%.

Figure 11.1. Declared religion – 2001 Census



Note that in Figure 11.1, 0.75% of the population (390,000) people said that they were Jedi Knights. This was the result of an effective campaign by fans of the *Star Wars* films to get 'Jedi Knight' accepted as an 'official' religion. As the ONS pointed out at the time, however, simply having a code in the census data does not mean that it qualifies as a recognised religion.

Sixteen percent of people in the Census said that they had no religion and 7% refused to answer. A further 5% declared themselves to be of other faiths, with Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Jews being the main four.

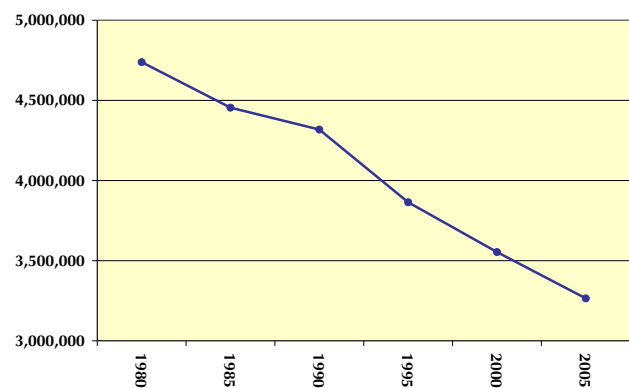
As always in polls of any kind, the results reflect the way in which the question is posed. In the British Social Attitudes Surveys, for example, interviewers ask "Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?" The 2004 survey produced responses that were rather different from the Census. Here 53% said Christian, 3% other faiths and 43% no religion. A study in 2007 by Tearfund¹, asking the same question and based on a sample of 7,000, obtained very similar results – 53% Christian, 6% other faiths and 39% no religion.

Given the consistency of these last two studies, it would seem that the much quoted census figures exaggerate the extent to which Britain continues to be a predominantly Christian country.

Church attendance

While over half of British people may see themselves as Christian, the Tearfund data show that less than 15% attend church on a monthly or more frequent basis. Christian church attendances in Britain have fallen markedly, as shown in Figure 11.2.²

Figure 11.2. Average numbers of people attending a Christian church in Britain on Sundays



It is also the case that Christian church congregations are now dominated by people over the age of 65.

Among the Black population, however, church attendance is much higher – 48% on a monthly or more frequent basis. The large evangelical churches of the Baptist and independent denominations, which attract significant numbers of Black people to their congregations, are showing some resistance to the overall trend as a result.

There is also more frequent church attendance in Northern Ireland, with 45% going to religious services monthly or more frequently. The level in Scotland is slightly above the average (18%) while in England and Wales it is below (12%).

While the 2001 census indicates that just under 3% of the British population claims to be Muslim, there is little in the way of reliable data to indicate how often they attend religious services. One survey in 1984³ indicated that 51% percent of Muslims attended one of the main Muslim festivals, such as that marking the end of Ramadan. The same survey estimated

1 Ashworth, J. and Farthing, I. (2007) *Churchgoing in the UK: A research report from Tearfund on church attendance in the UK*.

2 Source: Brierley, P. (ed.) (2005), *UK Christian Handbook Religious Trends No. 5: The Future of the Church*, Christian Research.

3 Holway, J. (1986.) *Mosque attendance, in UK Christian Handbook, 1987/88 Edition*. MARC Europe and Evangelical Alliance.

the number of Christians attending church at Easter or Christmas as being between 15% and 20%.

Since that study, a number of claims have been made, often by Islamic leaders and spokespersons, that mosque attendance may soon outstrip Christian church attendance and, indeed, may have already done so. A very recent survey by Christian Research, which undertakes statistical analysis of religious practice in Britain, adds weight to this claim.

More practising Muslims than Christians?

In their latest publication, *Religious Trends*, the organisation claims that by 2050 there will be 2,660,000 religiously active Muslims in Britain while Christian church attendance will have fallen to less than 900,000 (monthly or more frequently). They also suggest that the active Hindu population, currently around 400,000, will double to 855,000.

As might be expected, some Church of England leaders have contested these analyses. Lynda Barley, head of research in the CofE said: "These statistics represent a partial picture of religious trends today. In recent years church life has significantly diversified so these traditional statistics are less and less meaningful in isolation."⁴

While the statistics on levels of religiosity in Britain may not always be the most reliable, they consistently point to a significant decline in active Christianity accompanied by a rise in active participation in Islamic, Hindu and, possibly, other religions.

'Fundamentalism' is now evident in small pockets of religious activity in the UK but receives a disproportionate amount of media coverage. This leads to the popular misconception that Britain is becoming more 'religious' and that Islam is characterised by fundamentalist beliefs.

Implications for PSB

- **These trends have very serious implication for PSB and its remit to provide a certain level of religious programming. There is evidence of a strong trend towards a secular society in Britain, with signs of increasing adherence to more fundamentalist faiths among very small groups of people.**
- **Given this, is the level of religious programming consistent with such trends and does the content of such programming reflect increasing religious diversity in the UK?**

- **Given that ITV has already been released by Ofcom from its commitment to provide any religious programming at all, what is now the appropriate role of the BBC in this context?**

⁴ See, for example, *The Times*, May 8 2008, 'Churchgoing on its knees as Christianity falls out of favour'.