ETHNIC IDENTITY AND THE CENSUS

RESEARCH REPORT

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Vanessa Stone is a Director in BMRB’s Social Research Department. Vanessa specialises in the conduct of qualitative social research. She has been working in this field for over fifteen years and in this time has primarily been conducting studies for government departments and public bodies. Clients have included the Scottish Executive, Home Office, Black Police Association, Social Exclusion Unit, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, and the Department for Education and Skills. Vanessa has also conducted studies for charities, community groups, hospitals and health authorities. She has led a number of projects in relation to ethnicity, these have included: work for the Lord Chancellor’s Department among court users on the introduction of a question on ethnicity in the civil jurisdiction to develop equality work; research projects and development work for the Metropolitan Black Police Association to help bridge the gap between inner city communities and the police; a project for the Department of Health to support needs in relation to sexual health among young Jamaican, Indian and Pakistani teenagers; research for the Home Office to explore the views of people from minority ethnic communities towards a career with the police and another to investigate experiences of stop and search. Vanessa has also conducted projects among people seeking asylum and those recently awarded ‘leave to remain’. She recently managed a research project to develop the Scottish Executive’s ‘One Scotland, Many Cultures’ campaign against racism.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

1.1 The Census currently collects data on ethnicity by asking respondents to choose (from a list) the ethnic background they feel best describes them. However, there has been much debate about the purpose of gathering data on ethnicity, and in particular the use of terms such as ‘black’ and ‘white’; inconsistencies in category descriptions; and the representation of different communities, particularly small communities. Margaret Curran, former Minister for Communities, committed to re-evaluate ethnicity classifications to ensure that they reflected the diversity of Scotland’s communities, and gather more meaningful information to better promote race equality. In 2004 a collaborative team from BMRB Social Research, CERES and UHI PolicyWeb was commissioned to carry out research into ethnicity classifications with a view to exploring these issues among both data providers and data users.

RESEARCH AIMS

1.2 The overall aim of the research was to inform the development of a classification of ethnic identity; ideally one that would meet a variety of needs. Consequently, the research needed to explore how individuals would wish to classify their ethnic identity (‘data providers’), whilst looking at the information needs of those using such data (‘data users’). It should be noted that one option was for the 2001 census question on ethnicity not to be changed at all.

RESEARCH DESIGN

1.3 The research was designed in three stages. The first stage involved interviewing stakeholders with an interest in the topic and looked more broadly at the issues to help inform subsequent stages of the research. The second stage was with data users. This explored ways in which data users were collecting ethnicity data, why they did so and what use they made of the statistics they collected. This phase also looked at alternative methods of classification and the implications of changing methods. The third stage was with data providers and involved exploring how people define themselves (exploring different contexts and reasons), the extent to which definitions may change according to the context the data provider finds themselves in, and reactions to different kinds of framework.

1.4 The methodology was wholly qualitative for all three stages. A mixture of face-to-face and telephone depth interviews was undertaken for the first phase (11 interviews); face-to-face paired depth interviews for the second phase (6 interviews, 12 respondents); and face-to-face depth interviews and mini focus groups for the third phase (28 interviews and 2 focus groups; a total of 39 respondents).

1.5 Fieldwork was carried out in both urban and rural areas across Scotland. Respondents from a mixture of ethnic backgrounds were interviewed, with interpreters being used where necessary. A systematic and comprehensive analysis of the qualitative data was then undertaken.
PHASE ONE – THE VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS

Purpose of Ethnic Monitoring

1.6 Respondents identified four reasons for ethnic monitoring:

- as a **fact finding tool**;
- to **enable the delivery of equality of opportunity**;
- to **monitor progress**; and
- as an **awareness raising mechanism** to give visibility to the diversity of ethnicities currently in Scotland/UK.

Usage and dissemination of data

1.7 Stakeholders perceived that data gathered on ethnicity could be used to better effect than appeared to be the case. Concerns were expressed that public bodies and local authorities were not utilising the statistics available to them to improve services and equal opportunities/access.

1.8 Respondents wanted to see more detailed information being collected on ethnicity/identity to enhance service provision for different ethnic groups, particularly at the local level to supplement Census data, which could be quite out of date. There were worries that certain communities being excluded because they did not constitute a large enough percentage of the population, either locally or at the national level.

1.9 Some stated that ethnic monitoring data collected by larger bodies should be made available to smaller agencies, particularly in the voluntary sector. There was recognition that issues of data protection and confidentiality were aspects to be considered, but it was felt that data could still be disseminated whilst adhering to data protection legislation.

1.10 It was thought to be critical to cross-reference data, to take into account the needs of language or religion, for example. It was also suggested that there needed to be connectivity between Census data and data gained from other surveys.

Classification categories

1.11 There was a broad consensus among this qualitative sample of stakeholders with regard to the current classifications used on a number of issues:

- The current classifications were felt to be both **confusing and inconsistent** (particularly in relation to colour and ethnicity) hiding the real diversities within Scotland and not allowing people to make their ‘Scottish-ness’ explicit if they so wished.
- The current ethnicity framework was thought to do **little to promote community cohesion** by marginalising the identities of non-visible minorities as well as small visible minorities.
• Concerns over the “other” category. The range of ethnicities that this category is expected to encompass was felt to be very large, relegating new communities to ‘other’. For some groups constantly ticking the ‘other box’ was seen as ‘psychologically devaluing’. It was also felt that information in the ‘other’ category was not being used to address needs or to inform future categorisation systems.

The absence of a section on ‘languages’

1.12 It was felt to be important to include a question on languages spoken, partly because language was very much part of a person’s identity but also to tailor service design and delivery such that people would not be discriminated against due to a lack of English skills.

Generational differences

1.13 Better account needed to be made of differences between older and younger people (from minority groups) when describing their ethnic identity as there could be wide variation between the generations with reference to ‘Scottish-ness’ / ‘British-ness’ and country of origin.

Suggestions for improvement

1.14 Colour to be removed from ethnicity classifications, and perhaps asked as a separate question, with the proviso that a crude colour categorisation of ‘White/Black’ would not be acceptable.

1.15 For ethnic categories to be inclusive of all visible and non-visible communities, irrespective of their size - enabling everyone to have a chance to be identified in a way they felt comfortable with.

1.16 Using a framework that categorises people under broad regional headings, such as ‘European’, ‘Asian’, ‘African’, ‘Middle Eastern’, ‘North American’, ‘South American’. Coupled with additional questions, this would allow for multiple identities to be expressed and would unpack diversities in the ‘white’ category.

1.17 Extending the choice of categories within the ethnicity framework to allow people to better describe their identity, but in a way that allowed for data to be aggregated up for national comparisons. However, some respondents did prefer an ‘open’ style of question leaving people to describe their identity in their own words (others had reservations about how such data could be collated).

1.18 The purpose of collecting ethnicity data had to be better communicated in order to ensure co-operation from both those who are suspicious and those who do not see the need for collecting such data.

1.19 It was suggested that the religion question could be modified to include the different sects/denominations of the other major faiths already cited on the form.

1.20 Respondents felt strongly that Scotland needed to have its own national ethnicity statistics, which could be broad and diverse but could also be aggregated to enable UK wide comparability. It was thought that the new framework could usefully draw on
PHASE TWO: DATA USERS

Reasons for collecting data on ethnicity

1.21 Respondents gave a number of reasons for collecting data on ethnicity: compliance with legislation; monitoring for discrimination; devising policies to promote equal opportunities; tailoring services; raising awareness; targeting resources and responding to requests from other organisations.

How ethnicity data was being analysed

1.22 Organisations described using standard statistical techniques to compare groups within the data-sets they were using. This could occur at two distinct levels: large-scale and localised. Large-scale comparisons meant comparing their population with that of the Scottish and/or UK population as a whole. Localised analysis meant respondents were looking more closely at how their organisation operated. Another approach was to look at staff behaviour towards the general public by collecting data on ethnicity during interactions.

1.23 It was commented that when using current classifications the numbers of people from minority ethnic groups was very small when compared to the Scottish population as a whole, especially outside Glasgow and Edinburgh. Groups could therefore be too small for statistical analysis. Respondents aggregated groups to help with this, for example, into groups such as ‘Asian’.

Dissemination of statistics on ethnicity

1.24 Respondents were extremely mindful over issues of anonymity; they feared identifying individuals and the potential for harm that could result from this.

1.25 Ethnicity data was shared for a variety of reasons:

- To meet legislative requirements
- In response to special requests made by Parliament or by a member of the public
- To enable data sharing between government departments and bodies.

1.26 Overall there was a sense that data dissemination outside an organisation was in an ‘official’ capacity and in response to external requests. There was nothing to suggest that data users would be averse to disseminating data so long as confidentiality needs were addressed as this was a major concern for respondents.
Current classifications being used by data users

1.27 Data users interviewed for this study described using three different types of classifications for a variety of reasons:

- The 2001 census question on ethnicity (or something very similar) so that comparisons could be made with national data and also to enable joint initiatives
- Ethnicity classifications tailored to the specific needs of their organisation
- Ethnicity classification developed many years ago that were maintained to ensure compatibility over time.

Data users’ views on the ethnicity classifications they were using

1.28 Generally respondents thought that the classification currently used by their organisation was useful but could benefit from being improved or fine-tuned. This view stemmed from uncertainty over whether the current ethnicity categories reflected best practice.

1.29 A number of specific issues were raised in relation to current classifications:

- A better understanding of white minority groups
- A need to look at the ‘other’ category
- Extending the list of categories
- A need to review the relationship between nationality, colour and religion to ethnicity
- For ethnicity classifications to make more allowance for the sometimes flexible approach people could have to their identity.

The impact of changing to a new ethnicity classification

1.30 A number of concerns were raised by data users in relation to any changes to their current systems that might:

- Inhibit trend analysis
- Disrupt the organisation, in particular their computer systems
- Be expensive

1.31 However, data users generally thought they would cope with such changes and stressed that the most important thing was for data providers to have a framework that worked for them.
The ideal approach

1.32 A range of suggestions were made for improving and adding to the Census question on ethnicity:

- A desire for a tiered or nested approach.
- Focusing on ‘main headings’, leaving organisations to define the more detailed sub-categories that were best suited to the population they were working with.
- Separating out nationality and ethnicity.
- Expanding the question on language and religion as these factors also had a bearing on some people’s feelings about ethnicity.

1.33 Data users were keen for any new approach to better identify changes in the Scottish population. For some this meant having a much longer list of pre-codes (ethnic groups/categories) to choose from, which it was hoped would allow people to be more accurate in their responses. Others suggested that having a better understanding of a changing population would mean looking more closely at people’s responses to the ‘Other’ categories.

Phase Three: views of data providers: perceptions of ethnicity

Definitions of ethnicity

1.34 Respondents defined ethnicity more generally in terms of a person’s background or identity. It was clear that many respondents had not thought about this before in any great depth. Consequently, their thoughts on how they defined themselves developed over the course of their interview, with subtle differences emerging on how they perceived the term ethnicity in relation to themselves and others.

1.35 Whilst both race and colour were mentioned by some respondents, ethnicity was generally related closely to nationality. Religion, accent, culture or language could also have a bearing but this was variable with ethnicity being simple for some and more complicated for others.

Colour in relation to ethnicity

1.36 Colour was a contentious issue for some respondents but not others. There were people who saw colour as very much tied to their ethnicity whilst others felt strongly that it should not be, either for themselves or for others. Such people expressed fears over stigmatising people because of their skin colour and a few respondents commented that such associations could also be misleading.

Single and multiple ethnicities

1.37 Generally, respondents in this study described themselves as having multiple ethnic identities and drew on a number of reference points, which varied from person to person, these included: parents being from different ethnic groups, countries or cultures;
where they were born; where they were brought up; where they currently live (or have lived); their citizenship/passport; religion; and finally a range of life experiences.

Descriptions of identity

1.38 People referred to a wide variety of descriptors, underlining the complexity of trying to establish any kind of ethnicity framework. For some people there was a clear tie-in with the 2001 Census categories and how they wished to describe their ethnicity. However, for others the categories did not capture the level of specificity they might have wanted or needed. Having the opportunity to write in their answers helped some respondents when faced with the 2001 Census form.

Fluid and evolving identity

1.39 A number of the respondents taking part in stage 3 were not born in Scotland and they talked about developing a sense of Scottish-ness for a variety of reasons, for example because they had been living in the country for a number of years or because of other factors like their children being born in Scotland. Changing contexts were also explored but generally people either did not change how they described themselves or occasionally varied what they said because they were in a specific situation. Many respondents commented that the way in which they referred to their ethnicity was unchanging.

Other comments

1.40 It is worth noting that a few comments were made by respondents in stage 3 that suggested that people defined themselves according to the labels or categories they were familiar with. This might be because they had not thought about their ethnicity or identity in any great depth, perhaps because they did not see a need to.

Attitudes towards data collection and different classifications

1.41 In general respondents found it difficult to remember occasions when they had been asked about their ethnicity, although they remembered being asked about it for employment and in some other contexts. They found it more difficult to recall specific detail about the frameworks used, although some were aware that certain elements had changed over time, for example the addition of a ‘Mixed’ category or descriptions like Asian or Black Scottish.

1.42 Respondents varied in their reactions to being asked about their ethnicity, but generally speaking were happy to answer the question. Others were more reticent, feeling that it depended on who wanted to know, their reason for collecting such data and the way the question was asked. There were fears that the information might be used to discriminate. Some respondents worried about more detailed categories, wondering why an organisation would need so much information; others found broad categories pointless.

1.43 Respondents thought that organisations might want to know about ethnicity for the following broad reasons: for information purposes, including monitoring of diversity; to enable the most efficient allocation of services or resources; or to serve other agendas.
Strengths and weaknesses of different classifications

1.44 As the concepts being discussed were very abstract, three different methods of classifying ethnicity were shown to respondents during the interviews and group discussions.

1.45 Some respondents felt that the categories used in the example classifications were the wrong ones and proposed their own. However, others suggested ways in which the approaches adopted by the example classifications might usefully be combined in order to make a workable framework.

1.46 Generally, the preference was for a national identity question, with the current Census categories forming a second part asking about ethnic background. Respondents liked the opportunity to emphasise their national identity as well as their ethnic background, instead of their ethnic background alone.

1.47 It was thought to be important to have a wider ‘white’ background section and to have the opportunity to describe ‘other’ as necessary.

1.48 Respondents fell into three broad types in terms of the amount of specificity they wanted: those who wanted a short classification framework, which they could fill in quickly, and were willing to accept lack of detail and clarity; those who acknowledged the theoretical benefits to greater specificity of categories, but felt a line had to be drawn somewhere in terms of numbers; and those who wanted specificity to a potentially infinite degree.

1.49 Respondents differed in their attitudes towards the ‘Other’ category. For some, being forced to use it could be an annoying experience, which made them feel excluded and people would sometimes select categories that did not describe them adequately just to avoid ticking ‘other’. Others assumed that the categories on the frameworks were based on population sizes and did not therefore mind being ‘unrepresented’ if they were part of a numerically very small community.

1.50 It was thought to be important to list the different UK nationalities if a nationality question was given. Many thought that the Republic of Ireland should be listed with these, for cultural, numerical and geographical reasons.

Conclusions

1.51 The stakeholder respondents, data users and data providers recognised that data on ethnicity was collected for a variety of reasons. Data providers and users in particular saw the validity of collecting ethnicity data. Stakeholders believed that collecting ethnicity statistics had to move beyond compliance to contributing to equal opportunities. They also thought it was vital that ethnicity data had local relevance.

1.52 Data providers and stakeholders commented on the lack of evidence showing how ethnicity data was being used. On the other hand, data users commented on how data was helping them to improve practice. There was a distinct gap between these two views.

1.53 In general, it was recognised that the current classification systems would benefit from adaptation to better record increased diversity. There was recognition that
some data providers might resent and avoid using the ‘other’ category. However, respondents were unclear whether a longer list of categories was going to be helpful or desirable.

1.54 Stakeholder respondents, data providers and users also recognised the fluidity of concepts like ethnicity and identity. Stakeholder respondents found the conflation of characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity and colour to be highly problematic. They also viewed the current ethnicity question within the Census as being conceptually flawed and confusing. Stakeholder respondents in general saw the need to decouple colour from ethnicity or nationality, but the issue of colour was rarely mentioned by data users. There were mixed views among data providers. Nationality, however, was not contentious. A number of the respondents, from all of stages of the research, were clear that colour was still a clear trigger for racial discrimination and had to be addressed. Consideration may therefore need to be given as to how ‘colour’ is included within an ethnicity classification framework.

1.55 Religion was mentioned in passing by the stakeholder respondents and data users. The stakeholder respondents suggested there was a need to expand the religion question to include the different sects/denominations of the other major faiths. Data users on the other hand queried the relationship between religion and ethnicity. For some data providers, religion was perceived to be an important facet of their identity, but for others questions relating to it represented an intrusion into their personal lives.

1.56 Stakeholder respondents raised the importance of language as part of identity but also the lack of being able to communicate in English as a potential source of exclusion or discrimination. Data providers also talked about language being part of ethnicity.

1.57 During the research, the following were identified as areas to focus on for future consultation:

- How can the purpose for asking about ethnicity be more clearly communicated to members of the public in Scotland?

- How can information about the way in which ethnicity data is used to improve services and enhance quality of provision for Scotland’s diverse populations be better disseminated widely without compromising matters of confidentiality?

- What mechanisms should be in place to enable data collated by the Census to be used more extensively to meet the diverse needs of communities at national and local levels?

- What mechanisms need to be in place to assist those who have difficulty filling in forms like the Census (because of literacy or language issues)?

- How should issues of colour, nationality and ethnicity be disentangled in question frameworks?

- That colour is a trigger for discrimination is not disputed. However, is the Census the correct vehicle to do this? If yes, what would be appropriate wording for such a question?
CHAPTER ONE    INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

1.1 The 2001 Census revealed that minority ethnic groups comprise 2% of the population in Scotland. Of this 2%, the majority are Asian (70%). The Census currently collects data on ethnicity by asking respondents which ethnic background they feel best describes them. People can choose from a list of fourteen choices under five broad ethnic categories: White; Mixed; Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British; Black, Black Scottish or Black British; and Other.

1.2 Reactions to the ethnicity categorisations used in the Census have been polarised, both in England and Scotland\(^1\). Debate has centred on the following four key issues:

- The use and purpose of gathering data on ethnicity;
- The use of terms such as ‘black’ and ‘white’ as a description of all visible minorities and the majority community, thus hiding the differences within both groups;
- The inconsistent and confused basis of categorisation, which veers between geography and colour, replicating what some have called ‘apartheid’ categories\(^2\) and rendering some groups invisible; and
- Whether communities, particularly small communities, could influence classification frameworks.

There has also been a tendency to conflate the term ‘ethnicity’ with ‘non-white’, thus de-emphasising the ethnic identity of both the white majority and other white groups.

1.3 The requirement to arrive at an inclusive, workable framework has been given further impetus by the monitoring and impact assessment requirements of the Race Relations (2000) Amendment Act, which placed a duty on all public bodies to gauge the effect of all their policies on different ethnic groups. It is argued that classified communities stand to have material benefits, while those that are not, may not\(^3\).

1.4 Margaret Curran, then Minister for Communities, gave a commitment in 2003 to re-evaluate ethnicity classifications to better reflect the diversity of Scotland’s communities, with the ultimate aim of gathering more meaningful information to better promote race equality.

1.5 Any such framework developed would need to be acceptable both to those from whom the data was to be collected, and those using the data. A framework which was unacceptable to data providers would run the risk of yielding incomplete, confused or

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\(^1\) Klug (1999); REAF (2001); Manwaring (2002)
\(^2\) Muinde (2000)
\(^3\) Long (2002)
inaccurate data, while one which data users had difficulty in using might make it difficult to compare data over time or between different areas.

1.6 Towards the end of 2004 BMRB Social Research, CERES and UHI PolicyWeb were commissioned to carry out research into ethnicity classifications with a view to exploring the issues described above.

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.7 The overall aim of the research was to inform the development of a classification of ethnic identity. A classification that would be acceptable to individuals, whilst still providing the people who use such data (referred to as ‘data users’) with a framework that would enable them to gather and use data effectively. The research therefore needed to explore how individuals would wish to classify their ethnic identity (‘data providers’), whilst looking at the informational needs of data users.

1.8 More specifically, the research aimed to:

- Identify the views of data providers in relation to ethnic identity classifications, including religion, ethnicity and country of birth;
- Explore the ways in which data providers would wish to classify their identity, including considering issues of multiple identity and strength of identification, and whether a set of questions about ethnic identity would be preferable to a single question;
- Identify the reasons why data users need data about different aspects of ethnic identity and what data is needed;
- Identify data users’ views about the implications of changing ethnic identity classifications; and
- Develop recommendations for the consultation approaches to be used in any future consultation on proposals for ethnic identity classification frameworks.

1.9 Whilst the research was tasked to explore the best way of capturing data on ethnicity, it was understood from the outset that one option might be for the 2001 census question on ethnicity not to be changed at all.

RESEARCH DESIGN

1.10 The research was designed to take account of the views of both data providers – defined as all individuals who provide data about their ethnic identity – and data users.

1.11 Data providers were ‘ordinary’ members of the Scottish public, drawn from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Data users were staff working for the Scottish Executive, as well as several public bodies who were known to be using data on ethnicity. It was also felt to be important to gather the views of people directly involved in community groups and networks.
1.12 The research was designed in three stages. The first stage involved interviewing stakeholders, who had an interest in the area of ethnic identity, to discuss the broader issues and significance of the work being undertaken. The findings from this stage were used to inform the research among data users and data providers. The second stage was with data users. This explored the ways in which data users were collecting data on ethnicity, their reasons for doing so and the uses to which the data was being put. The research among data users also looked at alternative methods of classification covering advantages and disadvantages, as well as the implications of changing to a different method. The third stage was with data providers and involved exploring a range of issues, including how and why people define themselves in certain ways, and the extent to which definitions may change according to the context the data provider finds themself in.

Methodology

1.13 The study adopted a wholly qualitative methodology combining both in-depth interviews and group discussions. In-depth interviews are an excellent method for allowing people to talk at length about their individual views and experiences. Group discussions have the advantage of encouraging participants to share ideas and consider alternative points of view. Consequently, a combination of methods was used to maximise on the advantages of each. However, the emphasis was placed on one-to-one interviews as it was felt important to gain a good understanding of how different factors interrelate in an individual’s case, which would be limited by a group situation. A slightly different approach was taken with data users. Here respondents were interviewed in pairs. This was because the research team were keen to balance the views of those handling data on ethnicity (for example, collating statistics) with those developing policy around diversity and equal opportunities; bringing people together at the same interview can be very illuminating.

1.14 For stage 1, a combination of face-to-face and telephone in-depth interviews were conducted among stakeholders and community groups. Eight of these interviews took place face to face and four were over the telephone. Where feasible and acceptable to the participants in stage 1, interviews were tape-recorded.

1.15 For stages 2 and 3, the interviews and group discussions were all conducted face-to-face and all the fieldwork was tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The fieldwork took place in a variety of venues including respondents’ homes, places of work, colleges and, in a few cases, at a research facility in Glasgow.

1.16 The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1½ hours; the group discussions each lasted 1½ hours. The fieldwork was facilitated by experienced researchers using a topic guide agreed with the project steering group. Three topic guides were developed for the project, one for each stage, and these can be found in the appendix to this report.

1.17 At each stage, the research team ensured that participants based in both urban and rural parts of Scotland were included in the study.
1.18 The number of interviews and group discussions conducted at each stage is illustrated in the table below:

Table 1.1 Research design

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meetings with stakeholders, representative organisations and community groups:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11 interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Research with data users:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 paired in-depth interviews with a variety of data users, which included representatives from the Scottish Executive, agencies and public sector bodies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research with data providers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28 in-depth face-to-face interviews with people representing both majority and minority ethnic communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 group discussions (5-6 participants at each) among white college students, one group comprising members of the ethnic majority (‘White Scottish’) and one comprising respondents who said they would classify themselves as ‘White Other’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample profile

Stage 1

1.19 The individuals who took part in stage 1 were people known to be working with a range of visible and non-visible groups, representing majority and minority communities. The participants are listed in Appendix 1.

- Black Community Development Project
- Scottish Refugee Council
- Scottish Jewish Representative Council
- Grampian Racial Equality Council
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Glasgow Antiracist Alliance
- Glasgow Traveller and Gypsy Community Development Project
- Centre for Human Ecology
Stage 2

1.20 A range of data users were invited to take part in the interviews at stage 2. These covered people working for:

- The Scottish Executive
- The Prison Service
- A Human Resources (HR) department
- A local authority
- The Office of the Chief Statistician
- NHSScotland
- Education sector
- The Police

1.21 Respondents were selected to reflect a range of different data users and, in some cases, because they were known to be using an ethnicity classification that was different from the one used on the 2001 Census. Due to funding and time limitations it was not possible to widen the sample but it was hoped that purposefully selecting organisations to take part would enable the research team to capture a variety of views and data needs. As mentioned earlier, steps were taken to include respondents who were information officers or statisticians, as well as people who could give a policy perspective (i.e. respondents who used data on ethnicity to plan strategy and service provision).

Stage 3

1.22 It was decided that the aim for the stage 3 sample should be to ensure that a very diverse set of individuals was interviewed in-depth about their ethnicity and views of classifications. A decision was taken at the outset that it was better to reach out to a variety of people than to narrow the scope of the project to majority groups. This had the effect of limiting the type of analysis that could be undertaken. However, the team were particularly concerned that the views of people from groups that were small in percentage terms, when compared to the Scottish population as a whole, were included in the study as traditionally their views were often not heard.
Table 1.2   Sample profile of the participants in the data provider interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Ethnicity (self-defined)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African 2</td>
<td>Glasgow 7</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>Male 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afro-Caribbean 1</td>
<td>Edinburgh 6</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>Female 20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Filipino 1</td>
<td>Dundee 4</td>
<td>35-49</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bangladeshi 1</td>
<td>Aberdeen 3</td>
<td>50-RA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bengali 1</td>
<td>Highlands 3</td>
<td>RA plus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black Caribbean 1</td>
<td>Stirling/Perth 3</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British Pakistani 1</td>
<td>Dumfries/Galloway 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chinese 1</td>
<td>Lanarkshire 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Greek Cypriot 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gypsy Traveller 1(^4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indian 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Persian 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Irish 1</td>
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<td>Irish (Northern Ireland) 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish-Indian 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish 2</td>
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<td>Pakistani 1</td>
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<td>Scottish 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Scottish Chinese 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thai 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White South African 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White-British 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total 28</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity (as defined)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Scottish 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White Other British 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Southern Irish 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Other 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistani 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Other 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Caribbean 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black African 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Other 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) Three respondents were identified as ‘Gypsy Traveller’ for the study; two chose to define themselves differently when interviewed.
Table 1.3  Characteristics of the participants in the group discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity/Group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>White Scottish</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>White Other</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Glasgow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recruitment**

**Stage 1**

1.23 The people selected to take part in stage 1 were not chosen to be representative of user provider groups or networks as a whole, but rather to provide illuminative information to be analysed alongside other data gathered in this study. The research team drew up the list of eleven respondents, with some suggestions from the Scottish Executive Equality Unit.

**Stage 2**

1.24 Data users were identified in collaboration with the project steering group. Contacts known to the research team, the steering group and the Equality Unit at the Scottish Executive were followed up by a professional recruiter briefed by the research team. Interviews were then conducted with a nominee or nominees from a variety of organisations.

**Stage 3**

1.25 Members of the general public were recruited to take part in the interviews and group discussions using a technique known as ‘free-find’. BMRB has a network of recruiters based in locations across the UK. For this project professional recruiters based in Scotland were engaged to make direct contact with local people. This was sometimes in liaison with community groups and, for the group discussions, with further and higher education colleges.

1.26 A recruitment-screening questionnaire was designed by the research team for use by the recruiters to ensure a diverse sample of respondents and to confirm respondents’ eligibility to take part. Each respondent was made aware that their

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5 With free-find, recruiters are set targets or quotas and then use their knowledge of the local area to find eligible respondents; this may involve recruiting off the street or networking through community groups.
participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage.

Use of interpreters

1.27 The nature of the research meant that the research team could not assume that all the respondents would speak English. Arrangements were made for an interpreter to be present at interviews as necessary. The concepts discussed were abstract and thought-provoking, and so respondents who did not speak English as their first language were encouraged to have an interpreter present. Professional interpreters based in Scotland were engaged by the research team and given an advance briefing on the specific requirements of interpretation during qualitative interviews. In all other cases the interviews were conducted in English.

Analysis of the data

1.28 A systematic and comprehensive analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken. This ensured that the extraction and interpretation of the findings was based on the raw data rather than on the researchers’ impressions. For this study, the techniques included:

- A review of the verbatim transcripts;
- An initial debrief among the research team to discuss the emerging themes;
- Drawing up a framework based on the themes and sub-themes identified;
- Taking each transcript and sifting data according to the analysis framework;
- Reviewing the summarised data; comparing and contrasting the perceptions, accounts, or experiences; searching for patterns or connections within the data and seeking explanations internally within the data set.

1.29 As part of this process, verbatim quotes were drawn from the transcripts to illustrate and illuminate the findings presented in this report.
CHAPTER TWO  THE VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS

2.1 It is important to find out if those that are in a strategic position to take forward race equality and equality work in Scotland have shared understandings, or different perspectives, on the need for and usage of ethnic classifications. Against this background, the overall aim was to identify key issues and themes that the qualitative research with data users and providers should take into account. This was achieved by obtaining the views of some key stakeholders on the census ethnic classification system, as well as identifying changing views on ethnic classifications.

Purpose of Ethnic Monitoring

2.2 Respondents identified four reasons for ethnic monitoring:

- As a **fact finding tool** in terms of demographics e.g. population, workforce, student group within an educational establishment, prison population

- To **enable the delivery of equality of opportunity** e.g. in terms of service provision, development of government policy. To enable this would also require the correlation of data from different sources

- To **monitor progress**. This could be about monitoring the level of awareness of issues over a period of time within the general population, measuring progress against targets set by service providers, measuring whether there is a decrease in levels of racial discrimination over a period of time

- As an **awareness raising mechanism** to give visibility to the diversity of ethnicities currently in Scotland/UK. This was seen as a very important tool to aid inclusion, that is, to be seen to matter enough to be counted

2.3 The consensus amongst all those who were interviewed was that there was a lack of clarity, and no common understanding, of the purpose of data gathering on ethnicity, both, from the perspectives of the ‘information providers’ and, in many instances, the ‘information users’ as well.

2.4 There was concern that the purpose of collecting statistics was seen by many public bodies and local authorities as a way of evidencing compliance with the Race Relations legislation rather than as a tool for delivering equality of opportunity.

2.5 Respondents were unanimous that ethnic monitoring should not just be about counting or profiling. It had to contribute to the improvement of services and quality of life for people. It should also assist the different layers of government (national and local) as well as public bodies, business, voluntary and community organisations to enhance their provision and improve the quality of access for all; that is both majority and minority ethnic people.

2.6 A distinction was made by all between the ‘potential’ purpose of gathering data on ethnicity and the current perceived lack of effective use of the data.
2.7 A number of respondents recognised that the Census ‘was a blunt tool’ which may have to be supplemented by more detailed probing at a local level. There was concern that a majority of local providers appeared to use Census data as a guide to deciding how local services would be provided to minority ethnic groups rather than probing at more local levels. Many also questioned the currency of the Census information, given the ten-year gap and the usefulness of the statistics in shaping policy, particularly at local levels.

**Usage and dissemination of data**

2.8 Stakeholder respondents generally agreed that there were three stages in any data collection process: (i) collating data; (ii) analysing the data; and (iii) acting on the analysis. The consensus, however, was that there was little evidence of stages two and three.

2.9 A lack of evidence over how ethnicity data was being used was consistently raised by all those interviewed. Just one example of data usage was cited in the course of the stage 1 interviews, with one respondent citing the example of the Scottish Parliament as a model of good practice; this being an audit of the Parliament’s workforce.

2.10 The audit is conducted in two parts; Part 1 being a quantitative audit of the profile of the workforce, for example, including questions on age, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity and disability; and Part 2 of the audit involving recording the experiences of staff in relation to a range of areas such as recruitment, progression, harassment, and staff development. The data is then correlated to the data gained in Part 1 to provide a holistic picture of the experiences of employees within the Parliament. The analysis of this exercise is placed on the website of the Parliament for information. This was seen as the type of good practice all public bodies in Scotland should be engaging in as part of their ethnic monitoring data gathering exercise.\(^6\)

2.11 Overall it was felt that the lack of visible demonstration of how the data was being used acted as a disincentive for people to take questions on ethnicity seriously, and in many cases may lead to individuals not providing the information needed. The unanimous view among our sample was of little, if any, evidence of data being used to tackle inequalities. For example, the lack of positive action schemes in employment was cited by one participant as an instance where, despite the availability of data demonstrating discrimination in employment amongst minority ethnic groups in Scotland, there has been little or no effective interventions.

2.12 A number of our respondents made a distinction between data usage based on the Census and information required at the local level. Respondents felt that local

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\(^6\) [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/corporate/equality/speb-co03-03.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/corporate/equality/speb-co03-03.htm)

\(^7\) [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/corporate/spcb/reports/equalaudit.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/corporate/spcb/reports/equalaudit.pdf)
authorities, other public bodies and service providers needed to go beyond the quantitative national data to qualitative data gathering to provide really useful detail about needs and experiences. Participants commented that there should not just be a reliance on statistics to promote equal opportunities or improve services but to use focus groups and other qualitative methods of collecting data to give a more realistic picture of ‘on the ground’ experiences and needs.

2.13 Some respondents indicated that data gathering at a local level had to be more than a technical ‘number crunching exercise’; it had to be part of an ongoing relationship building process between communities and local authorities/public bodies. It was felt to be important for any agencies delivering services at the local level to be aware of the diversity of the communities they were seeking to serve. It was added that this could be actioned by developing mechanisms and tools for achieving such awareness and understanding, with a view to creating specific policy interventions that had visible and well defined outcomes.

2.14 Some respondents stated that ethnic monitoring data collected by local government and key service providers should be made available to smaller agencies, particularly, voluntary sector and non-governmental organisations serving communities. Smaller organisations did not have the financial or human capacity to necessarily monitor at the scale and depth required but would find the ability to extract such information immensely helpful in planning their own provision more appropriately and effectively. It was argued that bigger public bodies and local authorities often depend on these smaller agencies to scaffold and develop their own work and therefore such partnerships, in relation to data sharing, should be possible. There was recognition that issues of data protection and confidentiality were aspects to be considered by local government and service providers, however, it was still felt that generic local data could be made available while adhering to data protection issues. Data protection, professional territorialism, poor information technology and lack of leadership from public sector agencies were all given as contributory reasons for poor data dissemination.

2.15 A few respondents stated that it was critical to correlate data. This was necessary so that meaning could be given to different experiences, for example, the needs of a non-English speaking minority will be different to those that do speak English, or that of a male of a particular faith group to that of a female of the same faith group. Some respondents felt that unless correlations were made between ethnicity and other census questions different experiences would be masked. In particular, it was stated that issues of social class and levels of education together with ethnicity mattered, and the Census and local government data collation mechanisms needed to be able to record multiple identities so that issues of multiple discriminations can be explored. It was also suggested that there needed to be connectivity between Census data and data gained from other survey mechanisms such as the Scottish Attitudes Survey.

2.16 Some respondents felt strongly that current usage of ethnic monitoring data was being abused. They reported instances where comments seemed to be used an excuse for not engaging with race equality issues, for example, ‘there are not many of them here’ or as a justification to apportion resources to minority communities who were larger in numbers rather than on the basis of needs. This was seen as highly divisive of local communities and did little to assist diverse communities build bridges, create links or to bond.
2.17 With the exception of one individual who advocated caution on the issue of disaggregation into smaller ethnic categories, the other respondents felt that the information derived from the ethnicity data (based on the Census categorisation) in its present form was limited given that the categories are conceptually confused and inconsistent. It was stated that many minority ethnic people and groups do not feel they are effectively identified or included. However, the challenge of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity where the size of a specific group is small was also raised by a participant as requiring consideration.

Classification categories

2.18 There was a broad consensus among this qualitative sample of stakeholders with regard to the current classifications used on four issues.

2.19 **Conceptual confusion and lack of consistency:** All the respondents agreed that the current classifications were both confusing and inconsistent. The confusion of colour with ethnicity and spatial/geographical categories was seen to generate data that was inaccurate, open to a range of interpretations and meaningless in that it did not reflect the diversities that exist. Furthermore, respondents felt the current framework did not provide an effective tool for addressing the needs of all communities irrespective of their size. Some respondents pointed out that the current ethnicity question was quasi-objective unlike many of the other Census questions, which were seen as factual objective questions, like ‘what is the country of your birth?’. It was argued that the original purpose for including an ethnicity question in the 1991 Census was to enable minority ethnic groups to be counted and made visible. On that basis, it was felt that the current ethnicity classification framework had not been successful, as it did not capture the real diversities within Scotland.

2.20 For example, in the current framework it would not be possible to quantify the number of people who considered themselves Scottish and Asian as those statistics are amalgamated under the banner of ‘Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British’. This gives the message that it is not important to know how many people classified themselves as Asian Scottish. This applies to African Scottish and other categories. The ability to be able to record the number of minority ethnic groups who consider themselves to be Scottish is important largely to dispel the current dominant thinking that still equates being Scottish to being white and being born in Scotland. The consensus view was that if a colour question was to be asked it should be separate from ethnicity. For example as one participant pointed out: “where would a Libyan fit into the current categorisation? Would s/he tick the ‘African’ box?” The current categorisation makes an assumption that a person has to be ‘black’ to be African.

2.21 **Categories as divisive and exclusive:** Generally, respondents expressed grave concern that the current ethnicity framework did little to promote community cohesion. Respondents felt that the categories as currently articulated were exclusive, marginalising the identities of those who were non-visible minorities as well as those visible minorities who were small in number. It was considered to be an example of institutional racism by some and a route to ignoring the needs of smaller visible minorities, as well as those from non-visible minorities, such as the Gypsy/Travellers. Concern was expressed that communities that had contributed a great deal to Scottish society like the Italian and Polish communities continue to be unrecognised in their own right through either tick boxes or disaggregated Census data.
Similarly, people with a Middle Eastern background, for example, Turkish, Kurd, Iraqi, and Iranian are missed out all together. These are newer communities within Scotland but are not acknowledged or disaggregated under current Census classifications. These communities are largely already invisible within minority ethnic discourses where numbers appear to dominate for provision and services and this invisibility is compounded if there is no legitimate ethnicity data to draw from.

The acknowledgment of specific ethnicities under the ‘Asian’ category and the exclusion of others were perceived as unfair especially by the visible minorities who have small populations and by those who cannot comprehend why Asians are disaggregated, but not other groups such as Africans. It was also suggested that some of the groups who are specifically highlighted (e.g. Pakistani, Chinese, etc.) in the Census question on ethnicity were unclear as to why they were specifically identified and other minorities were not, creating suspicion about the purpose of the data collected.

One respondent argued that it was legitimate to specifically identify minority ethnic groups with sizeable populations - especially where evidence of discrimination had been clearly demonstrated. However, other stakeholder respondents did not support this view arguing strongly for a system where all minorities had the possibility of identifying themselves, irrespective of the size of their population.

Three specific issues emerged in relation to this category. First, the increasingly diverse ethnicities that this category is expected to encompass. For example, several respondents pointed out that people from the Middle East, Eastern and Central Europe are likely to be invisible in the current form. Simply relegating new communities to ‘other’ was not seen as inclusive or acceptable. Second, for a number of groups (for example, Gypsy/Travellers and smaller visible groups, e.g. Turkish), constantly putting oneself in the ‘other box’ was seen as ‘psychologically devaluing’, rendering some groups invisible. And finally, there were concerns expressed about the level and nature of analysis of the information in the ‘other’ category with a view to addressing needs but also informing future categorisation systems.

One participant argued very strongly that the level of racism and discrimination in Scotland towards all minority ethnic groups was still high enough to use the broad categories of ‘white’ and ‘black’. However, other stakeholders felt that the categories ‘black’ and ‘white’ were potentially racist, meaningless and insulting as they exclude those who are neither black or white.

Some respondents expressed concern about ‘colour’ which they perceived as a form of labelling that was racist in itself, whilst others felt that colour coding was inaccurate as only blacks and whites were coded and not other skin colour variations. This was seen to be highly unacceptable and, for some, offensive.

Stakeholder respondents agreed that colour was a factor in racial discrimination and felt that it was the most obvious trigger for attracting racist abuse, harassment and treatment. Generally, they saw racism as a complex phenomenon, making reference to racism against invisible minorities in Scotland, such as white Eastern Europeans, Gypsy/Travellers, and white English people. They thought this type of prejudice should also be acknowledged. For these respondents, racism was not merely a matter of colour. For the individual supporting the broad ‘white’ and ‘black’ category it was a matter of
adopting a pragmatic strategy to demonstrate and address the issue of racism and discrimination.

2.29 Some respondents remarked that the experiences of people who were not white, whether they be Scottish born or recently arrived, were different to the experiences of white people and that these experiences, particularly of racism and racial discrimination, needed to be recognised. These were vocalised strongly by several respondents who either belonged to or worked directly with minority ethnic communities and individuals.

The absence of a section on ‘languages’

2.30 Several respondents raised concern that the wide range of languages spoken in Scotland was not part of the Census. It was felt to be important to include a section on languages spoken, as language was very much part of the identity of an individual, as the inclusion of a question on Gaelic would confirm. Equally, people could be discriminated against because of their language, or more precisely whether they are able to speak English or not. Therefore it was thought to be important for service design, and delivery, to have knowledge of populations in areas that may speak particular languages.

2.31 An example was given of how an Asian woman dressed in Western style clothes, speaking English with a local accent, and shopping in a supermarket would get a different reception to a white woman from Eastern Europe who spoke no English. Discrimination was, therefore, seen as complex. Colour, ethnicity, appearance, language, age, gender were just some of the potential triggers in this one example given by a respondent. This suggests a strong need for data collection to be as robust as possible so that more detailed information can be used to deeper understanding.

Suggestions for improvement

Colour and ethnicity

2.32 Overall, stakeholder respondents felt that colour and ethnicity should be separate. They commented that it was important to find a way of measuring whether colour discrimination existed and, over time, whether it was increasing or decreasing. However, respondents were less certain about how a colour question could be asked in a way that ensured maximum ‘buy in’ to the question. It was also generally understood that terms like ‘Black’ were used politically to refer to people who had suffered racism because they were not ‘White’. However, a crude colour categorisation with ‘White/Black’ was seen as unlikely to be satisfactory in that there are people who do not perceive themselves as black or white.

2.33 One respondent suggested that if the intention of including colour was to gauge levels of discrimination because of colour, it might be more meaningful if the colour option was listed alongside a range of other characteristics which could trigger discrimination. This is illustrated in Option 1 below, or it was suggested that an explicit question could be asked about colour discrimination (Option 2, also below).
**Option 1:**

To ask a generic question to ascertain experience of discrimination. For example:

‘In the last 12 months, have you experienced discrimination because of your …’

(Please tick all that apply)

- Age
- Accent
- Colour
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Faith/Belief
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Social Class
- Etc
- Other (please specify)

**Option 2:**

In the last 12 months, have you experienced discrimination because of your colour?

Yes          No

If yes, please explain: ____________________________

2.34 If the above data was correlated with other Census questions (e.g. questions on country of birth and ethnicity) it would provide a picture of discrimination nationally, but also at a more local level.

2.35 It could, however, be argued that in both the above example questions, it may still not be possible to accurately find out about ‘non-white’ colour discrimination. However, Option 1 could be perceived as a more inclusive way of asking the colour question and one that acknowledges multiple identities and discrimination.
2.36 Other than the options above, respondents were not clear how else to ask the colour question.

**Recognising diversity**

2.37 One stakeholder respondent felt that breaking down groups into sub-categories would lead to fragmentation, making it difficult to address issues of racism in Scotland effectively. Others disagreed and suggested that it was important for ethnic categories to be inclusive of all visible and non-visible communities, irrespective of their size as ethnicity was not just confined to those who were visible. Although those interviewed were not specific about what categories might be used, they nevertheless expressed a strong desire for a system that enabled everyone to have a chance to be identified in a way they felt comfortable with.

2.38 Stretching the ethnicity categories to include smaller minorities and invisible minorities would present a much more diverse and true picture of the current population in Scotland and Britain. A few respondents indicated that there would be more differences between North and South Africans than Scottish and English. Additionally, overly generic categories would not enable data about different attainment rates, for example between African, Caribbean, Chinese, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian pupils to emerge.

2.39 One respondent suggested that people could be asked to tick under broad regional headings as already used by the United Nations e.g. European, Asian, African, Middle Eastern, North American, South American. This would give an idea of how people viewed their origins but then respondents could be asked to further self-define e.g. Middle Eastern and Turkish, African and Ethiopian, Asian and Indian. Such a framework could be worked on to enable people to have multiple identities e.g. African Scottish, Scottish Iranian.

2.40 A few respondents indicated that knowing the ethnicities of people and where they are geographically could contribute to bridging, bonding and linking people and communities. These are essential for developing community and social capital. Such data would also assist service providers to plan appropriately. For example, placing asylum seekers in areas where they may find support in language, faith, and cuisine from similar communities assists their development and reduces isolation. This might also enhance personal safety and enable the growth of self-confidence and increase opportunities.

2.41 It was also stated by a few respondents that unpacking the diversities would assist in deconstructing the category ‘white’ and record the range of diversities that are currently masked under ‘white’. These respondents felt this was critical, if racism was to be challenged and good race relations promoted.

2.42 Respondents, overall, were mindful of the need for comparability of data between countries within Great Britain. However, they did not see extending categories as being problematic. It was felt that data could be aggregated up for national comparisons, but conversely, if the framework was insufficiently diverse, you could not disaggregate down for local relevance.
Clarifying purpose and use

2.43 Improving categorisation on its own was not considered adequate in allaying any anxieties people may have in completing questions on ethnicity. While stakeholder respondents accepted that there were often very brief explanations about the reason for ethnic monitoring, there was less information on how such data has made a difference to public policy or local service delivery changes. Clarifying and communicating the purpose of gathering data on ethnicity, and demonstrating the ways in which data was being used to improve people’s lives, was seen as an area which could be vastly improved.

2.44 Several respondents felt it was very important to educate the public about the purposes of ethnic monitoring. This information would reassure those who perhaps considered ethnic monitoring to be a mere exercise in ‘political correctness’ or an infringement of individual privacy. It would also allay the fears of those providing the information (e.g. refugees who have been tortured or exiled because of their ethnicity, age, nationality, faith and so forth); reassuring them that the information would have a positive impact and make a difference to their lives. It was thought that positive and reassuring messages played an important role in maximising the accuracy of people’s responses.

Voluntary self-classification

2.45 Overall, stakeholder participants in this study felt that the current system of classifying people was constraining, in that it forced individuals to fit into boxes they may not feel reflected their sense of who they were, and indeed may well lead to non-completion. Whilst many of the respondents taking part in stage 1 supported, the ability to self-define, it was accepted that this made collation a difficult task.

2.46 Additionally, the basis for self-identification was not always clear. Some suggested nationality/citizenship as well as country of origin and colour.

2.47 On the matter of closed or open questions, there were divided responses. Some respondents suggesting open questions as a way forward for ethnic classifications and others rejected this approach. Those that rejected the open question method spoke mainly from experience of trying to ethnically monitor using an open question. It was felt that it was more pertinent to expand the ethnicity tick box options. This would acknowledge that there is no single category that is homogenous.

Other issues raised in Stage 1

Who decides on the categories in the Census form?

2.48 Respondents were not clear who decided on the categories that could be included on a Census form. There was a perception that the General Registrar’s Office took its lead from data users who provided a menu of the type of data they would require in order to shape and deliver services. However, there was also a view that the data users felt restricted as they were limited by the fixed categories drawn up by GROS. Overall, there remained a concern that minority ethnic communities and equality experts were unable to influence Census data frameworks.
2.49 Concern was also expressed that unless the Census framework included, for example, wider ethnicity categories to include non-visible minorities or de-coupled colour from ethnicity, these changes were unlikely to be taken up and legitimised at local level. It was felt by some respondents that the current Census framework, coupled with repeated advice from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) to use these frameworks, had meant little local variation had occurred. Consequently, it was believed that a confused ethnicity classification would continue to be legitimised and replicated unless changes were made nationally.

The needs of small communities

2.50 Many of the stakeholders interviewed felt strongly that all groups, irrespective of their population size, should have an opportunity to be identified. This was not just from a service delivery perspective, but also as a way for individuals to find out if there were others of the same ethnic group (i.e. ‘co-ethnics’) and where they were, in order to network and help overcome social isolation.

Specific issues in relation to Gypsy/Traveller communities

2.51 There were three specific issues raised in relation to Gypsy/Traveller communities:

- **Literacy Issues:** Literacy as a barrier to form filling in relation to the Census was raised specifically in relation to the Gypsy/Traveller communities. This was exacerbated, it was felt, by the formal /official structure of the census forms.

- **Collecting Census forms:** One participant also raised concerns about the potential for communities to be treated differently at a local level when it came to collecting census forms from households. From her experience of being involved in coordinating the local collection of forms, she was aware that those responsible for collecting forms went back at least twice to collect forms from households, but only once from Gypsy/Traveller sites.

- **Undercounting:** There was considerable anxiety and frustration expressed about the way in which the Scottish Executive conducted its bi-annual census count of Gypsy/Travellers. It was felt that this grossly underestimated the numbers of Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. The need for more accurate statistics was seen to be vital, not only to develop effective services for the communities, but also to develop trust in the system.

Generational differences

2.52 The issue of differences in the way in which identity might be articulated between older and younger people was raised. Essentially, the question of young people filling in forms, like the Census, on behalf of their parents, or vice-versa, but more specifically in cases where the older community were unable to communicate in English. In this context, it was felt that the younger people might prefer to identify themselves as ‘British’ as they did not wish to be identified as being different from the majority population, whereas their parents might prefer to identify themselves in terms of their country of origin. The danger being that the young person fills in the form erroneously.
2.53 There were also concerns expressed by a few respondents that there was insufficient consultation with young people on how they wished to be classified. These respondents felt that consideration needed to be given as to how the young people of today, who will be the form fillers of the future, may wish to identify themselves. Furthermore, there was also concern about how the growing mixed cultural heritage group /dual identity groups will be accommodated in the classification systems being developed.

Expanding the question on religion

2.54 One respondent suggested that the religion question could be modified to include the different sects/denominations of the other major faiths already cited on the form. Another respondent suggested that the wording of question 13 of the current Census form should be modified to say ‘What religion, religious denomination or body do you consider you have, or do you associate with’ rather than the current phrase using the word ‘belong’. It was suggested that there are people who have an affinity to a faith/belief group but do not belong in the sense of a membership into that particular faith.

Scottish solutions and the question of identity

2.55 A few respondents indicated that it was important for Scotland to consider how it intended to be inclusive of different ethnic groups and what role ethnicity classifications had in this process. The example was given of national identities from the United States and Canada where people from a range of ethnic groups swear allegiance to the flag and celebrate July 4th in the US and Canada Day on July 1st. People might be singing their anthems with a Korean, Irish, Turkish, Ghanaian or a range of other assorted accents, but they did so with pride. They are Korean Americans or Ghanaian Canadians and their children see themselves with multiple identities too. This multiplicity is not seen in any way as unpatriotic or diluting notions of being American or Canadian, yet in Britain there appears to be a need to be singularly British in order to retain your British credentials. It was suggested that there was a need to move away from an ‘imposed’ sense of British-ness or Scottish-ness which expects an individual to dilute or negate other aspects of their cultural, ethnic or national identities.

2.56 It was therefore argued that the Census framework, with an imposed configuration, does not aid diversity or integration. It denies people an equitable way to define themselves in a way that allows them to hold onto their cultural and ethnic identities. It relegates those that are not in the majority to the ‘other’ category.

2.57 Several respondents felt strongly that Scotland needed to have their own national ethnicity statistics, which could be broad and diverse but could also be aggregated to enable UK wide comparability. Some respondents did not want the Executive or the Scottish Parliament to be constrained into the UK picture.

International lessons

2.58 One respondent called for the new framework to draw on lessons learnt from international ethnic monitoring models. There was also thought to be a need to learn how other countries utilised data gained nationally for local relevance and consequence.
CHAPTER THREE     THE VIEWS OF DATA USERS

INTRODUCTION

3.1 Clearly, there will be varied perspectives on approaches to data collection in relation to ethnicity, and more broadly identity. The major part of this research has focused on people’s views in relation to people answering questions on their own ethnic identity. In addition to this it was considered important to explore the impact of any proposed changes on organisations that could potentially be using such data to inform policy and service provision. Within the remit of the research it was understood that these findings would inform a much wider consultation process, and as such the number of interviews was limited, but informative.

3.2 In collaboration with the project steering group, the research team selected a range of organisations to reflect the different types of uses made of ethnicity data, encompassing both local and national perspectives. Previous research undertaken by the Scottish Executive was also used to identify some organisations that had developed ethnicity classifications that were different from the 2001 Census question. Steps were also taken to ensure that we captured the views of professionals involved in the processing and analysis of data as well as those who were more concerned with services and policy.

3.3 This chapter sets out the perspective of data users on ethnicity classifications. It begins by exploring the reasons why respondents were collecting data on ethnicity and how the data was being used. The chapter then moves on to look at the classifications respondents were using in relation to identity and the ways in which ethnicity classifications could be improved (with a particular emphasis on the 2001 Census question). It finishes by exploring what impact any changes to the Census question might have on respondents’ organisations.

REASONS FOR COLLECTING DATA ON ETHNICITY

3.4 Respondents gave a number of reasons for collecting data on ethnicity. The previous research undertaken with data users by the Scottish Executive identified a number of organisations who saw the main reason for such data collection as associated with compliance with legislation. This was certainly mentioned by respondents in this research study, however, a host of other reasons were also cited that showed that organisations were interpreting the data and applying their findings to working practices. In addition, whilst compliance with race relations law was seen as important, a few respondents thought that the spirit of the law meant that organisations and bodies ought to be striving to go beyond data collection:

‘We’ve decided to go beyond that [the legislation] and we saw the spirit [of the law as]... not just monitoring but you know to understand what the position is in the sector in terms of how well different ethnic groups need to be met and so on.’ (Male, Age 18-25, Group No.5)

3.5 A number of the organisations interviewed talked about monitoring for discrimination and devising policies to promote equal opportunities, which included
setting targets and developing outreach work. In particular, respondents involved in policy making gave some examples of how this had been done. Examples included:

- An organisation wanting to ensure that their recruitment practices were promoting equal opportunities surveyed staff on a regular basis including a question on ethnicity. The results were then used to inform the development of a strategy to increase the numbers of staff from ethnic minority groups. In addition, they had recently begun to collect data on the ethnicity of line managers, as they were particularly interested in the career paths and promotion opportunities for staff from minority groups.

- Another organisation identified that the specific population they worked with included higher numbers of people from minority ethnic groups when compared with the Scottish population as a whole. This had led them to plan for more detailed data collection to explore whether there was a different level of service usage among minority groups so that planning could be better informed.

3.5 Similarly, one organisation used data on ethnicity and other specific information, like language and religion, to tailor their services directly to the needs of individuals by identifying needs for interpretation services and spiritual support and then putting services in place as appropriate.

3.6 In another instance, an organisation saw a role for collecting data on ethnicity as awareness-raising as they felt it signalled to the public that the actions of staff were being monitored and, they hoped, highlighted to staff that awareness of racism was important to their employers. Similarly, another organisation conducted trends analysis to study variations in health and disease in relation to ethnicity.

3.7 A number of the respondents also mentioned the need to respond to requests from parliament, government bodies and the Cabinet Office for information on ethnicity among staff and/or service users.

3.8 Resources were also mentioned, with some respondents talking about using ethnicity data to see if additional resources were needed, for example for interpretation services, or whether existing resources could be targeted more effectively.

HOW ETHNICITY DATA WAS BEING ANALYSED

3.9 As mentioned in the previous section, organisations had a variety of reasons for collecting data on ethnicity and this was often related to how they used such information. More specifically, respondents talked about how their organisation’s analysed and interpreted the data and the implications this could have for dissemination.

3.10 Taking analysis first, organisations described using standard statistical techniques to compare groups within the data-set. This could occur at two distinct levels: large-scale and localised. Large-scale comparisons meant comparing their population with that of the Scottish and/or UK population as a whole. Here data users were asking questions like ‘is our staff profile broadly representative of the population as a whole?’ this would include a focus on ethnicity. Clearly, any comparisons would be limited to ethnicity as defined in the national statistics that organisations were using to measure against, for example the last census.
3.11 In terms of localised analysis, respondents were looking more closely at how their organisation operated. This might mean looking at the numbers of people from ethnic minorities in different sectors. Respondents mentioned studying staff recruitment and student registrations to see whether changes needed to be made (for example, by reviewing their strategy to encourage more people from minority groups to join), and also exploring how people from minority groups were progressing in their organisation.

3.12 Another approach was to look at staff behaviour towards the general public by collecting data on ethnicity during interactions (an example being the use of police ‘stop and search’ forms). It was suggested that such data could then be used to see if people from minority groups were being unfairly targeted and would also allow them to investigate any allegations of racism more effectively. However, further research would be required with operational staff to explore how this was being done in practice.

**Statistical analysis**

3.13 For any meaningful statistical analysis, data needs to be organised into significantly sized groups. Current ethnicity classifications suggest that the numbers of people from minority ethnic groups are very small when compared to the Scottish population as a whole; this is particularly pertinent outside the two largest cities since most people from minority ethnic groups live in either Glasgow or Edinburgh. When organisations have analysed the data they hold on ethnicity it can be frustrating because they cannot compare groups, the number of people involved being too small. To help with this, respondents mentioned aggregating (combining) ethnic groups. By way of example, this might mean bringing together people into one ‘umbrella’ category, such as ‘Asian’, regardless of whether they describe themselves in a more detailed way - Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and so on. By doing this they can then make comparisons with other ethnic groups and look at issues of gender and so on, more closely. This is magnified for very small groups in the population that might be classified under ‘other’ or where all groups not classified as, for example, ‘White-Scottish’, are labelled ‘minority groups’. An example was given of one organisation using four aggregate categories, namely: ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘Asian’, and ‘other’.

**The importance of confidentiality and anonymity**

3.14 Data user respondents had a desire to make public the statistics they held on ethnicity, and in some cases data was made available. However, this could only be done in aggregate form and respondents were extremely mindful and concerned over issues of anonymity; they feared identifying individuals and the potential for harm that could result from this. They explained that this was of particular pertinence to Scotland as the numbers of people from minority ethnic groups was very small. However, it should be pointed out that comments made by respondents suggested that data users, particularly among those with an equal opportunities remit, were studying confidential data in more detail. A few respondents remarked that just by looking at statistics collected for their jobs they could identify a particular member of staff because of their ethnic description and gender. They felt that their responsibility towards keeping that information confidential was paramount but that this still allowed them to consider any issues of discrimination internally as an organisation.
DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICS ON ETHNICITY

3.15 Whilst there were concerns over anonymity in relation to publishing ethnicity data, respondents talked about a variety of ways in which aggregated data was disseminated. This might be because they were required to by law, for example, with civil service statistics or because special requests had been made by Parliament (in the form of Parliamentary questions) or by a member of the public. There was also mention of data sharing between government departments and bodies. One example took this a stage further with two organisations who were pooling resources to run a survey among local residents to better inform strategy for their local area; collecting data on ethnicity was seen as part of this process.

3.16 Overall there was a sense that data dissemination outside an organisation was in an ‘official’ capacity and in response to external requests. There was no evidence among our (limited) sample that information on ethnicity statistics was being disseminated more widely, or that respondents saw a need for this. As mentioned earlier, there certainly were worries over ensuring that such statistics would be handled sensitively so that anonymity would be protected and this may have led data users to be particularly cautious. Equally, though there was nothing to suggest that data users would be averse to disseminating data so long as confidentiality needs were completely addressed.

CURRENT CLASSIFICATIONS BEING USED BY DATA USERS

3.17 Data users interviewed for this study described three different reasons for using the ethnicity classification they were using:

- The 2001 census question on ethnicity or something very similar
  - Data users chose to use the 2001 Census question so that they could compare their population with national data. Where there were differences in the numbers of people from ethnic minorities (i.e. less people than might be expected), staff used the data to review their practices in areas like recruitment.
  - It was pointed out that using the same question also made it easier for organisations to develop joint initiatives.

- An ethnicity classification tailored to specific needs
  - One organisation asked a series of questions in order to match services to individuals. Questions were asked about ethnicity, nationality, language and religion. However, the services available were orientated towards language and religion rather than ethnicity or nationality.

- An ethnicity classification developed many years ago

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8 Please note that data users were selected for a variety of reasons not specifically to be representative of data users overall; a few respondents were included specifically because they were using ethnicity classifications that were different from the 2001 census question.
As with organisations choosing to use the Census question on ethnicity in order to make comparisons, one organisation chose to stay with a question they had developed many years earlier because they wanted to compare statistics. However, in their case it was so that they could carry out trend analysis over time so they could study changing patterns in their population and adapt the organisation accordingly, for example, by engaging new language interpreters. It was also commented that the question(s) they used worked for the organisation and hence change was not thought necessary, something we return to later in this chapter.

DATA USERS’ VIEWS ON THE ETHNICITY CLASSIFICATIONS THEY WERE USING

3.18 Data users’ views on the ethnicity classifications that they were using at the time of interview varied. They ranged from being happy with the current classification to welcoming a radical overhaul. Those who were content mentioned that they had received no complaints from people responding to their question on ethnicity, although it should be noted that there was no evidence of data providers being actively asked to comment. Also, it was said that the small percentage of people from ethnic minorities meant that any refinement of categories was basically ‘meaningless’ for one respondent, as data needed to be aggregated to such a high level in Scotland.

3.19 Conversely, another respondent felt that it was timely for questions on ethnicity to be reviewed. This belief came from a suspicion that people were simply responding to existing categories, rather than reflecting on how they really felt. He suggested that identity was something that people often had not thought about, and if they had it was rarely with any great depth. It was felt that the Scottish Executive ought to take this reconsideration of the Census question as an opportunity to encourage people to think about their identity.

3.20 Generally though respondents were of the opinion that the current classification being used by their organisation was useful but could benefit from being improved or fine-tuned. This stemmed from a level of uncertainty about whether the current ethnicity categories reflected best practice, as it was not known what data providers thought of the options offered to them. Consequently, data users were interested in the findings from this research project. Below we describe the key points made in relation to how ethnicity classifications could be altered and/or improved.

White minority groups

3.21 A number of the data users we interviewed commented that there needed to be a much better understanding of white minority groups. They referred to a ‘white mass’ in the statistics that hid minorities with needs, and among them people who could be experiencing discrimination or prejudice. Examples were given of a Portuguese fishing community and people from Eastern Europe.

The use of ‘Other’ categories

3.22 Ethnicity classifications generally make allowance for the list of categories not being exhaustive by including an ‘Other’ box to tick. Similarly, on the 2001 Census question on ethnicity there are a number of ‘other’ boxes where people are offered the
option of ticking and then writing in a description for themselves, such categories include:

- Any other White background, please write in
- Any other Asian background, please write in
- Any other Black background, please write in
- Any other background, please write in

3.23 Many comments were made in relation to how the ‘Other’ categories were handled and responded to by data providers. Data users were aware that some people avoided ‘other’ categories because they resented being classified as ‘other’. They expressed concern that this led to such people being mis-classified.

3.24 There were mixed views on whether introducing a longer list of categories for people to choose from would be helpful or desirable. It was suggested that having a longer list might be confusing and one respondent remarked that there was little point as such a list would ‘never be perfect’. Having a long list could also present problems for processing the data and one organisation reported that they had experienced problems when using a long list of options in the past. Staff entering the data was found to be pressing the wrong keys and mis-coding people. The errors were spotted and the anomalies were corrected during a subsequent audit to rectify the problem. This suggests that careful attention needs to be paid to how a long list is handled during the processing of ethnicity data to ensure that responses are correctly coded. Expanding on this point, it was noted that the quality of any statistics on ethnicity were also dependent on the skills of the people inputting the data, and the quality of IT provision when it came to designing user friendly computer programs that guarded against errors.

3.25 Even so, other respondents felt there would be value in having a wider choice of categories as some people could benefit from being counted differently and, it was hoped, this would enable people to provide more accurate responses. In addition, it was reported that some data providers had found exclusions upsetting (the example of Asian Caribbean was given).

Religion

3.26 A number of the data users wondered how religion should be handled and this led them to query the relationship between religion and ethnicity, the main examples being Judaism and Islam. There was a distinct lack of clarity over whether being Jewish, Muslim, or indeed of another religion, constituted being part of a distinct ethnic group.

Nationality and/or colour

3.27 Some respondents commented on the combination of nationality and colour often used in ethnicity classifications (including the 2001 Census question). It was remarked that some young people wanted to identify as primarily Scottish, regardless of ethnicity. Consequently, one respondent felt that ethnicity classification that did not make reference to nationality would be ‘flawed’. Conversely though, another
respondent considered it wrong for nationality to be used synonymously with colour, as in the 2001 Census. Although he did appreciate political concepts of colour and felt that the difference this had made in other countries like the United States needed to be acknowledged.

**Flexibility**

3.28 A number of points were made about ethnicity classifications in relation to flexibility. Firstly, it was felt that some classifications did not easily reveal a changing population. This was felt to be particularly pertinent to Scotland and the point made earlier about hidden white minority groups and changes in migration in recent years. One organisation used a classification that did evolve over time as staff was able to insert fields as new categories/self-descriptions arose. However, a curb had been placed on this as it had led to ‘new categories’ being added that were actually on the list; they were simply misspellings.

3.29 Secondly, it was noted that some people had a fluid approach to their ethnicity/identity. This might be dependent on the situation and/or who they are speaking to, but also changes over time. An example being changing nationality (such as receiving a British passport), as well as how long a person has been living in a country and feels more and more able to identify with that culture / way of life (both points that we take up later in this report). Some organisations recognised the fluid nature of identity and sought to update ethnicity data on a regular basis. However, it was also commented that a person’s ethnicity did not change and consequently there was no need to request ethnicity information more than once.

3.30 Little comment was made in relation to self-definition (being asked to describe you own ethnicity). One respondent wondered whether asking people to describe their ethnicity left classifications open to misrepresentation but she did not suggest that the alternatives (like probing for details and then interviewers/officials deciding the most appropriate code) were any better.

**THE IMPACT OF CHANGING TO A NEW ETHNICITY CLASSIFICATION**

3.31 Data users were asked to consider what kind of impact any changes to their current ethnicity classification might have on their work and that of their organisations. This might be if they were asked to start using the Census question on ethnicity or because the 2001 Census question was itself changed in some way.

3.32 A number of concerns were raised by data users in relation to any changes to their current systems:

- **Inhibiting trend analysis.** One organisation expressed concern over having to go back to many thousands of data providers to update their records to allow for comparability over time (trend analysis). This was important to this particular organisation because they wanted to study how their population changed from year to year.

- **Disruption.** Another respondent was very worried about the disruption her organisation might experience; this was particularly pertinent to her as they had recently introduced an expensive computer system. Such worries could be
alleviated so long as plenty of lead-in time was allowed for. Time was needed so that any changes could be introduced as part of normal review periods. Periods varied from a few weeks to a few years depending on how computer systems were organised and the ease with which they could be adapted (something that would need to be explored further with those responsible for implementing such changes). Allowances also needed to be made for training to be designed and implemented as appropriate and, more generally, communicating the need for change. In one case it was remarked that public bodies might need to enter into consultations of their own, for example with staff, the public and trade unions.

- **Budget.** Having a budget to manage any change was also highlighted by some respondents. Conversely though, one organisation mentioned that there were always unplanned for changes and they made contingencies in their budgeting to allow for this. This did not seem to be an option for some organisations working to tight spending plans.

3.33 Whilst respondents expressed some concerns, there was a general view that organisations would ‘just get on with it’; that they were used to handling change, such as taking on board new policy initiatives, as part of their work. A change to their ethnicity classifications would be similar to any other change. It was commented that it would be helpful if the ‘main headings’ (for example: black, white, Asian, other) were maintained to aid trend analysis, but another respondent was keen to stress that the emphasis of change should be on what works for data providers rather than meeting administrative needs.

**THE IDEAL APPROACH**

3.34 As described in the previous section, data users had mixed views on changing the ethnicity classifications they were using. Whilst the sample of respondents was small, there was a preference for not changing too much, but equally a desire to ‘get it right’ too. As part of the interview, data users were asked to put aside issues of trend analysis and concerns over change in order to consider a blank sheet approach: what would the ideal ethnicity classification look like from their perspective. Respondents did not sketch out a particular framework; as we mentioned earlier they were generally content with the current situation. However, they did flag up points that they felt would be useful to consider, and for the most part these reflected issues they had already highlighted to the researchers. This section explores their suggestions.

**Should there be one question or multiple questions?**

3.35 Generally there was a desire for a tiered or nested approach. This could be similar to the 2001 census question in that there is one question with main categories/headings and sub-categories or could be a series of questions that filter to a sub-question or questions. A nested approach was preferred because it had the potential for easily aggregating the data to standardised categories and, again if the current main categories were maintained, provided for the possibility of comparing data historically.

3.36 One respondent did feel that there should be just one question for simplicity and speed, but others said that using more than one question would enable them to capture more detail, be more accurate and, they hoped, overcome the problem of imposing labels that people could find inadequate.
3.37 In terms of how a series of questions might work, it was suggested that nationality and ethnicity be separated out. One respondent also mentioned that additional questions on language and religion would be useful in any classification related to ethnicity, as these factors also had a bearing on some people’s feelings about ethnicity (it should be noted that a question on religion was included in the 2001 Census).

3.38 It was also suggested that the Census ethnicity question could focus on ‘main headings’, leaving organisations to define the more detailed sub-categories that were best suited to the population they were working with. However, adopting this approach would present two issues. Firstly, not all organisations collect data on ethnicity directly from users; they use the Census as their main source of information to look at needs. This was not an issue for the respondents in this study but cannot be ruled out. Secondly, data could be misleading if there was no way of checking how data providers were identifying with the main headings, with the possibility that organisations are grouping people differently.

The list of categories – ‘pre-codes’

3.39 Whilst there were still concerns over no longer being able to compare data over time, should the Census ethnicity question change in 2011, data users were keen for any new approach to better identify changes in the Scottish population. For some this meant having a much longer list of pre-codes (ethnic groups/categories) to choose from, which it was hoped would allow people to be more accurate in their responses. Even so, they wanted the data to still be easily aggregated, confidentiality and anonymity to be protected, and careful testing/piloting to ensure that having a long list did not put people off answering the question.

3.40 Another aspect of having a better understanding of a changing population would be to look more closely at how the ‘Other’ categories are processed and analysed. Of course, this still might present problems in terms of publishing sensitive data that could identify individuals, but there may be scope for GROS to make public how they go about handling the data without compromising on confidentiality.

Ideas for ethnicity categories

3.41 Apart from the overall approach to collecting data on ethnicity, data user respondents also commented on the specific categories that should or should not be used. Their suggestions are described below:

- Ensuring that all the British nationalities are listed, including ‘Northern Ireland’. Adding in ‘British’ and ‘Republic of Ireland’ as separate categories.
- It was felt that just having ‘Scottish’ and ‘British’ was inappropriate: ‘screams inequality’
- It was also suggestion that ‘White European’ should be listed as a separate code as some people saw themselves as European.
- Having ‘Chinese’ as a separate category from ‘Asian’.
• Adding in new categories, for example, ‘Travellers’. Although there was some debate over how some groups should be presented / defined and to what extent any further distinctions should be made, for example by asking people who identify as ‘Travellers’ whether they are people of Roma, Scottish, Irish descent and so on.

3.42 Generally, though, data user respondents were unsure of making adjustments to the list of categories and felt that this was something that research among data providers should determine.
CHAPTER FOUR THE VIEWS OF DATA PROVIDERS: PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNICITY

4.1 The report now turns to the final stage of the project which gathered the views of the general public. This chapter is concerned with how people defined their ethnicity or identity relatively unprompted, taking an open and discursive approach to exploring their views. Consequently, we began each interview/discussion by asking people to talk about their identity and ethnicity in a spontaneous way. After allowing respondents to talk as they wished, the researchers went on to probe for further comments, prompting the respondents to reflect on whether certain aspects of identity had meaning for them.

DEFINITIONS OF ETHNICITY

4.2 Respondents defined ethnicity more generally in terms of a person’s background or identity. It was clear that many respondents had not thought about this before in any great depth. Consequently, their thoughts on how they defined themselves developed over the course of their interview, with subtle differences emerging on how they perceived the term ethnicity in relation to themselves and others. These are described below:

- **Simply.** There was a sense that for some people ‘ethnicity’ was a straightforward concept but one that was hard to elaborate on:
  
  “Where you're from; it means who you are really.” (Male, Age 50+, Interview No.35)

- **Identity.** Identity was seen as a broad and flexible term:
  
  "Who you identify with. What nationality or what sort of culture you identify with." (Female, Age 25-40, Interview No.19)

- **Nationality.** Nationality appeared to be the main factor for respondents in this study when it came to defining their ethnicity. This could be related to where you were born, where your family was from, your passport or quite simply because you lived in a country (perhaps for a long time) and had absorbed it’s culture. Conversely, a few people remarked that where they, or their ancestors, were born took precedence over length of residence.

- **Colour.** Respondents were very variable in how they felt about colour being associated with ethnicity, with some defining themselves in this way and others finding it offensive. Additionally, some respondents felt that colour was a factor in defining a person’s ethnicity but one that was not as important as other aspects. Colour was a contentious issue for many respondents and this is explored further at the end of this section.

- **Religion.** Religion was interesting in that it was crucial to some people’s identities whilst for others it not only did not come into ethnicity, but they felt it should not be allowed to. Further research would need to be done to conclude whether certain religions manifest themselves more strongly than others as part of a person’s ethnic identity. Among our sample there were people who described themselves as Jewish, Muslim and Hindu and talked about how this was very much a part of their identity – some were religious, some were not. There were Christian people who also mentioned that they saw religion as part of their identity but these respondents were
all regular church-goers. Other respondents thought that questions on religion were unnecessarily personal.

- **Culture.** Others linked ethnicity more strongly with culture. Culture itself was not easily defined but, when asked, people talked about language, food, clothing and music as definers of culture. A few people added that having shared beliefs, language and history were important too.

- **Language.** Views were very varied over whether language was related to ethnicity. For those people who saw language as part of their ethnicity, there seemed to be a connection with speaking or having knowledge of another language. This might be because a person was born elsewhere or because English was just one of the languages they spoke with their family. The most obvious connection was for people who spoke languages other than English, and for some of these people this could be connected to a sense of culture too.

4.3 Conversely, not speaking a language that might be associated with your ethnicity by others (especially where this was related to nationality) could be seen as ‘weakening’ your sense of identification or how others saw you. A few respondents made reference to this either in relation to their children only being able to speak English when they themselves spoke other languages, and for a young woman who was born in Europe but could not speak the language of her birth, having been brought up speaking English:

“I have also got a big family so most of the family are X but they all speak English so it makes me lazy, so I would say maybe half and half I don’t see myself [as much X] probably more English because I speak the language. ... I would say I was Scottish [if I was there] probably, they would laugh at me if I said I was X and I don’t talk [the language].”

(Age 18-24, Interview No.Grp2)

- **Race.** Race was referred to by a few participants, generally in relation to colour but sometimes as just one aspect of ethnicity along with others. One respondent thought that race was problematic, along with colour, but found it easier to think of himself in racial terms than as being a certain colour. Another respondent found race a difficult concept to define herself by, being unsure how it fitted into her own identity as British of Bangladeshi origin. However, a few respondents (who defined their race as black or white) found the term unproblematic.

“It’s your race, you know, what colour you are. ... or you can say nationality, what country you’re from and it’s if you’re black or white.”

(Female, Age 25-34, Interview No.7)

- **Accent.** Just a few comments were made in relation to accent. None of the respondents ascribed accent directly to ethnicity, however, they did mention it in reference to how it shaped their identity in the minds of other people they interacted with. This was because they felt that people made assumptions about their ethnicity on the basis of their accent, particularly in relation to whether they were perceived as Scottish. One person sensed that others would not see him as Scottish because his accent was not Scottish.

Conversely, another respondent felt that her Scottish accent encouraged people to see her as more Scottish than they might if they based their assumptions on looks
alone. A woman also talked about people assuming she was Scottish when she saw herself as Irish, having been born in Ireland and then moving to Scotland as a child.

- Combinations of the above
  - Either as an individual who identifies with various reference points, for example origin, place of birth and nationality
    “Where you originate from, where you're born and what you define your nationality as.” (Male, Age 18-24, Interview No.29)
  - Or as a single identity that draws on a combination of factors, such as culture and descent
    “Culture in the sense that there would be certain shared history, values, learning, traditions and approaches. Descent, to the extent that this is passed down between generations.” (Male, Age 50+, Interview No.10)
  - A way of defining ‘others’. Interestingly, a number of people felt that ‘ethnicity’ or ‘ethnic’ was about being different and related the term more strongly with ‘ethnic minority’ with the word ‘minority’ being implicit rather than stated. It was suggested that defining someone’s ‘ethnicity’ was about identifying them as different from the majority. This was not necessarily seen as a bad thing but it was highlighted that ethnicity was not so much of an issue for the majority.

COLOUR IN RELATION TO ETHNICITY

4.4 As mentioned earlier in this chapter, colour was a contentious issue for some respondents but not others. This section describes a variety of viewpoints in relation to colour and ethnicity.

People who defined ethnicity in relation to colour

4.5 A few respondents related their ethnicity to colour. Among this group, there were people who saw colour as very much tied to ethnicity and others who only commented on this in response to probing from the researcher. One of the respondents who referred to colour as being strongly associated with ethnicity also talked about how people reacted to her, adding that her Scottish accent seemed to ‘diminish’ prejudice towards her:

“We were talking about that the other day, because even say my gran [who is white], my mum's mum, she still can't get her head round it. Because she still thinks that black people are completely different, even though she knows my dad, do you know what I mean? But she would, for example, she 'll always say 'oh no, but you're Scottish, you're no like one of them'.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No.27)

4.6 Interestingly, this respondent did not make any reference to colour when asked to describe herself (“half Scottish/half African ... multiple identity”); she simply felt that colour played an important part in ethnicity.
4.7 The respondents who defined their ethnicity in relation to colour made different references and came from a variety of backgrounds. The references made by these people were ‘black’, ‘yellow’, ‘white’ and ‘brown’. However, there were few spontaneous responses to describing one’s own ethnicity in terms of colour; one of such respondent talked about genetic inheritance:

“It’s just basically I’m from the Caribbean and I’m black. ... I’m just black I think. Yeah. Well it has to do with your genes, isn’t it? It’s genetic, wherever your parents come from, that’s where you come ... to like have that ... from that background, you know, that the genes that you have in [any] case it doesn’t matter where you’re born, once your parents have that particular type of genes, you have that as well.”
(Female, Age 25-34, Interview No.Int7)

However, another respondent who defined herself as black, mentioned that this was in response to how other people defined her.

4.8 Respondents taking part in stage 3 did not put forward any strong arguments for defining a person’s ethnicity in relation to their colour, certainly not in the way that people had used to argue against taking this approach. However, this is something that would be worth researching further.

People who did not define their ethnicity in relation to colour

4.9 Some of the respondents in stage 3 felt that colour was not part of ethnicity, and a number of these people expressed strong feelings that it should not be.

4.10 Of particular note were references to colour and being Asian. One respondent explained his view by saying that he was often “called Indian” when he was actually from Europe; he put this down to his skin colour and thought that notions of colour could be misleading. Similarly, a woman who described herself as mixed (further details not given to protect anonymity) said that she may look Asian but had nothing in common with people from India because her upbringing had been different:

“No I don’t think so because well I am sort of Asian myself and you know there are other people, many other people in the city who are Asian but due to upbringing I would have very little in common with them and wouldn’t consider myself to be the same ethnic group. And the same said for like a Muslim person my age, a Sikh person my age, a Hindu person my age. ... Well not any more or any less in common than with anyone else I pass in the street.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No.24)

4.11 A respondent who described himself as Jewish said that he would not identify himself as ‘white’ because he found the attribution of skin colour stigmatising, giving the example of racist regimes in southern Africa; he added that whilst he was white he did not see himself as part of the ethnic majority and would therefore classify himself as ‘Other’ on forms:
“I have always been uncomfortable with the term ‘black’ as applied to a very large group of humanity. I’m afraid I’m old enough to recollect Ian Smith, the man who sent shivers down my spine talking about ‘blacks’. I’m afraid to me it is a term primarily used by racists. On the other hand, the attribution of the term ‘white’ is equally problematic, because what does ‘white’ mean? It means that you are a member of the ethnic majority, that’s what people mean to ask when they ask me ‘are you white?’. My usual answer to that would be ‘no, I am not a member of ethnic majority’.” (Male, Age 50+, Interview No.10)

4.12 This respondent went on to talk about political associations with the word ‘black’ being drawn from American politics. He firstly felt that caution needed to be applied in taking any approach from one society and transferring it to another, and secondly, he commented that America had ‘moved on since then’, for example, with people now describing themselves as ‘African American’.

4.13 Another respondent who identified himself as Scottish-Chinese talked about questions of colour being offensive to him as he felt it victimised people. A respondent who was Muslim felt that whilst historically colour was an issue, religion had become more pertinent since the events of September 11th.

SINGLE AND MULTIPLE ETHNICITIES

4.14 Respondents talked about whether they had a single or multiple identity and what this meant to them. A few people talked about having a single identity, for example, Scottish or Indian. However, for others feeling that you had a single identity could also mean that you saw one reference point as being more important than any others you may refer to. By way of example, two people described themselves as Romany Gypsies which they saw as a single identity, but qualified this by saying that they would mention country of birth, as in ‘Scottish-born Gypsy’. Similarly, another respondent saw himself as being ‘ethnically Jewish’ (by descent) but felt that Jewish culture was made up of three parts for him – country of birth, geographical region/continent (European) and religion.

4.15 Generally though respondents in this study described themselves as having multiple ethnic identities and drew on a number of reference points, which varied from person to person. Some people referred to dual identities:

- Parents from different ethnic groups, countries or cultures
  
  Example: A young woman whose mother was white and Scottish and her father black and from a country in Africa. She saw herself as “half and half”, although this varied depending on the context (see below). In talking about her identity, she explained that she felt Scottish but her father had encouraged her to explore aspects of his culture when she was a child. She was very pleased to see the ‘Mixed’ category introduced as an option on ethnicity classifications.

- Where you were born and where you now live
  
  Example: A man said that he identified with Pakistan because he was born there but having established himself and had a family in Scotland he also felt very Scottish:
“A pretty difficult question this. I mean I’m more Scottish and my children definitely see themselves as a Scottish Pakistani. Being born in Pakistan I still see myself as a Pakistani. So I would say my ethnicity will be Pakistani. ... just Scottish Pakistani.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.20)

- Where you now live and your citizenship/the passport you hold
  - Example: A middle-aged woman spoke about being born elsewhere and then coming to Scotland to live and consequently adopting Scottish culture and learning a new language. Whilst she still identified with her country of birth, she felt that having British citizenship, along with her husband and children living here, also made her British.

- Where your parents or predecessors were born and where you were born/brought up
  - Example: A woman whose parents were born in mainland China. She was born in Scotland herself and described having been brought up in Scotland, whilst at the same time picking up Chinese values from her parents. She described herself as Chinese-Scottish.

- Where you were born/brought up, where your parents were born and your religion
  - In particular, some respondents included religious identity along with other influences and for a few people this was the main defining aspect of their ethnic identity (not necessarily religious people), as mentioned above.

4.16 A few respondents made some more general remarks about ethnicity. For example, one man felt that a person’s identity could mean drawing on a range of life experiences:

  “[An] accumulation of all the things that happened to me up to that point.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.15)

DESCRIPTIONS OF IDENTITY

4.17 When asked to define their ethnicity, people referred to a wide variety of descriptors. This was interesting because it flagged up the very complexity of trying to establish any kind of ethnicity framework. Below we list some of the answers given to show people’s preferences ‘unhindered’ by pre-defined categories. It should be noted that people who might have defined similarly when presented with the census ethnicity categories did not necessarily provide the same description as each other when asked in an ‘open-ended’ way. It is difficult to explore this issue further without doing additional research among specific minority groups, i.e. bringing together a larger sample of people who identify in the same way on the Census. (Our approach was to talk to as diverse a sample of the general public as possible within the constraints of the project budget and time-frame.)

4.18 As part of the study respondents in stage 3 were asked to define themselves as they wished and then, later in the interview, to tell the researcher how they would
describe themselves according to the Census categories. Some examples are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>According to the 2001 Census classification</th>
<th>Personal definition of ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</td>
<td>British Bangladeshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bangladeshi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</td>
<td>Scottish Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</td>
<td>Scottish Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</td>
<td>Indian Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Indian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Black, Black Scottish or Black British</td>
<td>Black Caribbean / Jamaican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Caribbean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Black, Black Scottish or Black British</td>
<td>Sometimes African, sometimes African Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Caribbean, or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• African</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• White</td>
<td>British, from Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scottish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• White</td>
<td>Sometimes Jewish, sometimes Scottish – depended on context and who was asking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scottish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• White</td>
<td>White African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any other white background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• White</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other British</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mixed</td>
<td>Half Scottish, Half South African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mixed</td>
<td>Half Irish, Half Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other ethnic background</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.19 As the table above shows, for some people there was a clear tie in with the 2001 Census categories and how they wished to describe their ethnicity. However, for others the categories did not capture the level of specificity they might have wanted or needed. Having the opportunity to write in their answers helped some respondents when faced with the 2001 Census form.
FLUID AND EVOLVING IDENTITY

4.20 A number of the respondents taking part in stage 3 were not born in Scotland and they talked about developing a sense of Scottish-ness for a variety of reasons, for example because they had been living in the country for a number of years. It might also be a matter of different factors taking on new meaning as a person grew older and had different life experiences, such as having children. Consequently, a person’s age may be a factor in how they define their ethnicity.

4.21 People also had different views on whether their ethnicity changed depending on the context. Generally, people either did not change how they described themselves or occasionally varied what they said because they were in a specific situation.

4.22 Many respondents commented that the way in which they referred to their ethnicity was unchanging, regardless of who they spoke to, the reason for being asked or the context. However, there were also many respondents who talked about their take on their own ethnicity changing according to the situation they were in and the person who was asking; for many this did not occur often, just occasionally. Deciding to describe yourself differently could be associated with a number of factors:

- People who might identify themselves in the same way as you having greater knowledge of your culture or nationality, and consequently it is more relevant to reveal more of your identity (because you would expect them to understand any subtleties, for example cultural or regional differences) – this was the main reason given;
- Where you identify with a particular culture but do not feel others from that culture would accept your definition, for example, when visiting a country you have ties to you may feel more Scottish.
- There were also a few people who did not think their definition would be challenged, but simply that they had begun to feel different as they developed a sense of Scottish-ness leading them to re-define themselves. One respondent also mentioned that people from ‘home’ would immediately know ‘where she was from’, hence she would actually say she was Scottish to them and African to other people;
- When talking to other people from minority groups;
- Informal situations where you might feel more comfortable talking about yourself;
- A fear of prejudice;
- Formal situations where you trust the organisation making the request;
- Formal situations where you are unsure about why the request is being made.
OTHER COMMENTS

4.23 It is worth noting that a few comments were made by respondents in stage 3 that suggested that people defined themselves according to the labels or categories they were familiar with. This might be because they had not thought about their ethnicity or identity in any great depth, nor did they feel a need to. For example, a woman who described herself as Irish mentioned that she often said ‘Northern Irish’ because she had grown accustomed to people asking which part of Ireland she was from:

‘I’d say I was Irish. Northern Irish first of all. ... Well I would say Irish first of all but people always ask do you come from the North or the South.’ (Female, Age 29, Interview No.14)

4.24 Also, a woman who had moved to Scotland from the Caribbean as an adult remarked that she had not been asked to define ethnicity ‘back home’ which she put down to the UK being more multi-cultural:

“I guess because back home you don’t really hear people saying well I’m Afro Caribbean or anything unless it comes up as a historical issue ... but I found it started when I came over here ... because here is more multi-cultural, so I guess there’s a need to define who you are in terms of your ethnicity.” (Female, Age 23, Interview No.33)
CHAPTER FIVE    THE VIEWS OF DATA PROVIDERS: ATTITUDES TOWARDS DATA COLLECTION

INTRODUCTION

5.1 This chapter focuses on the general public’s reactions to being asked about their ethnicity, and their recall of occasions where organisations had done so. They were asked about the types of organisations that collect data on ethnicity, their assumptions about the reasons organisations have for doing so, and the different ways in which they might ask about it.

5.2 In general respondents found it difficult to remember occasions when they had been asked about their ethnicity, although they remembered being asked about it for employment and in some other contexts. They found it more difficult to recall specific detail about the frameworks used. Despite this, respondents varied in their reactions to being asked about their ethnicity, with some happy to answer the question and others more reticent, or feeling that it depended on who wanted to know and their reason for collecting such data. Certain respondents felt that it would depend on the way the question was asked; attitudes to different frameworks are further discussed in the next chapter.

AWARENESS OF ORGANISATIONS COLLECTING DATA ON ETHNICITY

5.3 When respondents were asked which types of organisations might collect data on ethnicity, the main one mentioned was employers. Generally, respondents mentioned having had to fill in a form when they applied for current or past jobs. Other organisations and institutions given as examples of those collecting such data included:

- Schools and colleges – these were cited both by parents of younger children who had made the application for their child and older students who remembered answering the question on their own behalf;

- The medical profession, although interestingly respondents said that they did not recall ever having been asked the question in this context and cited it more as an example of a body they assumed would want to know, rather than as a result of direct experience;

- Local authorities – some respondents were more specific, citing housing and council tax forms as times when a local authority would want to know their ethnic background, while others mentioned local authorities only in the abstract;

- Housing associations;

- The police;

- The Census;

- Private companies;
• Market research – both in the form of face-to-face surveys conducted by organisations, and self completion questionnaires, such as those found in magazines; and

• Charities.

RECOLLECTION OF BEING ASKED ABOUT ETHNICITY

5.4 Although respondents were aware of having answered questions about their ethnicity in the past, they found it difficult to remember doing so in great detail. This being the case, they also found it difficult to recall specific details about classifications used on the occasions they had been asked, although there were those who were aware that classifications did vary.

5.5 Although some respondents found it difficult to remember any details about the frameworks used, there were others who were able to draw comparisons. Those who made comparisons between ethnic frameworks did so over time rather than between organisations, identifying elements that were present in ethnic classifications now that would not have been found a few years ago.

5.6 Elements respondents felt were new or had changed over time included the expansion of categories contained within the standard Black and Asian categories to include Black British, Black Scottish, Asian British and Asian Scottish; and the addition of a specific code for people of mixed ethnic background. These elements were more likely to be noticed by those respondents who felt they fitted the categories affected, or were enabled to change the way they described themselves following the alteration.

“My sister who just noticed, and she was like, oh, we can actually fit into something now, do you know what I mean? Because it was just so hard before and you just end up leaving it and things.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No.27)

ATTITUDES TOWARDS BEING ASKED ABOUT ETHNICITY

5.7 Generally speaking, respondents said that they did not have a problem with being asked about their ethnicity. They were happy to answer the question. Many respondents seemed unsuspicious about how the data would be used, although there were also those who did entertain reservations about the reason for gathering the information and the use to which it would be put.

5.8 Data providers who indicated that they were happy to answer questions relating to their ethnicity in any circumstances said that this was for any of the following reasons:

• They had not thought about the issue and simply wanted to fill in the form quickly and accurately;

• They trusted the organisations that had asked them for the information to be asking for a legitimate reason, even when they were not sure of what it might be – either
because they trusted anyone who wanted to know to be collecting the information for a good reason, or because the organisation was a reputable one such as a public body or charity;

- They saw their ethnicity as a statement of fact or source of pride that there was no reason to hide.

  “[Just to give them the] information, it don’t bother me to tell, you know, where I’m from; it don’t really trouble [me].” (Female, Age 25-34, Interview No.7)

5.9 Respondents who had suspicions about the reasons for gathering the data in certain circumstances said that this was because:

- They feared that the information might be used to discriminate against them or against others; or

- They did not trust the organisation collecting the data to be doing so for the right reasons.

  “If it was just random in the street and they weren’t saying what it was for, and they just said an organisation, I’d be a bit cautious; I wouldn’t know what they would be using the information for. ... If they just said it was an interview for a retailer, something like that, and they didn’t really say why they wanted the information, I may be a bit cautious.” (Male, Age, Interview No.29)

5.10 For some, whether or not they were reticent about giving information about their ethnicity depended on the classification. Some respondents worried about more detailed categories, wondering why an organisation would need so much information. Even so, this should not be taken to indicate an overall preference for a small number of broad categories; as will be seen later, there were respondents who found this insulting or pointless. Classifications are discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

5.11 Some respondents said that they, or some others in their community, might hesitate to give information about their ethnicity, or to go into detail about it. In particular this issue related to some minorities that had experienced persecution during the Holocaust, such as Gypsy Travellers and Jewish people, and appeared to bear some relation to age, with those expressing concerns being older respondents. Some others in the same community, even of a similar age, did not have these fears.

  “I don’t have a problem with it. Again, I know that some Jewish people would. I think it's probably fair to say that my father would feel uncomfortable about it; it was used in his time for sinister purposes.” (Male, Age 50, Interview No.10)

  “And what happened to the Jews in Europe where ... people had to declare the religion made it much easier for the Germans to round them up. That, leaving that aspect aside ...I wouldn’t hesitate to describe myself on some official document as Jewish.” (Male, Age 65+, Interview No.28)
5.12 For other respondents, whether or not they were happy to give the information, and the amount of detail they wanted to give, depended on the organisation asking them and their perceived reasons for asking. Assumptions about these are discussed further in the next section.

5.13 As mentioned above, respondents generally assumed that certain organisations would need to know the data for legitimate purposes. Other organisations, however, were treated with more suspicion. In particular, respondents assumed that the medical profession and the Government were most likely to need information on a person’s ethnicity and in a detailed way, as the information would be relevant to their work; and employers least likely, as it was not perceived to be relevant to them.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT REASONS FOR ASKING ABOUT ETHNICITY

5.14 Respondents thought that organisations might want to know about ethnicity for the following broad reasons:

- For information purposes, including monitoring of diversity;
- To enable the most efficient allocation of services or resources, and to enable the needs of specific ethnic minorities to be identified; or
- To serve other agendas.

Each of these reasons is described in more detail below.

Informational needs

5.15 Some respondents thought that organisations wanted information about ethnicity simply for “information”, without being specific about why they might want it or what records they might keep. It was also suggested that in some cases organisations might be collecting data solely in order to comply with legislation without using the information. Some also felt that employers and organisations might simply be interested in finding out more about their employees, customers or residents, and therefore collected ethnicity data along with other personal information.

“They’re supposed to be, and you can call me cynical here, the reason they give you is to monitor the number of people in their organisation, either applying for employment, staying and you know .... I don’t think, I think they’re just doing it because the government is forcing them, under the equality opportunities rules and regulations, they have to collect it. They do nothing with that as far as I’m aware.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.20)

“I reckon it’s just for their detail, for example they’re one of their, you know, the department who organises the applications.... Detail about so many Asians, we have so many black, in a databank... I think it’s just a process, just a process where they have a good understanding what [people] they have in their college or bank.” (Male, Age 25-34, Interview No.31)
5.16 Those that did identify possible uses for the data gained through asking people about their ethnicity suggested that it might be used in the following ways:

- To provide statistics enabling the Government, Scottish Executive, Census and local authorities to see exactly what the ethnic backgrounds of people living in certain areas were.

- To enable the diagnosis and treatment of disease by GPs and the NHS as a whole. For example, if a patient was of South Asian background a GP might be alerted to check for diabetes in certain circumstances. Alternatively, the data might be used to map susceptibility of entire communities to certain illnesses and identify similar links to be used in future diagnoses.

  “The medical profession would probably be different because there’s people’s genes are different, you know, so they probably need to know. They need maybe, require a lot more than what anybody else would need to know, as to where you came from and things like that…. I think it is some part Catholic Asia, too, they’re very [susceptible to] diabetes and things like that. So I think really doctors and that need to know more about a person’s background than what anybody else would need to know.” (Female, Age 65+, Interview No.25)

- To allow organisations and the Government to monitor diversity among employees and populations. In situations such as recruitment or education this data could be used to check access to opportunities, so that companies and institutions could compare their intakes of ethnic minorities in comparison to the population in the area, and also track their progress. This would also enable them to monitor discrimination and disadvantage. Some respondents stressed the need for this in the context of the Race Relations Amendment Act.

  “As far as I’m aware the local authority collects that data for employment purposes, to monitor [the number of people in their organisation]…. I think the health, the NHS, and to a degree I think the Police does, especially the Race Relation Amendment Act 2000. Now a lot more organisations have got the responsibility to promote equality.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.20)

- To monitor changes in descriptors for ethnicity. Respondents said that asking people about their ethnic background would enable people analysing the data to keep up to date with changes to the way data providers described themselves, and also with descriptions of new or different ethnic groups.

  “I guess, to [help] other organisations and just see how they can improve their descriptions… [of] ethnicity…. ‘You’re going to different people to get their opinions on what ethnicity is. … They don’t like it when you use this term; could you think of something else to categorise’ – you know.” (Female, Age 23, Interview No.33)
**Allocation of services and resources**

5.17 Respondents emphasised that knowing people’s ethnicity would allow services and resources (especially faith or language resources) to be targeted in the most cost-effective and efficient way, whilst also allowing them to be tailored to specific ethnic groups. For example, a Gypsy Traveller respondent acknowledged the need to collect data on ethnicity in education, given the very specific educational needs of families who travel around. People also said that combining data on ethnicity with geographical data would allow services to be provided in the places they were needed most.

> “I think, for example, if they know that there are hundreds of Muslims living in Stirling, then the council should make sure they provide things for their needs, for example, mosques, and that will go down very well for these because it's a big group There’s a couple of families living in Stirling who are Muslim, it doesn’t mean they justify, and if it expands then they would be able to have a mosque. That’s just an example. So I think it's important to collect that data, but why you're collecting, the reason for collecting should be to facilitate them for their needs, and if they’re doing that, it's good.” (Male, Age 52, Interview No.30)

**Other agendas**

5.18 Some were concerned that the collection of data on ethnicity would further more sinister agendas, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

5.19 The concern was expressed that where statistics were gathered on ethnicity, these could be manipulated by a data user with an agenda to present some ethnic minority groups in an unfavourable light.

> “Well when they collect it, they say it’s confidential but yeah, true it’s confidential because you don’t see it in the Evening News or whatever. ... But it doesn’t mean that, you know, that small particular group of people who got the decision making [can’t] manipulate it to their own... personal agenda.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.17)

5.20 People also thought that employers could use the information that was ostensibly being gathered to prevent discrimination in order to discriminate against people of the “wrong” ethnic background. They felt that this could be done in a subtle way to make it appear as though they were not differentiating between ethnic groups.

> “I see it sometime as a means of discrimination... they say, oh it’s confidential, oh put it in a different envelope.... It could be used as a means of [discriminating by saying], ‘okay we got here ten applications ... you know, we’re probably just going to call in for an interview one [ethnic minority applicant] just to make it nice’, and you know, it worries me.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.17)
There were those who said that they had personal experience of this:

“It brings to mind an incident in my early management career as quite a young man, working for a big company. And the owners of that business had received an anonymous letter [saying] that only people of a certain religious background were being hired. And he sent for me to investigate how, was there any substance to this accusation. And yes, there was.”
(Male, Age 65+, Interview No.28)

Respondents therefore made a number of assumptions about the reasons companies and bodies were collecting data on ethnicity, not all of which were positive. Some of these affected the way in which they responded to the questions on ethnicity; and both whether they would, and how happy they were to, give the information.
CHAPTER SIX  THE VIEWS OF DATA PROVIDERS: THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF DIFFERENT CLASSIFICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

6.1 As the concepts being discussed were very abstract, three different methods of classifying ethnicity were shown to respondents during the interviews and group discussions. These acted as stimulus materials, helping them to frame ideas and encouraging them to think about what constituted an “ideal” framework around which to base the question.

- Three different classifications were used. Apart from the 2001 Census question on ethnicity itself, the other two examples were not selected as being the best available, rather because they presented different approaches to collecting and/or categorising ethnicity. All three examples are shown in the Appendices to this report.

6.2 Certain themes emerged which were common across all three classifications. Most fundamentally these included the usage of the terms “White”, “Black” and “Asian” as a basis for the frameworks; and also the whole concept of expanding categories instead of having two or three very broad categories. These common strengths and weaknesses, as well as conceptual themes such as length of framework, are discussed in the chapter. Only those themes which were not common to all three frameworks are discussed under the individual framework headings below.

COMMON FACTORS

6.3 This section considers the factors common to all three classifications. A comparison of the three classifications is made, which identifies common strengths and weaknesses and considers how respondents thought the different approaches might best be combined or otherwise changed in order to come up with a workable ethnicity framework. (As the classifications were used as stimulus material respondents were, of course, free to reject all three when they considered their ‘ideal’ framework.) Following this, the three common themes are considered in more detail, covering degree of specificity, single and multiple classifications, and the ‘Other’ category.

Comparison of categories

Common strengths

6.4 Generally, respondents felt that all three classifications would be varied enough for most people to be able to find a category that described them (although there were certain exceptions, which will be considered in the section on common weaknesses below).

6.5 Not including religion was felt to be a positive point by some, as they felt their religion was a personal matter and that it either had little to do with their ethnicity or they did not want to describe it, although others did not agree.
“I think religion should not play into, religion should be kept aside on people’s personal whatever, I think religion should not divide.” (Male, Age 52, Interview No.30)

6.6 Having a specific “Mixed/Dual” category was appreciated by those respondents who felt that this reflected their ethnic background. It made them feel as though they were “officially” included. As has been discussed earlier, the historical lack of a ‘Mixed’ code as standard in ethnicity classifications was something that certain respondents had both noticed and disliked.

“It’s nice to actually be included and just be part of Scottish society completely, like officially, if you see what I mean? So I like that, I think it’s lovely.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No.27)

Common weaknesses

6.7 Although some respondents had specifically praised the classifications for avoiding the mention of religion in relation to ethnicity, others felt that the omission of categories on religion and language meant that the sample classifications were less valuable in giving a true reflection of a data provider’s ethnicity.

6.8 Some respondents, particularly those who had spent time thinking about notions of ethnicity, rejected the fundamental categories around which all the classifications were based. They felt that the descriptors ‘white’, ‘black’ and ‘Asian’ were inconsistent, being based both around skin colour and geography. The point was also made that the categories were not inclusive. For example, respondents who were white but from Africa or the Caribbean would find it difficult to place themselves according to these categories.

6.9 Some data providers could not see any rationale for relating colour to ethnicity. They suggested instead a nationality-based list of categories. Others felt it was important to gather data on colour, but suggested that it was given less prominence, as there were other factors such as language and nationality that were also important in determining things like access to services. A similar system of nationality categories was therefore suggested, with the option of ticking ‘White’ or ‘Black’ in each.

6.10 Another issue that some respondents thought was a common weakness across the classifications was the omission of certain categories. Although respondents did vary in how specific they felt ethnicity frameworks should be, there was some discussion about which ethnic groups should be included. ‘African’ was thought to be a large and diverse category; some felt so large that they could not see what possible use could be made of the data. It was suggested either that specific countries should be listed or, if this would make the form too large, that the regions North, South, East and West Africa should be specified.

‘I’m not African because it’s undermining that Africa is a continent, you know what I mean, they’re saying ‘what’s your ethnic background?’. ‘African, it’s actually wrong because for me, someone from Senegal to someone from South Africa, we got absolutely, I mean absolutely no
6.11 Similarly, the use of ‘Asian’ in subcategories was questioned by some respondents. They did not see the reason for referring to ‘Asian Indian’, ‘Asian Bangladesh’ and so on, believing that Asian data providers would identify themselves solely in terms of their country of origin or ancestry.

“If they were going to use Asian, they don’t need to use Asian Indian, Asian Pakistani. The people, if they’re going to consider themselves, if they want to be called Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, they wouldn’t use another tag, label on it that they’re Asian. Either they’re Asian and Asia covers a whole area, you know, quite a few countries under that, or they will consider themselves individually with their country, their link. To me, that ... it doesn’t make any sense.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.20)

6.12 Some respondents questioned why certain countries were specified separately and not others. Although they did not necessarily feel this was a problem, and could even guess at potential reasons, such as the size of the ethnic community in Scotland, that why some countries had been picked out, they did feel that it was difficult to justify listing certain countries separately while others were left under ‘Other’.

“I’ve always wondered why people always put Chinese, I mean there are other major Asian countries as well, like Japan... Korea, those are not in this, just Chinese. Looking from that I think it’s fine. ... It could be because, I think there is a bigger Chinese community in Scotland, than a Japanese or Korean, and things like that.” (Male, Age 25-34, Interview No.15a)

6.13 Finally, some respondents seemed confused by the categories used. For example, one data provider who came from South Africa said that she was just as likely to tick Black Caribbean as Black African on a form, as she did not think there was a great deal of difference between them.

THE IDEAL METHOD OF CLASSIFYING DATA PROVIDERS

6.14 Some stage 3 respondents felt that the categories used in the example classifications were the wrong ones and proposed their own. However, others suggested ways in which the approaches adopted by the sample classifications might usefully be combined in order to make a workable framework.

6.15 Generally, the preference was for the national identity question in Classification 2, but with the Census categories replacing the second part asking about ethnic background. Respondents liked the opportunity to emphasise their national identity, whilst at the same time keeping it separate from their ethnicity. The Census categories
were chosen over those in the second part of Classification 2 for two reasons: because the ‘White’ category was wider and because it offered respondents the chance to specify (write in) other ethnic backgrounds.

**Specificity of categories**

6.16 The degree of specificity respondents wanted from an ethnicity framework was discussed and respondents fell into three broad types:

- **Those who wanted a short classification framework, which they could fill in quickly, and were willing to accept the lack of detail and clarity this would mean.** Some of these respondents suggested as few as three categories would be acceptable to them: ‘White’, ‘Black’ and ‘Asian’. However, these respondents also understood that greater specificity was important to other people, and stated that they did not mind filling in a more specific framework.

- **Those who acknowledged the theoretical benefits to greater specificity of categories, but who felt that at some point pragmatism would mean that the list would have to be curtailed.** Some of these respondents did, however, make the point that frameworks could be far more specific if they were only going to be used with certain communities.

  “It’s just that if you had a category of Chinese or Hong Kong, then you’re running the risk of, the form will be like 3 pages long, because there are Chinese all over the world, there are Chinese from mainland China, Chinese from Taiwan, Chinese from Singapore, Malaysia. ... So I would guess that if this survey is concentrated on the Chinese community then definitely you would need to ... [specify] types of Chinese. But if it’s for, the whole of Britain, then people who are not Chinese will be completely bored to death. Just like if you look at an African person, then you will probably think this classification is not specific enough, but if everybody wants to be as specific as possible then your leaflet will be like 3 pages long.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.15)

  “Under Indian there is like, just not Sri Lankan, there is Tamil, there are different groups in India, so where – I mean, how are you going to.... I mean, under Indian, I mean, they speak different languages. There is the Tamils and I don't know who they sort of, you know, aligned with. Do they align themselves with Indian or Tamil? I mean, so it is going to be many, many different – you will have to have so many different categories.”  
  (Female, Age 25-34, Interview No.9)

- **Those who wanted specificity to a potentially infinite degree.**

**Single and multiple classifications**

6.17 Respondents were divided over whether they were happier with single or multiple questions on ethnicity. Those who preferred a single ethnicity question said
that this was because such frameworks were quicker and easier to work with on the part of the data provider. Some also felt that the elements that might be used as a separate stage, such as religion, were private.

“Obviously if you want to find out my religion or you want to find out my weight and my height and all that kind of stuff, that’s something that I would – That’s personal, if you see what I mean, but things that anyone could kind of find out, you can even find out by looking at me, then I find that that’s fine, but anything underneath that I think is a wee bit personal.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No. 27)

6.18 On the other hand, respondents were very positive when shown the two-stage framework which also included nationality, as it allowed people to state their Scottish-ness or British-ness as well as their ethnic background; although those who felt nationality and ethnicity were the same thing did not see a need for this distinction.

6.19 Although respondents generally liked the nationality question, some thought that there were other categories which could usefully be added as a separate stage, for example religion and language. They felt that these would provide an even clearer picture of data providers’ identity, as for members of some religions this could form the most important factor in their thinking about ethnicity. Language was thought to be an important factor in ethnicity too, and to be particularly helpful in distinguishing between different groups of white people.

The ‘Other’ category

6.20 Respondents also differed in their attitudes towards the ‘Other’ category. For some, being forced to use it could be an annoying experience, which made them feel excluded. Others assumed that the categories on the frameworks were based on population sizes and did not therefore mind being ‘unrepresented’ if they were part of a numerically very small community.

6.21 Respondents’ feelings about the ‘Other’ category also had a bearing on how they felt about specificity. There were those who preferred a longer list of codes in order to use the ‘Other’ code as little as possible; but also those who wanted the form to be concise even if it meant they would not be included.

“I feel alright with that because I know for a fact that there’s not so many Filipinos in the country, so I’m fine with that, because we really are a minor number in the population, so that’s what I think.” (Female, Interview No.18)

The example classifications used in the research are now considered, and the strengths and weaknesses of each considered.
SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON EACH EXAMPLE CLASSIFICATION:

CLASSIFICATION 1: ONE-STAGE CLASSIFICATION; WHOLLY PRE-CODED

Initial reactions

6.22 Respondents’ first reactions were that there was a wide selection of categories and that they would be able to classify themselves according to this framework. Those respondents who at the time of recruitment had classified themselves as something specific that was not represented found it easy to find a corresponding category that they felt fitted them well. For example, the respondent who had defined himself as “Greek Cypriot” when asked his ethnicity said:

‘Here they describe more or less everything you want to know, the only thing I don’t understand, why any other ethnic group, they’re all there more or less. ... I don’t think you can have any other ethnic group than what they are asking you there. ... If they ask me, because that’s what I am, I’m white, I come from Europe, I’m a white European, and there isn’t other things in here the way you can describe me, I think.” (Male, Age 50+, Interview No.35)

Strengths

6.23 On first sight respondents generally felt that this framework had a selection of categories long enough to describe the range of ethnic classifications well, and that it would both enable data providers to fill it in and data users to work with it.

6.24 The fact that the framework has a specific ‘Mixed/Dual’ category was appreciated by those respondents who felt that this reflected their ethnic background. It made them feel as though they were ‘officially’ included. As has been discussed earlier, the historical lack of a ‘Mixed’ code as standard in ethnicity classifications was something that some respondents had both noticed and disliked. Having a ‘Mixed Other’ category was appreciated, although views were mixed on the other sub-categories (see Weaknesses).

6.25 This framework was also liked because it included a separate White European category. Respondents from elsewhere in Europe did not feel the need for a list of all the different European countries (although one British person identified a need for this), but nevertheless appreciated being able to tick something more specific than “White Other”.

6.26 Having the questions closed and in “tick box” format was thought to be a strength by some, as they said they were easy to fill in. Again, as will be discussed later, not all respondents took this point of view.

“It makes life a lot easier, tick boxes.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.20)
Weaknesses

6.27 Some respondents found it difficult to decide where they would put themselves should they be presented with this classification. This was particularly the case for respondents who wanted to identify themselves as Scottish as well as another ethnicity, and who were not White or partly White. Although they might be able to find a category that they would be able to fit into, they said they would prefer to acknowledge their Scottish-ness. One respondent of Chinese ethnicity, with a preference for describing himself as ‘Scottish Chinese’, said that he would be more likely to tick ‘Asian – Other’ over ‘Chinese’ on the list presented, as he felt that the fact he was not describing himself as being wholly Chinese represented being a Scottish-born Chinese person better.

“There’s none here that I can say, apart from the Pakistani. As I said earlier, I would rather say Pakistani Scottish.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.20)

“I would tick other Asian, Asian British, I don’t know, but that’s what I would have ticked, because I am Asian British if you like.” (Male, Age 25-34, Interview No.15a)

6.28 Not everyone appreciated that the ‘Mixed’ category was subdivided into a list of pre-coded options. This was for two reasons. Firstly, it was felt that they did not reflect the full range and diversity of Mixed backgrounds, but only those involving White plus another of the broad ethnic categories. Secondly, one respondent with a mixed White and Asian background, who would ostensibly have been represented, said that the way the categories were specified implied that she took half of her ethnicity from each. Respondents would not necessarily choose this option even if they could relate to it in some way.

“Myself I would say I would probably put white and Asian or any other mixed background…. It is just that usually the ‘any other mixed background’ option doesn’t come up on forms. It is usually just white and Asian. And whilst I do know a wee bit about being half Indian and so on, it’s, I am not… 50% in this case. So I would prefer to choose, I would feel more comfortable choosing any other mixed background.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No.24)

6.29 Some respondents did not understand the reason for including certain groups, for example Somali and, Gypsy Traveller. This was for two reasons: because they were felt to be unusual groups to include, and thus might make people of these ethnicities feel conspicuous and as though they had been identified for a specific reason such as being in great need; or because they could be fitted into other categories – for example, Somali people would be able to tick Black African and Gypsy Travellers would also have an ethnicity such as White British or White Other. In the case of Gypsy Travellers, people (of non-Gypsy Traveller heritage) objected to the name, as they felt it was probably a racist term, and therefore said that people might be offended by it.

“It might be useful for a company or organisation, but, imagine if I was from Somali [sic] and I knew how my country is. Like they are poor,
they don’t have enough food, there are a lot of diseases, maybe I would feel a bit embarrassed. Do you know what I mean. ... I would say, oh should I say really that, or should I say for example, African.” (Female, Age 25-34, Interview No.23)

“That first one, I think it’s crazy. ... I mean do you have to be, I don’t know, a gypsy. You’ll be either Irish or Scottish or English or whatever. ... Traveller of Irish heritage, that’s a new one. I’ve never heard of that.” (Female, Age 65+, Interview No.25)

6.30 The fact that there were no other definitions other than “Traveller of Irish Heritage” to define Travellers was also thought to be a weakness. However, the Showground (Occupational) Traveller who was interviewed did not feel this was the case, and said that he would unhesitatingly tick “White British”. This was because he saw ‘travelling’ as something which constituted his job rather than his ethnicity.

“Gypsy travellers see themselves as an ethnic group. I see myself as an indigenous Scottish person or British person who, I operate a small business which I inherited from my father. And the only difference between myself and any other small business person is that my business entails moving around the country.” (Interview Ref. Occupational Travellers)

6.31 Another category which people felt should be expanded was ‘White British’. Respondents thought that many people would prefer to define themselves as English, Irish, Scottish or Welsh and that this was more important than defining themselves as British. They felt that having a broad definition like ‘White British’ had the potential to upset people by not giving them the opportunity to articulate a more specific Scottish, English or other identity.

“The white British here is encompassing Welsh and Scottish and English and they haven’t broken that down; I’d prefer to see white British broken down into Scottish, English, Welsh or Northern Irish and have that as separate.” (Female, Age 29, Interview No.14)

6.32 Classification 1 placed the ‘Chinese’ category under ‘Other’. Both Chinese and non-Chinese respondents noticed this; many of the respondents who were not Chinese assumed that Chinese people would be offended by this. Although Chinese respondents did not express offence, one respondent did say that it made her feel “lost” and in general people did feel that it would fit better under the ‘Asian’ category.

“It is just Chinese here... and it is like we are not part of anything and it is just like, I don’t know, I just thought we would belong to something anyway. ... [it makes me feel] lost.” (Female, Age 25, Interview No.16)
6.33 Finally, some respondents felt that there should be an opportunity for data providers to write in their ethnicity for the ‘Other’ and ‘Mixed’ categories.

CLASSIFICATION 2: TWO-STAGE CLASSIFICATION INCLUDING NATIONAL IDENTITY, WHOLLY PRE-CODED

Initial reactions

6.34 This form had mixed reactions compared when compared to Classification 1 described above. Although the second section was felt to collect data on ethnicity in roughly the same way as the first form, the two-stage approach was generally considered to be different from the first form’s one-stage approach. Respondents also characterised is as “friendlier” and “less offensive” in appearance; however, this was probably because of the more finished layout.

Strengths

6.35 Those who wanted to classify themselves as Scottish or British but were not of White ethnicity said that Classification 2 allowed them to express their Scottish-ness or British-ness whilst also recognising their ethnic origin. The respondent who described herself as Mixed ethnicity, and who saw herself as partly White Scottish, said that this was very much preferable to ticking ‘Mixed’, as it allowed her to express that she was part-Scottish in ethnicity and also Scottish in nationality. Being able to identify national identity was very important to some respondents, for whom their Scottish-ness or British-ness was a source of considerable pride.

“I actually really like that, because I’m really proud to be Scottish. Yes, I like that.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No.27)

6.36 Some respondents thought that the two-stage approach might mean that higher-quality data was collected, as the ethnicity data would not be compromised through people’s desire to state their national identity. These respondents also thought it would clarify the question for those who had a tendency to assume that ethnicity was the same as nationality.

6.37 The Chinese respondents interviewed preferred the inclusion of the Chinese category under Asian. This was felt to be more comfortable and easier to find, and also more geographically logical.

“For one thing, this one is more geographically correct. Because Chinese is now part of Asia, which is correct, but now Chinese is ... which stands out from like the rest basically. So this is more factually correct, I think it’s more well organised.” (Male, Age 35-49, Interview No.15)

6.38 Respondents also commented that the UK was broken down into its constituent countries, with British also included as an option. Although comments on this issue were negative as well as positive (see next section) having the different countries listed was thought to provide scope for those who wished to express a regional identity to do
so. As discussed earlier, respondents were aware that feelings often ran high on this issue and so felt it to be sensible to break down the category. One respondent also commented positively that she had never before seen Northern Ireland listed on a form. Similarly, there were respondents who were aware that it was more important to some people to feel British than, for example, Scottish or English. Some respondents who were not British by birth but who had lived in Scotland for some years felt they would be more likely to feel British than they would one of the constituent country nationalities, which they saw as specific, regional and associated with having been born in the country.

“Because I am in Britain, I don’t want to, I don’t want to say English or Scottish or I don’t know. British is more, more this, yes. ... British is more wider term.” (Female, Age 35-49, Interview No.8)

**Weaknesses**

6.39 As mentioned above, there were also respondents who disliked having a nationality breakdown. This was for three reasons:

- They saw the category as superfluous, as anyone identifying with a single nationality will also be British. One respondent referred to people who insisted on classifying themselves more specifically than British as “stubborn”;

  “I would put British because it has been on my passport and when I fill the form, you know, I always tick British; like college form. What nationality, British, whatever, I just fill in, and jobs, always British, because I always thought, like, Scottish was, like, stubborn, so I was like, OK, I am not going to.” (Female, Age 25, Interview No.16)

- They felt that the identities Scottish, English, Northern Irish and Welsh were regional identities, not national; and

- They felt that the categories could be expanded. For example, respondents said that Asian, or other, nationalities should be included. The category respondents felt did need to be added, however, was Irish, by which respondents meant the Republic of Ireland. This was felt to have a much stronger case for inclusion than other nationalities, especially in a Scottish categorisation. This was for three reasons: because of the number of Irish people that live in the UK and, more specifically, Scotland; because the Republic of Ireland was seen as very similar culturally to the UK and, in particular, Scotland; and because Ireland is geographically part of the British Isles.

  “English, Scottish, Northern Ireland, Wales, is British, if you take British away altogether, anybody who ticks Scottish, English, Northern Ireland, Welsh, are British, and the regions are separate” (Male, Age 52, Interview No.30)

6.40 Some felt there was no need for the first question on nationality at all. These people tended to see nationality as being either a very similar concept or the same as ethnicity.
6.41 One respondent disputed the description White UK in the second half of the classification. She felt that it had negative and nationalistic connotations.

“That makes me think of the BNP, you know, by putting white UK. I would just never, ever classify myself as white and I think the people that do are negative against people who aren’t [white].” (Female, Age 29, Interview No.14)

6.42 Objections were also raised to the number of categories given for the White category. This was because it was thought that White Other did not adequately specify where someone was from. It was suggested that the category White European might be added at a minimum.

“It could have said “from Europe” or something, actually say. Some of the others say, like ‘Asian Pakistan’; it would have been nice if it said… because there is not so many Greeks here in Scotland as I suppose Pakistanis or Asians, there’s no any other way of describing myself on there than by ‘white other’.” (SEX???, Age 50+, Interview No.35)

6.43 Finally, respondents spoke about the Occupational Traveller category. The respondent who could technically be described as an Occupational Traveller, as mentioned earlier, said that he did not feel the need to classify himself as anything other than White British, distinguishing his ethnicity from his job. He felt that putting Occupational Travellers with Gypsy Travellers confused those who were ethnically Gypsies with those who travelled as part of their work, and potentially created situations where they could suffer by association with the negative perceptions some people had of other traveller groups. However, he did see a need for data to be collected on those who spend their lives travelling in terms of service provision, and consequently did not oppose the category. Respondents who were not themselves Travellers sometimes found this category confusing, associating it with travelling salesmen, for example.

“This is asking for your ethnic background, what’s an occupational traveller well I wouldn’t think that that is… ethnicity. …Because it’s not describing the person from an ethnic point of view. Occupational traveller could apply to anyone.” (Female, Age 23, Interview No.33)
CLASSIFICATION 3: 2001 CENSUS CATEGORIES

Initial reactions

6.44 The Census was thought to have a similar approach to Classification 1 and similar categories to both Classification 1 and the second stage of Classification 2. However, some respondents thought it strange that the categories should be less specific than those in the other classifications, as they would have assumed it would be more specific with the aim of gathering more precise data.

Strengths

6.45 The main strength of the Census classification was thought to be the provision of open questions for the Other categories and Mixed category, or of spaces where ethnicity could be specified if the respondent wanted to. Respondents acknowledged that some people would prefer to give their precise ethnicity rather than tick a box. Adding a space for the respondent to describe their ethnicity was also thought to mean that higher-quality data could be collected.

“You’re putting other there and what does other mean? It could mean anywhere in the world, so it's not telling the person that's reading that then very much.” (Female, Age 65+, Interview No.25)

6.46 The provision of a space to write in more specific information also removed confusion in people’s minds about whether or not to write on the form, as well as ticking the box. Respondents who habitually ticked ‘Other’ said they were often confused about whether they should do so.

“It’s not so much different from those two [Classifications 1 and 2], but the good thing is, it mentioned that if you want to write, you know, you can, you don’t have that doubt, should I write down or should I not, you know. ... because it put these, you know, like empty places.” (Female, Age 25, Interview No.23)

6.47 In common with Classification 2, ‘Chinese’ was included under the ‘Asian’ category and this was thought to fit better with respondents’ preferences as well as seeming more logical.

6.48 Irish respondents liked the provision of ‘Irish’ as a separate category in the Census classifications; however, for some this was thought to be a weakness.

Weaknesses

6.49 In common with the other classifications, there were thought to be some areas where there was a lack of clarity about the categories used. Respondents were not sure where some people would put themselves. Although ‘Irish’ was given as a category, respondents were unsure whether this referred to the whole of Ireland or just to the Republic. They thought that, at the least, Northern Irish respondents would be unclear whether or not to tick it.
6.50 The White category, in common with Classification 2, was not thought to be broken down far enough. Like this classification, it lacked a White European category.

6.51 One respondent felt that the Census categories did not have a specifically Scottish focus. He believed that such categories were worked out centrally in London and then applied across the UK, and that they were therefore not necessarily applicable to Scotland. However, he did not offer any suggestions on how they might adopt a more Scottish focus. Another respondent felt that the terms Asian Scottish and Asian British were not readily understandable.

6.52 One respondent was concerned that the form included ‘White Scottish’ and ‘Black Scottish’ as broad headings, but listed ‘Mixed’ as a heading on its own. This seemed to imply that respondents of Mixed ethnicity were not considered to be Scottish. Additionally, she complained that the amount of space provided for her to write in her ethnicity was inadequate.

“There’s never a box big enough to fit Scottish South African, or you’d be Afro-Scot, that’s what you – I hate that, I hate writing that, but it was only because the boxes were too small to write that in. So yes, it’s fine that it’s got the box in, you can do it, but it’s still kind of excluding you, if you know what I mean, because everyone else is included.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No.27)
CHAPTER SEVEN  THE VIEWS OF DATA PROVIDERS: THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

7.1 During the interviews and group discussions, respondents were shown the leaflet about the consultation process (see Appendix) and asked for their views. Although respondents had not been aware that the consultation was taking place, attitudes were very positive. Stage 3 respondents had very few comments on the consultation process as a whole or on the approach used, other than to express approval.

ATTITUDE TO THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

7.2 Although respondents had not been aware that the consultation was taking place, reactions were overwhelmingly positive towards the fact that it was happening. Respondents appreciated having the chance to have a say in the matter:

“The fact that you are all standing up and being counted and you have a little bit of a say...being included.” (Female, Age 35-49, Interview No.22)

7.3 Although respondents acknowledged that the primary focus of the research was to aid in developing a framework for classifying ethnicity, they were aware that the effects of such a framework could be far-reaching. For example, it was felt to have a wider role in assisting in the monitoring of discrimination and the promotion of acceptance of different ethnic groups. People thought that changing categories and terminology within the Census form would have an effect on the terminology used elsewhere, whether in everyday language or in other forms. Some respondents felt it was a measure of society’s progress that a consultation was taking place.

“I think it's good because there are more cultures and it’s not the same [white] Scottish people. ...There are people who are born in different ethnic backgrounds. ... I'm actually surprised by a lot of people who are ignorant when it comes to ethnicity. ... Some people use terminology that they think is OK but it's [actually] quite offensive to someone of a different ethnicity.” (Female, Age 23, Interview No.33)

“I think it's very good because I think it's nice to get the feelings of people from ethnic backgrounds, how they feel, because maybe things are putting in these forms and data collection which may look... offensive, but if you can change the way they are presented, we might get a more positive response... so I think it's nice to talk to all people and take their views [on words] which are offensive, words like colour, white, black, [in order to find out] which is the better way to get the detail you’re looking for without making them angry, so I think it's a very positive move.” (Male, Age 52, Interview No.30)
7.4 It was felt that reclassifying the ethnicity framework in the Census would allow higher-quality data, and that this data could then be shared with other bodies such as the NHS and private companies.

7.5 Respondents considered that another effect of a revised Census classification might be to change how they thought about themselves and their own ethnicity, feeling that it would help them to clarify their thoughts.

“Very good, I think it is very good... I would like to define myself more rather than just saying generally, oh Chinese, but that is really different, in that it really defines you.” (Female, Age 25, Interview No.16)

7.6 No negative views were expressed about the consultation process, but some respondents did express reservations. One person was not sure how the Scottish Executive would manage to carry out what seemed to be a complicated project, and another was unsure how revising the ethnicity framework would help monitor discrimination in itself, reasoning that people would still have to report discrimination to the Scottish Executive.

VIEWS ON THE APPROACH

7.7 Respondents enjoyed the process of data collection. Those in both depth interviews and discussion groups felt that the process allowed them time to consider their feelings about ethnicity and to discuss it at length and in depth. The private nature of in-depth interviews was appreciated – one respondent said that she would not have reacted well to being approached in a public place and asked about her ethnicity. Respondents hoped that the interviews would give the Scottish Executive a new perspective in considering the issue of ethnicity and ethnicity frameworks. They also approved of the opportunity to write or submit suggestions and views online as part of the wider consultation process. One respondent felt that the research did not allow sufficient numbers of people to be interviewed.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONSULTATION PROCESS ITSELF

7.8 Very few suggestions were received. Those that respondents did give were as follows:

- Make the reasons that it is important to know people’s ethnicity clear while the consultation process is being carried out.

- Look at the very broad categories – Asian, Black and White – and see how they can be subdivided, as they are such broad categories.

- Jewish respondents felt that the religious element to ethnicity had the potential to confuse people’s thinking about the issue and to make data gathering difficult. A separate consultation exploring the issue of religion in a similarly sensitive way was therefore suggested.
• Make sure the people consulted come from a broad spectrum of society: respondents emphasised the need to get a good youth perspective, a diverse white perspective, and the perspectives of as many different ethnicities as possible.

“I think it is quite important to get a good idea of how people who are maybe taking part in their first census in 2011 would feel about it, because I do think attitudes will change an awful lot between now and then. And should know how people sort of that age now would feel about themselves and because you don’t really want to be filling in a census form and feel you are just filling in one of the minority boxes, you know.” (Female, Age 18-24, Interview No.24)
CHAPTER EIGHT EMERGING THEMES

Purpose and usage of ethnicity data

8.1 The stakeholder respondents, data users and data providers recognised that data on ethnicity was collected for a variety of reasons:

- as a fact finding tool to help profile the population as a whole or within a specific setting such as an organisation’s workforce;
- as a tool to assist service providers better tailor and improve services for a diverse population; and
- as a monitoring mechanism to ensure equality of opportunity.

8.2 It was generally agreed that collecting ethnicity statistics had to move beyond mere compliance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to contributing towards the improvement of services as well as promoting greater equality of opportunity.

8.3 However, stakeholders were concerned that data gathering might not always be used to promote equality of opportunity and that it could be open to abuse. For example, stakeholders commented on how the issue of small numbers was still used as an ‘excuse’ for not engaging with race equality matters. They were also concerned that numbers were used as a justification to apportion resource to minority communities who were larger in number rather than on the basis of need.

8.4 This had an effect of being divisive rather than enabling cohesion within communities. There was also concern that some employers might use the data to discriminate rather than facilitate opportunity.

8.5 There were some contexts where data providers in particular saw clear validity for asking about ethnicity data, such as in the area of health. It was recognised that some medical conditions were related to different ethnic groups and such information would better inform medical staff about possible health areas of concern.

8.6 The stakeholder respondents in Stage 1 commented on the need to be better informed about how data gained nationally could be used for local relevance.

Analysis and dissemination of data

8.7 Data provider and stakeholder respondents commented on the lack of evidence available showing how ethnicity data was currently being analysed and used. This lack of information, particularly in relation to improvement of service provision or equality of opportunity, may be contributing to the concerns cited by stakeholders. In particular in relation to why ethnicity data was being asked for and a perception that people were reluctant to take part in any further requests for ethnicity information.

8.8 Data users on the other hand commented on how data gathered was currently assisting them to improve practice. For example, data users reported
• better matching of services to individuals (particularly in the area of language and religion, rather than ethnicity),

• analysis of the profile of their workforces in relation to ethnicity to improve their recruitment practices for under-represented ethnic groups, and

• making comparisons with national data to enable a study of trends and patterns.

8.9 Data users were particularly concerned about issues of confidentiality and anonymity. This was perceived as an issue for Scotland where numbers of minority ethnic groups were very small. Dissemination at present was largely in an ‘official’ capacity, internal within organisations or in response to external requests. There was no evidence among this study’s sample of data users of any wider dissemination nor did respondents see a need for this. There is however no evidence to suggest data users would be averse to disseminating data so long as confidentiality needs were addressed. Correspondingly, the issue of confidentiality and anonymity was not a significant issue for data providers and was not actually mentioned by Stage 3 data providers at all.

8.10 There is a critical difference in expectations about dissemination from data providers and users. Data providers and stakeholder respondents want more evidence on how the collation of ethnicity statistics contributes to the improvement of services and life chances particularly for minority ethnic groups. Data users see the need to ensure anonymity and confidentiality as being critical and this could be affecting the wider dissemination of data. There is a need, however, to consider how information about improvements can be made more widely known without necessarily compromising on issues of confidentiality and anonymity. Equally, care needs to be taken that issues of confidentiality and anonymity do not become reasons for lack of dissemination.

Classification categories

8.11 There was consensus between stakeholder respondents, data providers and data users that there was now a greater diversity of people within contemporary Scotland. In general, it was recognised that the current classification systems would benefit from refinement to better record the diversities of these new communities, in particular, white minority groups. One respondent believed that people were simply responding to existing categories, rather than reflecting on their identity in any informed or meaningful way.

8.12 Another area commented on by stakeholder respondents, data users and providers was in relation to the ‘Other’ category. There was recognition that some data providers might avoid being recorded in this category as they resented being classified as ‘other’ or find it psychologically devaluing to be constantly placed within this category. However, neither stakeholder respondents nor data users were clear whether a longer list of categories was going to be helpful or desirable. This not withstanding, data users and stakeholder respondents felt there would be value in having a wider choice of categories to enable some groups to be better counted and identified.

8.13 Stakeholder respondents, data providers and users also recognised the fluidity of concepts like ethnicity and identity. All groups recognised that context, a sense of belonging, whether you held a British passport, whether you were born in Scotland/UK, as well as other factors, contributed to how a person might classify themselves. The
complex range of responses, particularly from data providers in Stage 3 of the study, demonstrates that issues of identity are not fixed and do influence the way people respond to classifications.

8.14 Stakeholder respondents found the conflation of characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity and colour to be highly problematic. They also viewed the current ethnicity question within the Census as being conceptually flawed and confusing. Data users also saw the need to separate issues, however, unlike the stakeholder respondents who commented in particular on the conflation of colour and ethnicity, data users were more concerned about the linking of nationality and colour.

8.15 The stakeholder respondents in general saw the need to decouple colour from ethnicity or nationality, but the issue of colour was rarely mentioned by data users. There were mixed views among data providers, with many expressing concerns over references to colour in ethnicity classifications, but not all participants took this view. Nationality, however, was uncontentious, in particular in terms of classifying self according to the country of origin. The stakeholder respondents were clear that colour was still a clear trigger for racial discrimination and had to be addressed. Consideration may need to be given as to how ‘colour’ is included within an ethnicity classification framework so that the key tenets of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 could be met.

8.16 Religion was mentioned in passing by the stakeholder respondents and data users. For some data providers, this was perceived to be an important facet of their identity. The stakeholder respondents suggested there was a need to expand the religion question to include the different sects/denominations of the other major faiths. Data users on the other hand queried the relationship between religion and ethnicity and how being members of one religious group such as being Jewish or Muslim constituted being part of a distinct ethnic group. There were mixed views among data providers from Stage 3 with some people seeing religion as key to their identity and others feeling that questions on religion were an unnecessary intrusion into their personal life.

8.17 The stakeholder respondents raised the importance of language as part of identity but also the lack of being able to communicate in English as a potential source of exclusion or discrimination. These respondents suggested that the language section should be expanded to record the wide range of languages spoken in Scotland. Such data was important at a national and local level to enable the improvement of access to services. Among data users, the issue of language was limited to one organisation describing how a question was asked to monitor the need for interpretation services. Data providers talked about language being part of ethnicity and, for some, it was something that contributed to having a sense of culture.

Areas to focus on in future consultations

8.18 How can the purpose for asking about ethnicity be more clearly communicated to members of the public in Scotland?

8.19 How can information about the way in which ethnicity data is used to improve services and enhance quality of provision for Scotland’s diverse populations be better disseminated widely without compromising matters of confidentiality?
8.20 What mechanisms should be in place to enable data collated by the Census to be used more extensively to meet the diverse needs of communities at national and local levels?

8.21 What mechanisms need to be in place to assist those who have a difficulty (e.g. literacy or language issues) to fill in forms such as the Census?

8.22 How should issues of colour, nationality and ethnicity in ethnicity question frameworks be disentangled?

8.23 That colour is a trigger for discrimination is not disputed. However, is the Census the correct vehicle to do this? If yes, can you suggest ways in which a question on colour might be included?
Appendix 1  Stage 1 participants

The following people were interviewed for Stage 1 of the study among stakeholders.

- **Jacinta Barker** – Development Officer, Black Community Development Project, Edinburgh
- **Peter Barry** – Integration Manager, Scottish Refugee Council, Glasgow
- **Ephraim Borowski** – former member of the Race Equality Advisory Forum and Director of the Scottish Jewish Representative Council
- **Dr Philip Muinde DL** – former member of the Race Equality Advisory Forum, Chair of Grampian Racial Equality Council, Company director and International Business consultant, key member of the African community in Scotland and resident in Aberdeen for nearly 30 years
- **Kay Hampton** – Academic and sociologist, Glasgow Caledonian University
- **Jatin Haria** – former member of the Race Equality Advisory Forum and Director of the Glasgow Antiracist Alliance, largest black Social Inclusion Partnership in Scotland
- **Mairi McKeane** – Director, Glasgow Traveller and Gypsy Community Development Project
- **Verene Nicholas** – Centre for Human Ecology
- **Sitki Nalci** – Dumfries and Galloway Multicultural Forum
- **Monica Lee MacPherson** – Chair Moray, Highlands and Islands Chinese Association and self-employed – Highland Interpreting Services
- **Tim Hopkins** – Equality Network, Scotland
Appendix 2  Stage 1 topic guide

The interviews conducted for stage 1 were framed around four open questions, which were agreed with the Scottish Executive. These questions allowed enough scope to probe if required.

Q1. What do you consider the purpose of ethnic classifications to be?

Q2. How you think it is currently being used?

Q3. What further issues arise for you in the area of ‘ethnic classification’?

Q4. Have you a suggestion as to how the Census categories can be improved?
Appendix 3  Stage 2 topic guide

Aims of the project

- Overall aim: To inform the development of a classification of ethnic identity which would be acceptable to individuals, whilst providing data users with an approach that meets their needs
- Examine the need for information on ethnic identity among data users
- Establish the different ways in which data is collected and used
- Examine the adequacy of current methods of classification, the need to change and the implications of changing these
- Explore the uses of single versus multiple questions on ethnicity
- Explore other ways of classifying data on ethnicity
- Examine ideas for consultation approaches about ethnic identity classification frameworks in the future

1. INTRODUCTION

- About BMRB
- About the research
- Commissioned by the Scottish Executive to examine issues relating to ethnic identity and how people see themselves
- Two parts – asking data providers how they would like to be classified, while asking data users what their needs are in terms of producing usable data
- Aim is to develop classification that both data providers and users are happy with
- Length of interview – 60 minutes
- Confidentiality
- Tape Recording – tapes not available to the Scottish Executive but only to the research team

(Note: please record instances where the respondent has difficulty answering the question, finds it difficult to provide precise information or is reluctant to disclose information.)
2. GENERAL BACKGROUND

- Their organisation
- Length of time they have been working there
- Their role – what responsibilities
- Responsibilities as regards data (briefly)
- Different communities served by the organisation

3. USE MADE OF DATA

- How is data on ethnicity currently collected
  - Who is responsible for it
  - Method of classification
- Ways in which they use data on ethnicity
  - What do they use it for
  - Who uses it
  - Who sees the data
- Reasons for collecting data on ethnicity
  - Probe: collect to comply, collect for specific need (probe whether organisational or general), collect in case needed in future, other reasons

4. CURRENT CLASSIFICATIONS

- Classifications they use (can they show us)
  - How were these developed (e.g. by the organisation, CRE/Census classification)
  - (If developed by the organisation) Can they tell us about the process they used for developing their classifications
  - Extent to which these classifications have changed during their experience, reasons for these changes
- What do they believe the strengths of this classification are
- What do they believe the weaknesses of this classification are
  - What difference does collecting data in this way make to them
- What are their experiences of the “other” category
  - Who do they find comes under this category
  - Extent to which this data is analysed
  - Extent to which this data is used (purpose)
- Can they think of any ways in which their current classification could be improved
  - (If they can) Reasons why they have not implemented these improvements
- What do their data providers think about these classifications

5. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF DIFFERENT CLASSIFICATIONS

- Show different methods of classification (including the current Census classification)
- For each method:
  - What are the strengths of collecting data like this
  - What are the weaknesses of collecting data like this
  - How would it affect their organisation if it were to become compulsory to collect data like this (as opposed to changing at all)
  - Changes they would make
6. IDEAL METHOD OF CLASSIFYING DATA PROVIDERS

- If they were designing their ideal method of classification, what would it be (give respondent a blank sheet of paper and pen and get them to talk through each category, why they have chosen to categorise in this way.
  - Explore inconsistencies, e.g. geographical – “Asian” – categories vs. colour-based – “Black” – categories
  - Attitude to single vs. multiple questions on ethnicity.
- Impact on their organisation of collecting data in this way
- Impact on data providers of collecting data in this way

7. VIEWS ON CHANGE

- Views on need for change – extent to which they feel it is necessary
- What are the implications of changing their methods of collecting data on ethnicity
  - Probe on:
    - Cost
    - Staff time/attitude
    - Consistency of records/data
    - Comparability of records/data
    - Usability of data for their purposes (i.e. would it make the data more/less usable, would it allow them to group people into meaningful groups)
    - Likely attitude of data users/providers to change (at all, rather than to a specific method of categorisation)

8. CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Show leaflet
  - Were they aware that a consultation process was underway
  - What do they think about the fact that there is a consultation process underway
  - Views on approach
  - How would they suggest people are asked about their ethnic identity

9. ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS OR COMMENTS / QUESTIONS FOR THE RESEARCHER

THANK AND CLOSE
Appendix 4  Stage 3 topic guide

45103220
January 2005

Topic guide
Scottish Executive – Ethnic Identity
Data Providers

Aims of the project

- Overall aim: To inform the development of a classification of ethnic identity which would be acceptable to individuals whilst providing data users with an approach that meets their needs
- Examine how individuals classify themselves
- Explore the reasoning behind such classifications and perceptions of why questions on ethnicity are asked
- Examine the adequacy of current methods of classification and attitudes towards these
- Explore other ways of classifying data on ethnicity – single vs. multiple questions
- Examine ideas for consultation approaches about ethnic identity classification frameworks in the future

10. INTRODUCTION

- About BMRB
- About the research
- Commissioned by the Scottish Executive to examine issues relating to ethnic identity and how people see themselves
- Two parts – asking data providers how they would like to be classified, while asking data users what their needs are in terms of producing usable data
- Aim is to develop classification that both data providers and users are happy with
- Length of interview – 60 minutes (up to 2 hours if an interpreter is being used)
- Confidentiality – from Scottish Executive/data users
- Tape Recording – tapes not available to the Scottish Executive but only to the research team

(Note: please record instances where the respondent has difficulty answering the question, finds it difficult to provide precise information or is reluctant to disclose information.)
11. GENERAL BACKGROUND

- Can they tell us a bit about themselves (age, children, where live, how long lived there etc.)

12. CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF OWN ETHNICITY

- What does “ethnicity” mean to them
- How would they describe themselves if someone asked them about their ethnicity
  - Probe on:
    - Colour
    - Ethnicity
    - Country/countries identified with (and relationship to these e.g. country of residence, country of birth, parents’/grandparents’ country/ies of birth)
    - Religion/belief
    - Language
    - Culture
      - For all the above, probe for influences they have and factors they bring in
- Perceptions of whether they feel they have a “single” ethnic identity versus a “multiple” ethnic identity
- Why have they chosen to describe themselves in this way (ask about categories not used)
- Relative importance of different categories
- Extent to which the way they describe themselves changes according to who they are with
  - Is this just the wording or do they describe themselves in a different way
  - Probe on:
    - With people who are of same ethnicity
    - With people of different ethnicity
    - People own age (of same/different ethnicity)
    - People different ages (of same/different ethnicity)
    - Official context/Formally
    - Informally
- What about other people of the same ethnicity – different ways they describe themselves
  - Does this vary with different people (e.g. older/younger people)

13. ATTITUDES TOWARDS DATA COLLECTION

- Which organisations can they think of that collect data on ethnicity
- Views on:
  - Why they do this
  - What they use it for
  - Any variations between organisations they can remember
- Attitude towards being asked to describe their ethnicity
  - Probe: extent to which this varies according to the organisation/intended use
- Can they recall any instances when they were asked to classify their ethnicity
  - How did they react
  - Adequacy of the categories used
  - Attitude towards categories used
  - Views on the reason they were asked (was a reason given)
14. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF DIFFERENT CLASSIFICATIONS

- Show different methods of classification, one at a time
- For each method:
  - Why do they think data is being collected like this
  - How would they classify themselves
  - What are the strengths of this classification
  - What are the weaknesses of this classification
  - What would they think if they were asked to classify themselves in this way
  - Changes they would make

15. IDEAL METHOD OF CLASSIFYING DATA PROVIDERS

- If they were designing their ideal method of classification, what would it be (give respondent a blank sheet of paper and pen and get them to talk through each category, why they have chosen to categorise in this way.
  - Attitude to single vs. multiple questions on ethnicity.
- Strengths of collecting data in the way they have designed
- Weaknesses of collecting data in the way they have designed
- How would they describe themselves according to this framework
- What would they feel if they were asked to do this

16. CONSULTATION PROCESS/METHODS/APPROACH

- Show leaflet
  - What do they think about the fact that there is a consultation process underway
  - Views on approach
  - How would they suggest people are asked about their ethnic identity

17. ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS OR COMMENTS / QUESTIONS FOR THE RESEARCHER

THANK AND CLOSE
Appendix 5  Classifications considered during the stage 2 and 3 interviews
2001 Census Question on Ethnic Identity

What is your ethnic group?
Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.

A  White
   □  Scottish
   □  Other British
   □  Irish
   □  Any other White background, please write in

B  Mixed
   □  Any Mixed background, please write in

C  Asian, Asian Scottish, or Asian British
   □  Indian
   □  Pakistani
   □  Bangladeshi
   □  Chinese
   □  Any other Asian background, please write in

D  Black, Black Scottish, or Black British
   □  Caribbean
   □  African
   □  Any other Black background, please write in

E  Other ethnic background
   □  Any other background, please write in
Completely pre-coded list

**WHITE / WHITE BRITISH:**
- WBRI - White British
- WIRI - Irish
- WIRT - Traveller of Irish Heritage
- WROM - Gypsy/Roma
- WEUR - White European
- WOTW - White Other

**MIXED / DUAL:**
- MWAS - White & Asian
- MWBA - White & Black African
- MWBC - White & Black Caribbean
- MOTH - Any Other Mixed Background

**ASIAN / ASIAN BRITISH:**
- AIND - Indian
- APKN - Pakistani
- ABAN - Bangladeshi
- AAFR - African Asian
- AOTA - Other Asian

**BLACK / BLACK BRITISH:**
- BCRB - Black Caribbean
- BSOM - Black Somali
- BAOF - Other Black African
- BOTH - Any Other Black Background

**OTHERS:**
- CHNE - Chinese
- OOTH - Any Other Ethnic Group
- REFU - I do not wish an ethnic background category to be recorded
- NOBT - Information not yet obtained
### 1. National Identity

Please tick **one only** of the following categories which you feel best describes your National Identity. For example a child resident in Scotland of Bangladeshi parents might want to be considered Scottish, regardless of their ethnic background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Irish</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum Seeker</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not disclosed</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are an Asylum seeker or a Refugee then tick one of these boxes.

If none of the above is suitable then tick this box.

Tick this box if you are not prepared to provide this information.

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### 2. Ethnic Background

Please tick **one only** of the following categories which you feel best describes your ethnic background. For example a child born in Scotland of Bangladeshi parents should be entered as Asian Bangladeshi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White UK</td>
<td>01</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Other</td>
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<td>Black African</td>
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<td>Black Caribbean</td>
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<td>Black Other</td>
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<td>Asian Indian</td>
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<td>Asian Pakistani</td>
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<td>Asian Bangladeshi</td>
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<td>Asian Chinese</td>
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<td>Asian Other</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
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<td>Occupational Traveller</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Gypsy Traveller</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Traveller</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you are white then tick the box in this group that best describes your background.

If you are black then tick the box in this group that best describes your background.

If you are Asian in origin then tick the box in this group that best describes your background.

If you are a traveller then tick the box in this group that best describes your background.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>☐ 99</th>
<th>If none of the above is suitable then tick this box.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not disclosed</td>
<td>☐ 10</td>
<td>Tick this box if you are not prepared to provide this information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Background: 2001 Census question**

What is your ethnic group?
Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.

<table>
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<td>Other British</td>
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<td>Any other White background, please write in</td>
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<th>C</th>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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<td>Any other Asian background, please write in</td>
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<th>Black, Black Scottish or Black British</th>
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<td>Caribbean</td>
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<td>Any other Black background, please write in</td>
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<th>E</th>
<th>Other ethnic background</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any other background, please write in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, contact:

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Please contact us if you would like more copies of this leaflet.

If you would like a summary of this document in your language, please phone the number above or contact us at the address above.

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**Ethnic identity categories**

We (the Scottish Executive) and other organisations ask questions about people’s ethnic identity to:

- monitor discrimination; and
- take action to make sure we and they offer equal opportunities and treatment to all ethnic groups.

At the moment, most organisations use the ethnic categories from the 2001 Census but some people are concerned about these categories and do not think they are the best way to collect this information.

We are planning to carry out research and consultation to see if there are better ways of asking people about their ethnic identity.

This leaflet explains our plans for this work.
Why we need ethnic identity categories

We need to ask people about their ethnic identity so that we can check whether people from different ethnic backgrounds have the same opportunities and are treated in the same way. Collecting this information helps us to take action to remove any unfairness or disadvantage.

Our duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 make it important that we can effectively monitor policies, how we deliver services and how we employ people.

- All public authorities have a general duty to promote racial equality and good race relations.

Why we are doing this work

Some community groups have raised concerns about the ethnic categories used in the 2001 Census. For example, several groups were unhappy that Africans were placed under the ‘black’ category, while Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese people were placed under the ‘Asian’ category.

We are committed to working with a wide range of people, communities, service providers and statisticians to:

- better understand the issues around ethnic identity categories;
- look at other ways people might want to describe their own ethnic identity; and
- continue to monitor effectively.

The General Register Office for Scotland is currently consulting on questions for the next census in 2011. We are doing this work now to make sure we have a chance to review the ethnic identity categories before the census.

What will happen next

We are planning two different phases of work.

Stage 1: December 2004 to March 2005

We will carry out research with information providers (for example, those providing information about their ethnic identity) and information users (such as local authorities and NHS) to:

- find out how people want to class their ethnic identity; and
- identify what information is needed and what it is used for.

Independent researchers will talk to a range of different people and organisations to make sure they gather a range of opinions. This research will influence the planned consultation work. If after research and consultation it looks unlikely that we can set suitable alternative categories for ethnic identity, we may have to decide to continue using the 2001 Census categories (but updated to reflect cultural and population changes in the meantime).

Stage 2: June 2005 to September 2005

Formal consultation on options for ethnic identity categories.

You can give us your views about the categories you think we should use.

If the consultation suggests different approaches, we will develop new categories for ethnic identity and use them in the 2006 Census test.

How you can get involved

The main consultation will begin in June. If you would like us to tell you when the consultation begins, please e-mail us at the address over the page. You can also phone or write to us if you do not have access to the internet. Full contact details are over the page.

What this work means for the monitoring we are doing now

This consultation process is looking at what categories we might use for the 2011 Census. It does not mean that any ethnic monitoring should end until we develop any new categories. It is very important that organisations continue to collect ethnic monitoring information in the meantime, using the existing 2001 Census categories.