



Success and Equality of Opportunity in Multicultural Britain



What people think,
feel and do



FOREWORD

DAVID LAMMY MP – Member of Parliament for Tottenham

I welcome this report from Opinium on success and equality of opportunity in Multicultural Britain. In 21st Century Britain, equality of opportunity and representation is an ongoing issue, and research such as this is invaluable for policy makers to understand the perceived and actual barriers that ethnic minorities still face today. Adding to our understanding of disparities in racial opportunity, not least from the Race Disparity Audit, my hope is that this provides further impetus to action from all those able to make a difference.

A particularly alarming finding from the report is that racial and ethnic discrimination has risen over the past year.

I have experienced first-hand the rise in racist content on social media, and the level of abuse experienced by the younger generation, makes dealing with this problem of paramount importance.

Opinium's research shows us the scale of challenge for policy makers.

Success requires equal opportunities for all. The fact that half of ethnic minorities feel that they do not have the same opportunities to become successful shows we have a lot of work left to do. I have been campaigning for many years now to tackle a lack of diversity in numerous institutions, and that so many ethnic minorities feel like they don't have the same opportunities is something I'm all too familiar with in my constituency. My independent review of the treatment and outcomes for BAME individuals in the Criminal Justice System found that BAME individuals still face bias across the board. I have called for increased representation of ethnic minorities, in addition to women, LGBT, and people with disabilities in the BBC.

Education is where we should start.

The feeling that the BAME community have of being underrepresented at our universities is not just mere perception. My freedom of information request revealed how deep the diversity problem at Oxbridge is, with many colleges failing to offer any places at all to Black students in 2015. Action here could be a catalyst for change in the rest of society.

This latest report from Opinium shows us how much more needs to be done in the workplace, education and society more generally to build a Britain that works fairly for us all. It's up to us to see that words and intent becomes action and change.



SETTING THE SCENE

Multicultural Britain in the 21st Century

This time last year the political turmoil of Brexit provided much of the context for our report on Multicultural Britain in the 21st Century. A year on and the situation is much the same. Economic uncertainties around Brexit and questions of culture and identity have come to dominate the national conversation.

Against this bleak backdrop and almost a year on from the government publication of the Race Disparity Audit, this year's report focusses on social mobility and success. In it we aim to understand how different ethnic groups perceive success and what it means to them. We also delve into how we perceive barriers to success and how class and race intersect to restrain or improve social mobility.

Whereas last year's report was punctuated by the social dislocation and insecurities that Brexit brought to the fore, this year's report shows that when it comes to how to we define success and what we hold as important, we have a great deal in common. Regardless of our background our priorities are much the same; a happy family life, financial stability and the means to provide for our families.

By no means do we ignore the social and political issues of our time and as the report shows issues of discrimination, alienation and misunderstanding still linger in the foreground of British society. Nonetheless, we hope to show that there remains the potential for bridge-building and with it a greater sense of togetherness.

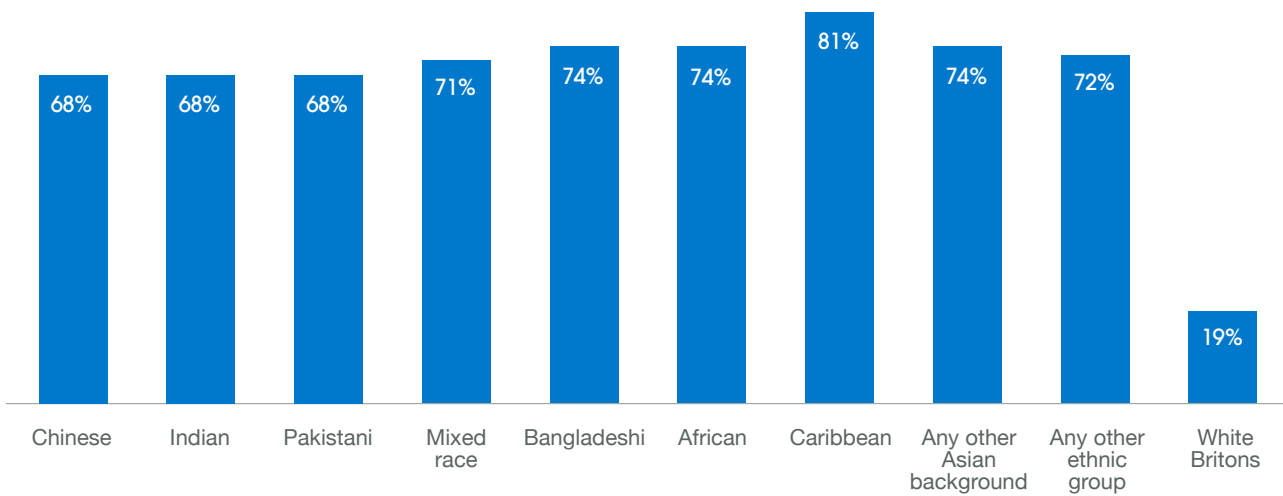
Methodology

We conducted a nationally representative online survey of 2,000 UK adults and conducted an online survey among 1,000 nationally representative ethnic minorities. We also conducted a two-day pop-up community, where community members were set a series of tasks to explore our questions in a more qualitative way.

DISCRIMINATION

Since starting this report series, we have found that racial and ethnic discrimination has been on the rise, and this year continues that trend. Seven in ten (71%) ethnic minorities now report having faced racial discrimination compared to 64% in October 2016 and 58% in January 2016. Black minorities in particular have faced the biggest increase, with three in four (74%) being victims of racial discrimination compared to 65% in October 2016. However, discrimination faced by white Britons is also on the rise, with 19% saying they have faced racial or ethnic discrimination compared to 10% in October 2016. The chart below shows a more detailed breakdown of racial and ethnic discrimination faced by various ethnic groups:

Proportion of ethnic groups who have been victims of racial discrimination





Despite being one of the more ethnically diverse regions of the UK, London has not been immune to this trend. 72% of ethnic minorities in London say they have been a victim of racial discrimination, a significant increase from 58% in October 2016. Female ethnic minorities have also reported a sizeable increase, with 76% saying they have faced racial discrimination this year, compared to 61% in the latter half of 2016.

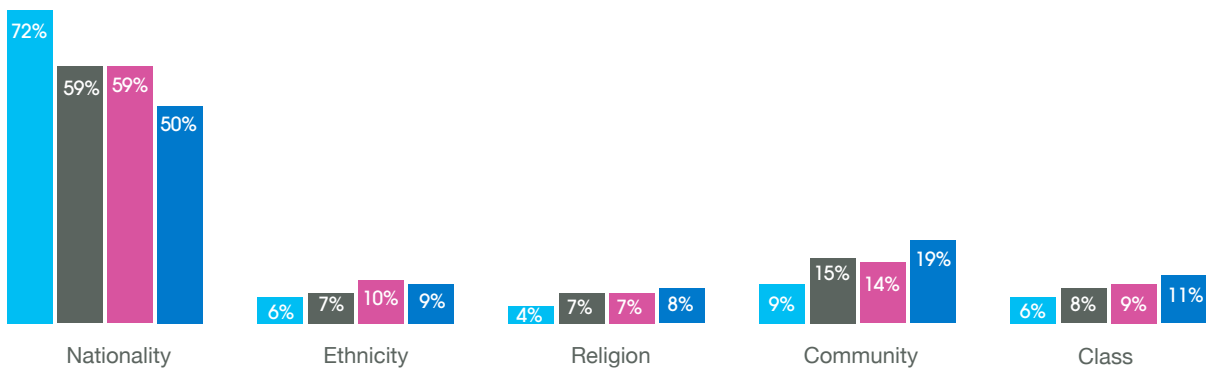
This increase in racial discrimination is mainly being driven by strangers. Three in four (75%) of those who are victims of racial discrimination or abuse have received this from strangers, compared to 62% in 2016.

Looking towards the types of racial discrimination faced, the proportion saying they have experienced someone making a racist comment in jest has risen to over half (55%) of ethnic minorities. There also continues to be an increase in racist content on social media. At the end of 2016, 37% saw racism on social media on a day-to-day basis, which has now risen to 51%, and rises to three in five (63%) of the younger generation (minorities aged 18 to 34). Social media companies have increasingly been under pressure to effectively moderate content on their platforms; this increase in racist content shows there is still a long way to go to find solutions to tackling this issue.

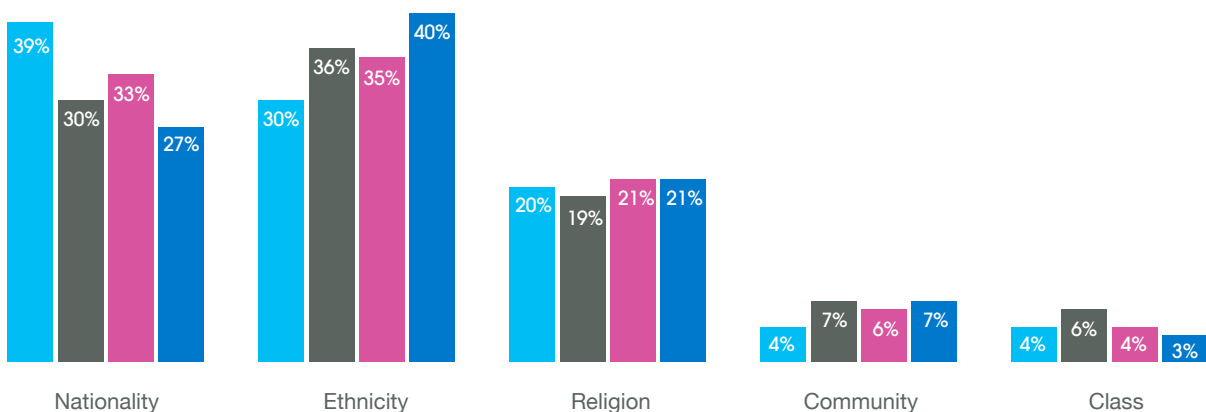
IDENTITY

After the Referendum we found that the way we identify has changed; nationality as a main component of the identity of white Britons had dropped, while for the first-time ethnic minorities were more likely to say ethnicity was the most important part of their identity. In 2019, the story remains much the same. Now only 50% of white Britons consider their nationality to be the main part of their identity compared to 72% in January 2016. Minorities continue to turn to their ethnicity as the main part of their identity, with two in five (40%) now saying this forms the main component of their identity, compared to 30% in January 2016.

Main part of identity for white Britons



Main part of identity for ethnic minorities



● Jan 16 ● Oct 16 ● Aug 18 ● Feb 19

DEFINING SUCCESS

From the type of job we want to do, to the type of home we want to live in, and how we want to bring up our children, all of us have our own criteria for success. For our community member Charanjit, success means:

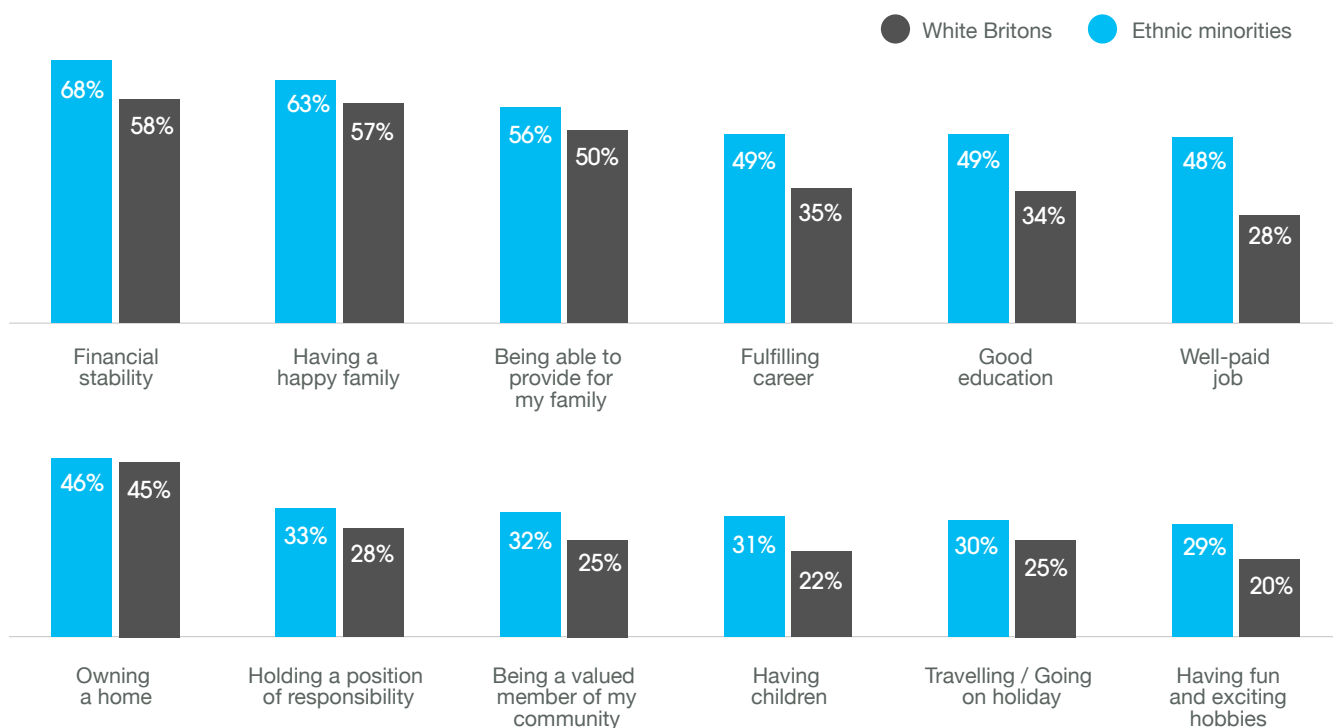
“having a job that you enjoy...afford to look after your wife, your family, your kids.”

While for Andrea success is more than a career and money:

“Having a good social life, a good circle of friends, and a family that support you is really important.”

Among ethnic minorities, there is greater importance placed on living a successful life (96%) than their white British counterparts (79%). However, the top three signs of success are the same for white Britons and ethnic minorities; having a happy family, financial stability and being able to provide for their family.

Factors considered to be important signs of success





Opportunities have a big factor to play in success. Half (47%) of minorities think there are equal opportunities for everyone to succeed in Britain, however a similar proportion (49%) do not think that they have the same tools at their disposal to become successful. The latter sentiment is strongest amongst those from an African background (57%), from a Caribbean background (61%), and females of African origins (63%).

This mixed picture on injustices and inequalities was apparent in the views of our community members. Generally, there was acknowledgement that progress has been made on making Britain a fairer society for all. For some, such as Onkar, Britain is fair to all:

“I think this country is fair to everyone... I feel this country is fair in terms of progression for ethnic minorities.”

However, for others like Jason, a lot of inequality still exists:

“Where I work you just have to look at the picture of the board and there’s not a single ethnic person on the board... Young black Caribbean men do have it harder in this country and are less likely to be in careers of influence... you have to work harder.”

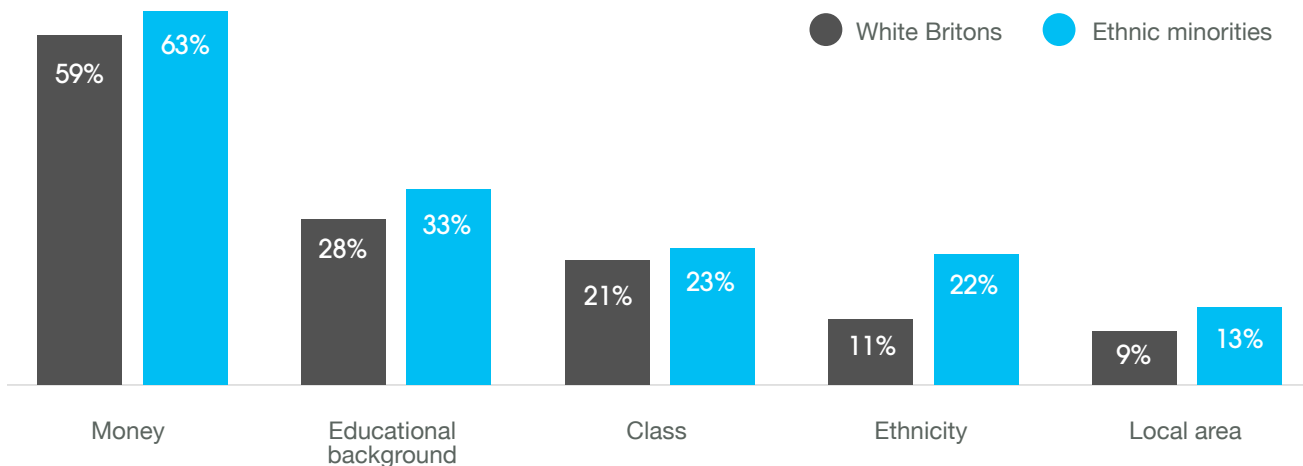
EDUCATION

For a third (34%) of Britons a good education and success go hand in hand. This is even more true for ethnic minorities with half (49%) identifying a clear link between a good education and success.

Yet, only half (48%) of minorities feel that higher education is easily accessible.

Reflecting on the barriers to applying to university, three in five Britons (59%) listed money as a key barrier alongside educational background (29%), class (22%) and ethnicity (11%). While the views of white Britons and ethnic minorities are aligned on the majority of these factors, the biggest difference we see is on the topic of ethnicity. Only one in ten (11%) white Britons consider ethnicity to be a barrier, compared to one in five (22%) ethnic minorities.

Which of the following do you consider to be barriers to applying to university?



Two thirds (67%) of Britons believe that more effort needs to be made to address the financial barriers. In an era of expensive tuition fees, the financial obstacles to higher education are becoming more and more evident. Money and debt were themes that were continually raised by community members when discussing factors which prevent people from progressing to higher education. Onkar states that:

“I think the main barrier is finance...studying for three years will leave students around £40k in debt so before they even start a job they have a large debt.”

More recently, we saw South London grime artist Stormzy pledge to fund two scholarships for black British students to go to Cambridge University stating...

“If you’re academically brilliant don’t think because you come from a certain community that studying at one of the highest education institutions in the world isn’t possible”

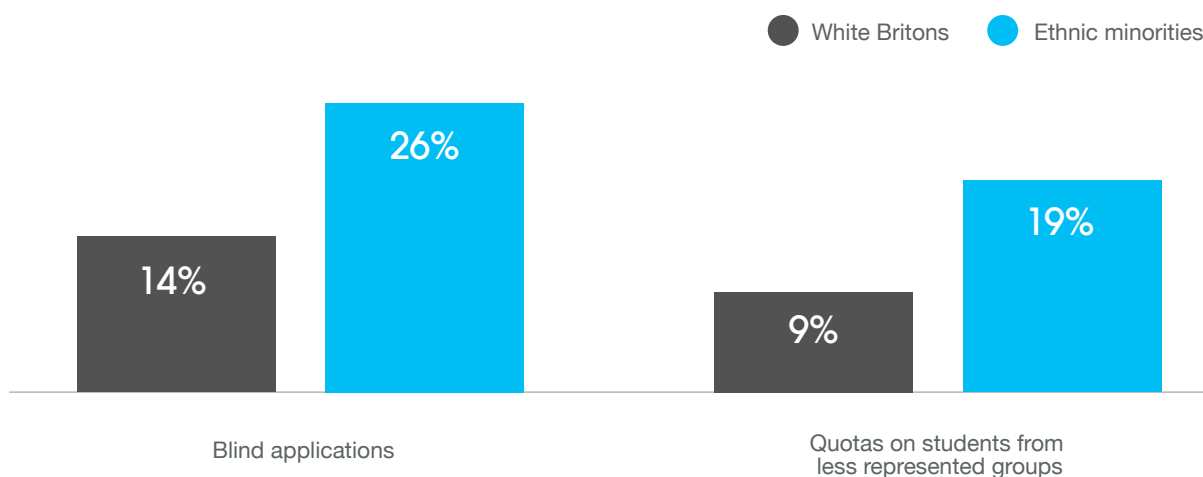


IMPROVING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The lack of representation in the highest echelons of universities continues to be a hot topic, with calls for many of the elite universities to increase the diversity in their student intake. Some have even pushed for the likes of Oxford and Cambridge to publish their access and admissions data every year when it was revealed that a Cambridge University college, St. Edmund's, failed to make a single offer to any of its black applicants between 2012 – 2016.

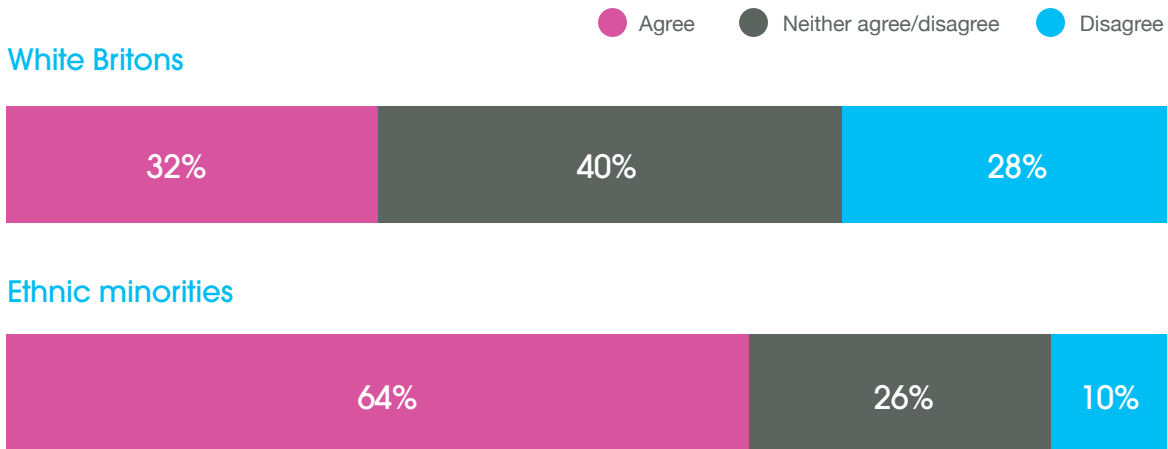
Occurrences such as this could perhaps explain why a quarter (26%) of ethnic minorities feel blind applications (e.g. no names on application forms) would improve access to university, compared to less than a sixth (14%) of white Britons. One in five (19%) ethnic minorities also think that pushing for quotas on students from groups whether there is a lack of representation would improve access to higher education.

Which of the following do you think would improve access to university for those who are currently unlikely to attend?



The overall sentiment amongst ethnic minorities is that more effort needs to be made to try and bridge the gap in the representation of ethnic minorities to the leading universities, with two in three (64%) ethnic minorities stating that more effort needs to be made to increase applications from ethnic minorities to universities compared to just a third of white Britons (32%) who think the same.

“More effort needs to be made to increase applications from ethnic minorities to universities (e.g. Russell Group)”



While the consensus is that financing university is one of the key barriers to applying, it is important to note that the barriers to higher education are not simply financial. Focussing on the earlier years of education and the steps leading up to applying to university, we see a desire for more guidance and support for students who would have not otherwise considered university as an option. Support is a key factor for ethnic minorities, with two in five (41%) feeling that more support systems in place for students, such as peer support or mentoring, would encourage those who are currently unlikely to attend university to apply.

Against the backdrop of campaigns such as #EducationNotExclusion, a movement started by a group of South London students that sought to highlight the route disadvantaged students can take between school exclusions and prison, the need for better systems of support, particularly for some of our most disadvantaged pupils is extremely evident. One of the campaign posters read:

“Every day, 35 students (a full classroom) are permanently excluded from school. Only 1 per cent of them will go on to get the five good GCSEs they need to succeed”

Statistics published by the Department of Education showed that not only were black Caribbean pupils permanently excluded at 3 times the rate of white British pupils, but that black and mixed ethnicity pupils had the highest rates of exclusion.



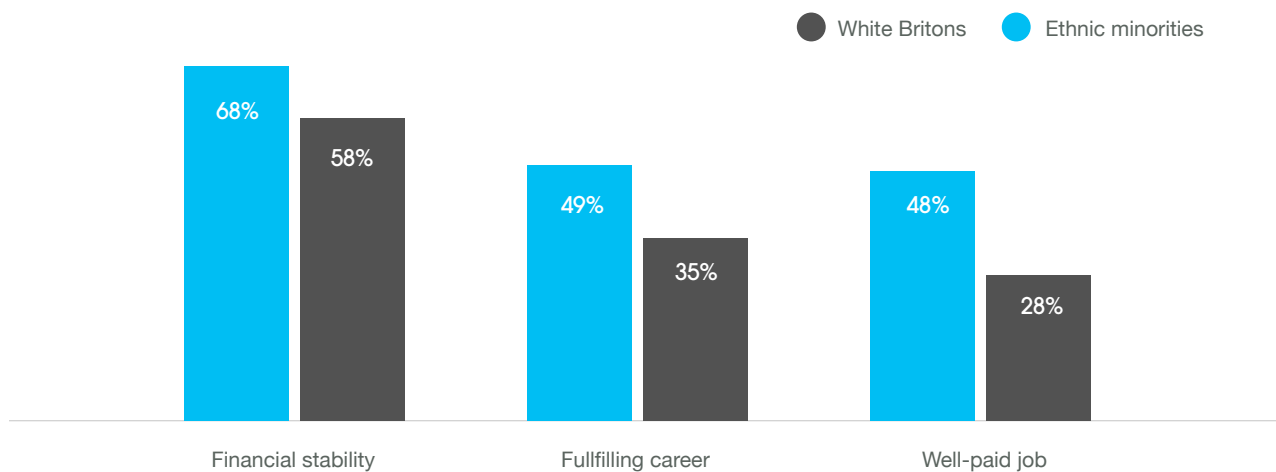
The campaign essentially begs the question of how attainable success is for certain sections of society, whilst also highlighting how the barriers to the pursuit of higher education intersect and affect the disadvantaged most.

As highlighted above, for many education is a key factor in their definition of success. Yet the majority (74%) of Britons feel there are barriers to progressing to the highest levels of education, with monetary factors being a prominent feature for both white Britons and ethnic minorities.

SUCCESS AT WORK

Unsurprisingly, for both white Britons and ethnic minority groups financial stability is considered the most important factor in terms of achieving success. That said, ethnic minority groups are more likely to say that having a fulfilling career and a well-paid job are important markers of success.

Factors considered important signs of success



Barriers to employment

Delving into the complexities of class and ethnicity and the way in which the two intersect, we asked the British public to rank four groups according to who they think faced the biggest barriers to getting a well-paid job.

Unsurprisingly, those from a wealthy white British background are seen as having the fewest barriers to getting a well-paid job. This is followed by those from a wealthy minority background.

- Three quarters (74%) of those from an ethnic minority background feel that people from poor ethnic minority backgrounds faced the biggest barriers to getting a well-paid-job
- Two in five (60%) of the general population agree

However, although race and ethnicity are key aspects in understanding the barriers people face, the British public regard class as the overarching structural factor standing in the way of a fairer job market.

Almost half (46%) of Britons think that class is more important than ethnicity in determining how successful a person will be in the future. Break this down by ethnicity and the picture remains much the same; 46% of white Britons and 44% of ethnic minorities see class as a more important factor than ethnicity. However, ethnic minorities are almost twice as likely to think that ethnicity is a more important factor than class in determining success.

Factors determining future success

● Class is a more important factor ● Don't know ● Ethnicity is a more important factor

White Britons



Ethnic minorities



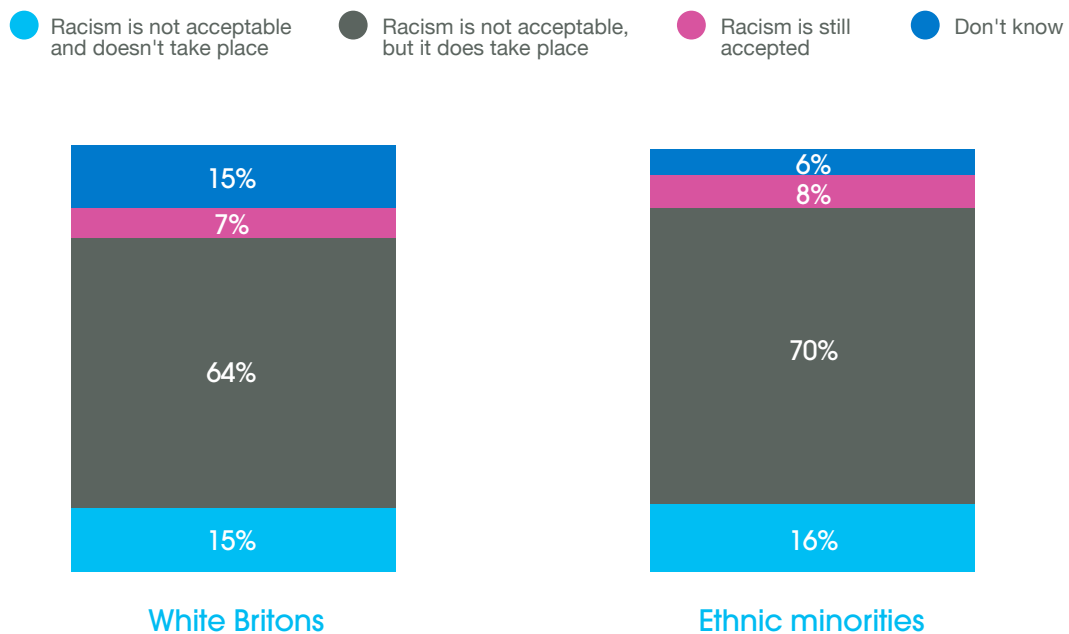
While overall ethnic minorities do consider class to be a more important factor in determining future success, those from Indian, Pakistani or Caribbean backgrounds perceive ethnicity to be a more important factor than class.

Experiences at work

Despite the progress that has been made in improving diversity in the job market, those from ethnic minority backgrounds still face discrimination at work.

Over two-thirds (70%) of ethnic minorities say racism still takes place in modern offices despite the majority considering it unacceptable. One in six (16%) minorities who have experienced racial discrimination say this was in the form of bullying in the workplace, and 9% say they have been denied a job or interview on the grounds of their race or ethnicity.

Racism in the workplace



Those aged 35-54 from ethnic minority backgrounds are the most pessimistic about racism in the workplace. One in ten (11%) say that racism and discrimination is still accepted in the modern workplace compared to 6% and 5% for 18-34s and those over 55 respectively.



Types of jobs

Three in five (60%) ethnic minorities think that there are professions that are harder to progress in if you are from an ethnic minority background.

The top five jobs considered hardest to progress in among ethnic minorities are:

1. Police Officer (25%)
2. Investment analyst (15%)
3. Journalist (13%)
4. Solicitor (13%)
5. Prison Officer (12%)

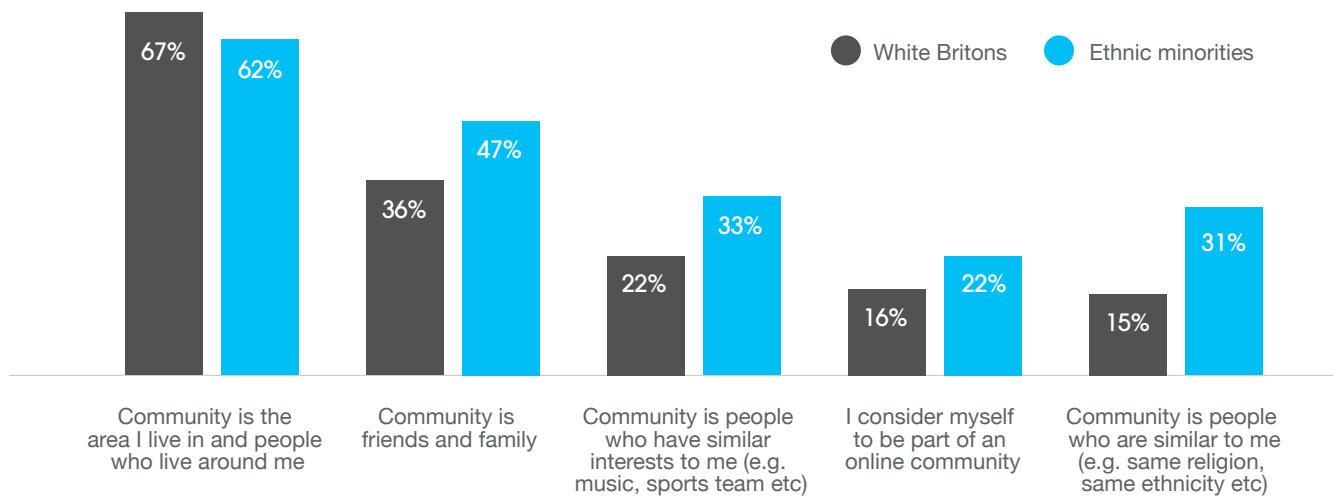
The most pertinent figure here concerns the police service with a quarter (25%) of those from an ethnic minority background saying that being a police officer is the hardest job to progress in if you are from an ethnic minority background. Of all the ethnic minority groups, those from a Pakistani or Chinese background are the most likely to think this (both 31%).

This is of particular note considering the historically fraught relationship between the police and ethnic minority groups. One of the many ways to repair this relationship is to encourage a more representative police force. However, a 2016 Home Affairs Committee report into this topic found the police force wanting; diversity in the police force remains a major problem. It's hard to see such a situation improving when so many see it as the most difficult profession to succeed in.

COMMUNITY

For a quarter (25%) of Britons, being a valued member of their community is an important sign of success. But what does community mean to different groups? Community being the area that we live in and the people around us is the most salient idea of what constitutes a community among both white Britons and ethnic minorities. However, generally, ethnic minorities are more likely than white Britons to consider other concepts of community.

The meaning of community

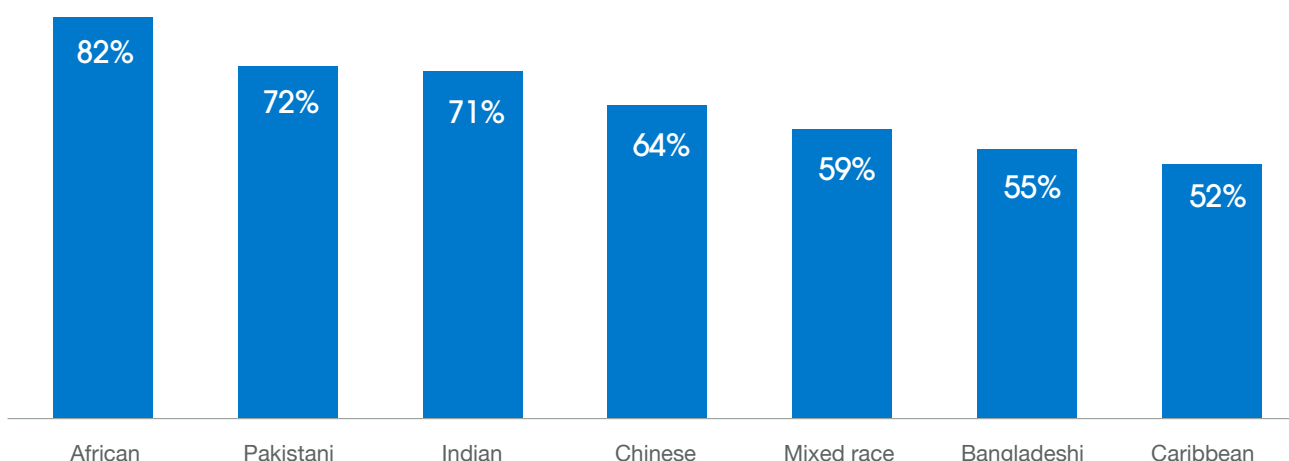


Our community members also had varying notions of what community means to them. For Charanjit, community was **‘people of the same ethnic origin who support you in your time of need your family... Sikh people are part of my community where we meet at our local Gurdwara.’**

For others, such as Grant, community was multi-faceted: **‘Generally it’s any group of people with something in common, so it could be location e.g. where you live or where you work, or a religion, or your age or ethnicity or gender or sexuality, or it can just be a common interest that create communities, with many being virtual (online) rather than real-world these days.’**

In terms of community belonging, ethnic minorities are more likely to say that it is important to them to feel like they belong to a community (88%) compared to white Britons (72%). Not only are they more likely to consider community to be of importance, two thirds of ethnic minorities (66%) feel that they are strongly part of a community, compared to half (50%) of white Britons. However, this strong feeling varies among different ethnic groupings, with those from an African background being the most likely to say they feel strongly part of a community (82%).

Proportion who strongly feel part of a community by ethnicity



Ideal place to live

We asked people what would put them off living in an area. Safety and the area being noisy are the topmost concerns of white Britons and ethnic minorities. However, ethnic minorities are more likely to say that lack of people like them would put them off living in an area and less likely than white Britons to say that accommodation being hi-rise is an issue. Perhaps this is why ethnic minorities are more likely to say that they live in an area that is a mix of ethnicities (90% vs 65% of white Britons) and that their local area is diverse (80% vs 54%)



THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES TO BRITISH SOCIETY

Over half of the British public (55%) think that ethnic minorities have made a positive contribution to British society, with 28% seeing the contribution as neutral.

Contribution of ethnic minorities to British economy and culture



When asked to explain why they thought contributions of ethnic minorities have been good for the British economy and culture, people cited a wide range of factors from music and food to healthcare and technology.

“Immigrants to this country re-built the economy after WW2. The UK would not have flourished without this assistance”

“I work in a care home and around half the people who work there are from other countries – I don’t know how we would run without them”

“Diversity gives us links to the wider world. Can’t imagine Leicester without its ethnic mix – just wouldn’t be home!”

The positive case for immigration is rarely made in our national conversation. Some of those in public office and positions of influence who direct the debate on the issue often argue that they are simply responding to the opinions and attitudes of the public. However, our research demonstrates that the British public has a favourable view of the contribution of ethnic minorities and hence, on balance, a more positive view on historic immigration than policymakers might imagine.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Our findings indicate that racial discrimination is on the rise, particularly against Black minorities. This year on year increase since we started tracking discrimination rates is concerning, as is the increase in racist content seen on social media, indicating that there needs to be conversations about tackling this issue at various levels.

This report aimed to understand what success means to us all, and how we perceive the 'good life'.

We find that our perceptions of a successful life are much the same: we most want a happy family, with financial stability and the means to provide for our families.

Success requires opportunities.

However, many ethnic minorities feel that they do not have the same tools at their disposal to become successful, and that higher education is not easily accessible for them. Lack of representation has a part to play in this, with 64% of ethnic minorities feeling that more effort needs to be made to increase ethnic minority applications to universities. Blind applications or quotas may be a way to bridge this representation gap.

In the workplace, there is still progress to be made; 60% of ethnic minorities feel that there are professions that are harder to progress in if you are from an ethnic minority background. The police force has a particular challenge on their hands to improve representation; one in four minorities feel that being a police officer is the hardest job to progress in as an ethnic minority.

For the most part, white Britons and minorities share a similar understanding of community. As we may expect, the area in which they live and the people that live around them are key to the understanding of community for both parties. Delving deeper into how minorities define community, we see importance of other identifiers such as friends, family, religion and ethnicity in their notion of community, with almost half (47%) describing community as their friends and family.

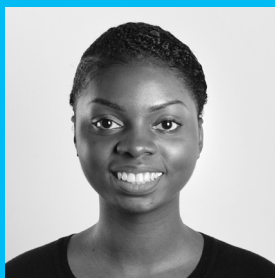
Regardless of ethnicity, people living in the UK have a broadly similar definition of success. There is still a great deal of work to be done to address issues of race, class and social mobility in the UK. However, this report has shown that despite the polarising elements in society at present, there remains common ground and agreement that ethnic minorities are making a positive contribution to the economy and British culture.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Priya Minhas // Senior Research Executive

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



Susan Bello // Research Executive

Susan has worked and supported on a range of projects covering topics such as savings habits amongst Britons and more recently has worked alongside think tanks to understand the youth voice in politics. For a variety of clients in the private and third sector Susan, has been able to delve into issues concerning everything from parental first aid to stress management in the workplace.



Joseph Curran // Research Executive

Joe works with both quantitative and qualitative research methods across a number of practice areas. Most recently he has helped clients in the social policy space understand how public attitudes are changing and the implications this will have for businesses and government.

About Opinium

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

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