

## **Diversifying the Uniform? The participation of Minority Ethnic Personnel in the British Armed Services**

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### ***Abstract***

This paper considers the pressures on the British armed services to increase the participation of minority ethnic groups and assesses recent government policy on this issue. Limited progress has been made towards the realisation of current goals, which are framed largely in terms of the concept of 'equal opportunities'. The authors argue that while the concept of *diversity* appears to provide a more sociologically well founded basis for future government strategy on this aspect of service personnel policy, there remain significant obstacles to effective implementation of practical measures. These concern in particular the way in which the armed services relate to wider questions of British identity. Successfully increasing the participation of minority ethnic communities in the British armed services, we contend, entails developing a new framework for British identity and citizenship that cannot be accomplished by the armed services alone. Rather it is a responsibility of both government and wider society as a whole.

136 words

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### ***1. Introduction***

Since the end of the Cold War, human resource or 'people' issues have moved up the agenda of the British armed services. Of course, a focus on people has always been important, as armed forces can only be as effective as the personnel who work for them; yet, until recently, strategic and technological issues have tended to occupy centre stage.<sup>1</sup> A key people issue in the UK is the increasing expectation - not least by government - that the armed services should 'reflect' society.

One meaning of this phrase is that the social profile of the Services should correspond more closely with that of the wider population in terms of gender, sexual orientation, social class and ethnicity.

This paper considers the pressures on the British armed services to increase the participation of minority ethnic groups and reviews recent government policy in this area. To date, its response has been framed largely in terms of the logic of 'equal opportunities' with, we note, only limited progress being made towards the realisation of current goals. We argue that this lack of progress may not be accidental and suggest that there may be good reasons for believing that current policy targets may be unreachable. Against this background, we note that the concept of *diversity* is increasingly being invoked in policy discourses addressed to the representation of minority ethnic groups in the armed services.<sup>2</sup> As will become clear, we argue that, in principle, this concept could provide a more sociologically well founded basis for future government thinking and practice. However, we suggest that a number of major issues would need to be addressed if a strategy based on this concept were to be implemented effectively. Some of these issues relate to the organisation and history of the British armed services. Others, however, have to do with the nature of British identity more generally. We argue that the British armed services - a relatively small, all-volunteer force - cannot realistically be expected successfully to address the problem of increasing the participation of minority ethnic communities within their ranks without the prior development of a robust framework of ideas about how these broader identity issues are to be

tackled.<sup>3</sup> Such a framework is first and foremost a responsibility of government and the wider society as a whole.

This paper sets out the basis on which such a framework might be constructed. We should make it clear that the primary purpose of this paper is to explore some key conceptual issues concerning representation, equity, nationality and citizenship as they bear on the British context. Whilst we are interested in the implications that our conceptual explorations have for policy, the aim of this paper is not to design detailed practical policy measures for the British armed forces. Indeed, a key aspect of our discussion is our claim that both the armed services and British society more widely have some fundamental decisions to make about the shape of the British national project in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The specificities of the British case are central to our discussion. In particular, the essentially 'ethnicised' nature of traditional British (and English) conceptions of nationality and citizenship contrast markedly with societies like the United States with their more contractual constitutions and civic nationalisms. Similarly, the relatively small, if growing, size of the British minority ethnic population and its near invisibility in the ranks of the armed services and other elite sectors of the British social life, make easy comparisons with societies like the United States problematic. The relative success of the US armed forces in securing greater racial equity arose out of an assault on segregation and discrimination in an army in which large numbers of African-Americans already served.<sup>4</sup> In Britain, the problem is simultaneously to secure equity of representation and of treatment.

## ***2. Minority ethnic communities and the armed services: a story of under-representation.***

It is important at the outset to be clear about what is meant when British policy makers refer to 'minority ethnic groups'. In Britain, ethnic difference is almost exclusively associated with an implicit division of the population into an ethnic 'majority' and a number of ethnic 'minorities'. This perspective is a product of the pattern of migration to Britain since the Second World War, resulting in the growth of a population whose recent origins lie in the former British colonies in the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean, Africa, and East Asia. These populations are commonly

referred to in popular culture and in public policy as 'ethnic minorities'. Two points about this terminology are significant. The first is that in order to qualify for designation as an ethnic minority, a category of people must exhibit a degree of 'difference' that is regarded as significant. Not every group having a distinctive culture and constituting a minority in the British population is normally included. For example, the large communities of people of Cypriot, Italian and Polish origin (to name but a few) to be found in many British cities are rarely so labelled. Similarly, to refer to an earlier example, people of Irish descent, a significant proportion of the British population, are rarely defined in this way.<sup>5</sup> In practice, it is a combination of visibility by skin colour and cultural values that marks off 'ethnic minorities' from the 'majority' population in Britain. This latter point has been highlighted both by domestic strife in British cities involving minority ethnic communities and, more recently by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, discussions of which have become entwined with existing debates on immigration and asylum seekers. After September 11, in particular, it is now possible to debate the nature of 'Britishness' and how to integrate minority cultural communities - not least those with Islamic roots - into the mainstream of British society in ways that were difficult if not impossible before.<sup>6</sup>

The second point about the term 'ethnic minorities' is that, despite the implicit emphasis on difference, such groups are typically seen to have more in common with one another than with the 'majority'. *Diversity among* the groups so designated is thus downplayed while their purported *differences from* the rest of the population are exaggerated. This is not necessarily a conscious process; nor is it driven simply by those committed to explicitly racist, or otherwise exclusionary, political projects – such as far right political parties. Even initiatives driven by a commitment to policies designed to address ethnic disadvantage and exclusion find it difficult to escape these assumptions. Thus, for example, the question in the 1991 Census of Population designed to measure the ethnic diversity of the British population, and map differences of experience and opportunity, effectively reinforced the distinction between an undifferentiated 'white' population and a limited number of 'ethnic minorities'.<sup>7</sup>

The pattern of under-representation of minority ethnic groups (thus understood) in the British armed services is well established. In 1998, as part of its Strategic Defence Review (*SDR*), the British government made the goal of increasing the participation of minority ethnic groups in the armed services an explicit feature of its policy.<sup>8</sup> This policy has been driven by two sets of considerations. These are what might be termed the ‘citizenship case’, on the one hand and, on the other, an argument based on instrumental, efficiency-based considerations: the ‘business case’.<sup>9</sup> The former rests on considerations of equity: that the participation of all members of society in its core public institutions is a moral and political priority because it symbolises what a decent, tolerant and inclusive society should be. By contrast, the business case relies on more hardnosed, material calculations. It claims that widening the recruitment pool to include more members of the minority ethnic communities would both increase the numbers of potential recruits and broaden the values and insights within the military, in turn adding to its intellectual capital.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, whether recruiting from the majority pool or from minority communities, there is also an assumption that the armed services will provide recruits with an opportunity for bettering themselves later on in life when their military careers have ended.<sup>11</sup> The most recent data show a persistent gap between the social profile of the armed services and that of wider society, although there have been some recent modest increases in the participation of minority ethnic groups, not least in the British Army. In October 2001 (the date at which the most recent systematic data are available), when the overall percentage of minority ethnic groups in the wider population was said to be approximately 6 per cent<sup>12</sup>, the percentage of Regular personnel in the UK armed services drawn from minority ethnic groups was 1.7 per cent overall (1.2 per cent for Officers and 1.8 per cent for Other Ranks). This compares with the 1.00 per cent overall (1 per cent officers and 1 per cent Other Ranks) for April 1998.<sup>13</sup> Within these already low levels of participation in the armed services, South Asian minority ethnic groups (a significant proportion of the UK minority ethnic population) are particularly under-represented among uniformed personnel.

There are some interesting variations by individual service: the Royal Navy has increased minority ethnic representation from 0.7 per cent to 1 per cent overall (0.9 per cent to 1.1 per cent for

Officers and 0.7 per cent to 1.1 per cent Other Ranks). Meanwhile, the Royal Air Force has remained static or worse with figures of 1.2 per cent overall for 1998 (1.2 per cent for Officers and Other Ranks) and 1.1 per cent overall for October 2001 (1.3 per cent Officers and 1.0 per cent Other Ranks). The Army has made more significant gains with figures of 1 per cent overall for 1998 (0.9 per cent Officers and 1.1 per cent Other Ranks) and 2.4 per cent overall for October 2001 (1.2 per cent Officers and 2.5 per cent Other Ranks).<sup>14</sup>

**Table 1 about here**

The comparative data for the participation of women in the armed services are instructive. In percentage terms, their relative contribution has risen significantly (from 5.7 per cent in April 1990, to about 8 per cent, with the latest figures, October 2001, showing 9.5 per cent of officers and 8.00 per cent Other Ranks overall). British service women provide a significant contribution to the overall participation of female military personnel in NATO countries, supplying 15.4 per cent of the total number of NATO women, with the US providing 69.4 per cent.<sup>15</sup> In terms of female participation in national armed forces, the UK ranks in relative percentage terms after the United States (14 per cent) and Canada (11 per cent).<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted that the number of women employed in the British armed services has remained stable for the past five years, (with a slight increase in numbers for the fifteen months up to October 2001). The 'figures do not show sustained growth' in comparison with, for example, the police service, 'where the percentage of women is now about 35 per cent, having remained at 20-25 per cent for a number of years.'<sup>17</sup> Of course, women comprise some fifty one per cent of the population and their numbers would be expected to be higher than minority ethnic personnel especially with the recent elimination of many (but not all) of the formal exclusions to which they have been traditionally subject. Currently, female personnel are able to serve in 70 per cent of posts in the Army; 73 per cent of posts in the Naval Service; and 96 per cent of posts in the RAF.<sup>18</sup>

While government attempts to increase the participation of both women and minority ethnic groups in the armed services appear similar there are some significant differences in their underlying policy assumptions. Thus with regard to the employment of women,

The three Services are wholly committed to maximising opportunity for women in the Armed Forces, except where this would damage combat effectiveness...<sup>19</sup>

Women's roles, then, are discussed in terms of the maximisation of *opportunity*. There is no suggestion that *proportional* representation is a goal. By contrast, minority ethnic groups are discussed in the following terms:

We are determined that the Armed Forces should better reflect the ethnic composition of the British population. Currently some 6% of the general population are from ethnic minority backgrounds, but they make up just 1% of the Services. This must not continue. We have set a goal of attracting 2% of new recruits this year from ethnic minority communities for each Service. We want that goal to increase by 1% each year so that, eventually, the composition of our Armed Forces reflects that of the population as a whole.<sup>20</sup>

Here the emphasis is clearly on *proportionality* of representation and the implication is clear: its absence is itself evidence of continuing disadvantage or unfairness. How do we account for this divergence in policy assumptions? To understand the issues involved we must examine the discourse of equal opportunities as it has developed in the UK.

### ***3. Thinking through equal opportunities in the UK: two dilemmas***

In debates about equal opportunities in Britain, two recurrent dilemmas are especially relevant to the contemporary armed services.<sup>21</sup> The first is the question of whether the objective of policy should be to secure equality of *opportunity* or equality of *outcome*. The dominant emphasis in



Britain has been on equality of opportunity with a focus on procedure characteristic of what has become known as the 'liberal' model of equal opportunities.<sup>22</sup> In this view, equality can be achieved if the skills and qualities of individuals (assumed to be randomly distributed in the population) can be matched more precisely to the functional requirements of occupational roles. Accordingly, emphasis is placed on the bureaucratic regulation of recruitment and selection systems designed to remove unfair, and inefficient, barriers to the achievement of that aim.<sup>23</sup> The individualist emphasis of the liberal model also means that equality of opportunity is characteristically structured in terms of the opportunity for people, whether men or women and of whatever ethnicity, to be treated *as if they were the same*. No explicit account is taken of the possibility that there may be systematic differences between people, which have their origins in group characteristics.

In practice, however, liberal proceduralist policies have frequently been judged in terms of standards that are, in principle, the province of an outcomes-centred approach – what has been termed the 'radical model'.<sup>24</sup> In its extreme form, such a perspective would envisage positive discrimination in favour of under-represented groups, a practice that remains unlawful in Britain. However, a good deal of orthodox equal opportunities discourse involves making comparisons between groups in terms of the notion of proportionality of representation. Hence the stress on monitoring, measurement and intervention in terms of positive action even if, as research evidence suggests, these have by no means been widespread even among organisations apparently committed to equal opportunities.<sup>25</sup> We are faced then with a paradox: the liberal model's emphasis on opportunity is frequently combined with a concern with outcomes while, in practice, the measures necessary to deliver greater equity in outcomes are not systematically pursued.

The second dilemma concerns the respective merits of generic or targeted policies. There is widespread recognition that the precise disadvantages experienced by different, marginalized and excluded groups vary in character and degree. Nevertheless, with limited exceptions, equal opportunities policies in both the private and public sectors in Britain have tended to take a generic

form. Where differences in the needs of particular groups have been recognised this has tended to be reflected in targeted positive action provisions.<sup>26</sup> This contrast is mirrored at government policy level. Despite significant differences in the legislative provisions regarding sex, race and, more recently, disability discrimination, official Department of Employment (now Department for Work and Pensions) advice on the development of equal opportunities policies has generally focused on generic recommendations.<sup>27</sup> While there are often practical reasons for the adoption of generic policies, the choice is often dictated by the more or less explicit embracing by policy makers of the liberal conception of equal opportunities. By contrast, those championing the claims of women, minority ethnic groups and, more recently, those with disabilities (who also wish to challenge what they perceive as illegitimate exclusionary practices by the armed services) are more likely to stress the distinctive needs and characteristics of these groups. Such demands are counterposed to the ultimately liberal, individualist focus of generic policies and have helped to ensure the survival of a group-centred equality agenda. This, in turn, has led to demands for more effective monitoring and measurement, and has bolstered arguments for targeting and other forms of positive action. Critically, these features highlight the weaknesses of approaches to equal opportunities that concentrate on technical or administrative solutions and they signal the ultimately *political* character of equal opportunities as an issue for excluded and marginalized groups.

Despite the dominance of generic approaches to policy, however, it is by no means the case that, in practice, such policies have pursued the needs of all groups with equal vigour. Jewson *et al.*, for example, identify a number of cases where equal opportunities for women have been, in practice, higher up the agenda than the needs of minority ethnic groups.<sup>28</sup> In other cases, differences of emphasis are not difficult to discern – most notably in what is frequently not said – within the framework of ostensibly generic policies. For example, the question of gender equality in occupations traditionally dominated by women is rarely, if ever, constructed in terms of the problem of achieving a proportional representation of *men*. Instead, the focus is more usually on the disproportionate numbers of men in senior positions, relative to their presence in the profession as a whole.<sup>29</sup> Implicit in this approach is a range of largely unspoken, culturally bounded,

assumptions about occupational choice. As we shall see, presently, the contrast with the way equity for minority ethnic groups is characteristically conceived is plain and this raises some difficult questions about how we should conceptualise occupational choice and constraint

#### ***4. Increasing the participation of minority ethnic groups in the armed services: an achievable goal?***

In the context of the dominance of generic approaches, it is noteworthy that, as we indicated earlier, the British armed services have embraced explicitly different policy agendas in respect of gender and race equality. While the equation of representation with proportionality is so commonplace in the equal opportunities literature as to amount to orthodoxy, the explicit contrast drawn in MOD policy between the treatment of ethnic and gender equality represents a rare exception in a British context. This contrast implicitly invokes two different senses of 'representativeness': the *statistical* (i.e. proportional representation) and the *delegative*, where members of groups are represented in the ranks of any profession by some of their members but this does *not* require proportional representation.<sup>30</sup> Such an approach is vulnerable to charges of 'tokenism,' as was recognised in the development of schemes for the integration of women in the ships of the Royal Navy, and by those who perceive it as a major issue should the exclusion of women from combat arms in ground forces be lifted.<sup>31</sup>

It is important to ask, given this contrast, whether the goal of statistical representation of minority ethnic groups is achievable even if resources continue to be allocated to the achievement of targets to close the gap between the armed services and society on this issue.<sup>32</sup> In our view, there is a real danger that the commitment to 'representativeness' (as expressed in *SDR*) is a promise that cannot be delivered.

A key difficulty with which the armed services have to contend is that the gross category 'ethnic minority' takes no account of the different socio-demographic profiles, levels of social mobility, educational attainment and cultural traditions of the very diverse groups that make up Britain's

minority ethnic population. It is quite conceivable that the overall target of increasing minority ethnic participation to a level commensurate with the proportion of the population classified as 'ethnic minority' could be reached without proportionality being achieved for some of the communities involved. Were this to be the case, the credibility of the armed services' commitment to equal opportunities might be challenged, particularly if the consequent over-representation of some groups was reflected in differential casualty rates.

Of critical importance is the probability that members of different groups may have differential propensities to select particular occupations or to aspire to particular careers. Given that we know that the 'white' population has not had a uniform propensity to select the armed forces as a career, we should not be surprised if similar differentials were to be found among other groups; although it must be said that what we know about the attitudes and aspirations of different minority ethnic communities concerning the armed services as a career continues to rest more on military recruiters' practical judgements and anecdote rather than systematic research.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, in order to know that completely proportional representation was unattainable - perhaps even undesired - by the groups concerned, the armed services would have to be confident that potential recruits were exercising genuinely unconstrained choices. This would mean ensuring that they had a demonstrably effective programme for promoting opportunities and eliminating discriminatory decision-making and other practices.

Nevertheless, until recently, it has been commonplace to assume that the labour market experience of members of minority ethnic groups has been universally one of disadvantage and exclusion. Without in any way minimising the weight of evidence that points in this direction it is important to note the complexity in the ways in which the rapid economic change of the 1980s and early 1990s has affected existing patterns of advantage and disadvantage in the labour market. An increasing number of studies in the early 1990s had already begun to suggest that members of some groups were experiencing significant upward occupational mobility.<sup>34</sup> The growth of a middle class of professional and managerial workers in some minority ethnic communities, and the

entry of these groups into the service sector, has led some to suggest that there is a developing convergence in the class structures of minority ethnic groups towards that of the majority white population.<sup>35</sup> These trends have been confirmed by the most recent analyses of data for the late 1990s, which suggest that, in terms of economic activity, unemployment and job levels, even some of the previously most disadvantaged groups, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, have continued to close the gap with whites.<sup>36</sup>

We should note that the patterns are complex, particularly in relation to differences between men and women, and we should avoid jumping to too many conclusions about future patterns of minority ethnic disadvantage. There remain significant differences between members of different ethnic groups, with those of Caribbean descent in particular apparently still lagging behind. Moreover, there are marked regional variations with significant local pockets of labour market disadvantage and exclusion affecting even those groups apparently experiencing upward mobility. We should also remember that upward mobility is quite compatible with occupational segregation, and with continuing discrimination. Moreover, there may be important differences of level *within* broad occupational categories, such as those between senior and middle management.

What this evidence does point to, however, is a need to place any discussion of the attractiveness to potential minority ethnic recruits of a career in the armed services in the context of a recognition that the *range* of other opportunities open to them is also changing. The evidence about educational attainment further reinforces this point. It is clear that members of minority ethnic groups are more likely to remain in full-time education after the age of 16 than are their white counterparts—a finding which holds both for young men and young women.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the evidence suggests that this is a pattern of relatively longstanding, dating back at least to the beginning of the 1980s.<sup>38</sup> In addition, it appears that, in general, minority ethnic groups are over-represented in higher education relative to their presence in the population as a whole, although this gross observation conceals some important variations.<sup>39</sup>

There are a number of potential explanations for this pattern of post-16 educational participation. However, Modood has argued that it is important not to under-estimate the strength of what he calls 'ethnic minorities' drive for qualifications'.<sup>40</sup> He attributes this to a strong motivation for economic betterment in which education is seen to play a key part. In addition, he suggests that qualifications are seen as a means to circumvent persistent labour market discrimination. The results of the fourth Policy Studies Institute (PSI) survey of ethnic minorities<sup>41</sup> concerning qualification levels add further to this picture of progress.<sup>42</sup> Although the patterns are complex they appear to confirm Modood's observations about the progress made by minority ethnic groups relative to whites.<sup>43</sup> Minority ethnic young women, in particular, have made great strides in educational attainment over a relatively short time span.

Any analysis of the potential attractiveness of a military career must be placed in this broader context. Indeed, some recent survey evidence about the attitudes of minorities of Pakistani Muslim descent in Britain lends weight to this line of argument. When questioned about the attractiveness of a military career, respondents in the survey cited concerns about racism as the major issue accounting for their lack of interest. Significantly, however, the authors also found evidence of more generalised concerns about the nature of a military career as well as tendency to prioritise further and higher education over enlistment in what was often seen as low status occupation.<sup>44</sup> All the above data lend weight to the possibility that, even with effective equal opportunities policies and practices in place, differential career choices by members of different minority ethnic groups might well make the aims expressed in the *SDR* unattainable. Where would that leave the 'citizenship' and 'business' cases for equal opportunities, and what would be the implications for the expressed policy goal of the armed forces representing wider society?

If proportional representation proved to be unattainable (or unacceptable) perhaps *delegative* representation would offer a more promising way forward. This would entail the armed forces becoming more representative of society in so far as they recruited personnel from a wider range of groups in society without statistical proportionality being achieved. Although, as we noted

earlier, this strategy would be open to the charge of ‘tokenism,’ it does resonate with some of aspects of the discourse of *diversity*, which is increasingly replacing or augmenting traditional ‘equal opportunities’ discourse in many civilian equal opportunities circles in the UK.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, as we noted at the outset, it is also a term increasingly invoked in policy discussions concerning the representativeness of the armed services, even if it is not always clear that those deploying it have fully grasped its nuances.

Is it possible that embracing the concept of diversity could provide a way out of the policy dilemmas we have identified? Might it provide a way of legitimising the pursuit of delegative representation, and hence of recognising and exploiting ethnic and other differences in occupational aspirations rather than dismissing them as simply an artefact of ignorance or exclusion?

##### ***5. The armed services and representing society: a strategy based on diversity***

According to its proponents, the concept of diversity means that people are valued precisely because of their differences.<sup>46</sup> It assumes that different people will bring a variety of perspectives to an organization and that, through the contribution of these diverse viewpoints, the most innovative and effective solutions will be generated. Since it is also committed to using fully the talents of individuals, allowing them to rise to the limit of their abilities, the diversity model is said simultaneously to address individual needs while enhancing the capacity of organisations to mobilise human resources and respond to unpredictable environments.

These claims resonate directly with both the citizenship and business cases for improving the equal opportunities performance of the armed services. On the one hand, tapping the pool of labour represented by minority ethnic communities is justified on the ground that the armed services would benefit from the diversity of skills and backgrounds that a broader based entry would produce. With the need for more intelligent and flexible service personnel likely to increase rather than decrease due to developments such as new technologies and more complex, politically

sensitive, missions it is held that such diversity is likely to prove an advantage in future years.<sup>47</sup>

At the same time valuing diversity will provide the opportunities to realise the *SDR's* commitment to developing a personnel strategy that could:

enable individuals to realise their full potential during their service, provide equality of opportunity irrespective of race, gender or religion, and assist them to prepare for subsequent careers...<sup>48</sup>

For the British armed services, the utility of the concept of diversity, then, would appear to lie in its potential to transcend the difficulties associated with the idea of proportionality and to legitimise a delegative sense of representativeness. Yet it is by no means clear that diversity is a straightforward concept for military organisations in general, and the UK armed forces in particular, to embrace. Discipline, authority and conformity are central to the social integration of military units and organisations. They are key aspects of the notions of comradeship and esprit de corps that are core components of military self-image and organisation. These characteristics of military organisations tend, in principle, to give rise to problems when confronted with *difference* – a fact that may help to explain some of the difficulties they have encountered with the integration of female, gay and related ‘others’.<sup>49</sup>

Traditionally, the UK armed services have been able to incorporate *certain kinds* of ethnic and national differences into a broader, British and imperial identity. An example is the role played by the sub-state national communities of Wales, Ireland and, especially, Scotland in the development of the military and its role in the construction, policing and dismantling of empire.<sup>50</sup> It is difficult to exaggerate the impact of empire on the culture of the armed services, especially the Army and Royal Navy. In the case of the British Army, it is symbolised by the continued recruitment of Gurkhas into the Army. This originated in a settlement between Nepal and Britain, and the use of British officered Gurkha regiments for policing the Empire (although the importance of Gurkha forces continues as much for reasons of recruitment shortages in Britain as from the requirements



of administering the remaining remnants of empire).<sup>51</sup> The possibility of recruiting personnel to the armed forces from outside the United Kingdom (another important example is Eire) reflects the evolution of the UK's laws relating to citizenship and nationality since the dismantling of the British Empire after the Second World War and the subsequent formation of the Commonwealth.<sup>52</sup> In contrast with the position of the longer established national communities at the core of British history, and that of the Gurkhas, the situation has been rather different for many of Britain's contemporary minority ethnic populations. This is due not least to their position as *visible* minorities, marking them out as *different* from their white peers – whether for reasons of biology, culture or history – in the context of the distinctive polarities of British conceptions of ethnicity discussed above.

This perspective on ethnic difference poses particular problems for the relationship between citizenship and nationality in a British context, and in turn affects the ways in which the armed services can operate. This is because of the way in which both 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' have been represented as uniquely long-standing and primordial attachments.<sup>53</sup> The significance of this appeal to historical continuity is greatly heightened when we consider the fact that all armed services tend to place a high value on tradition and history. In the case of the British armed services, this emphasis on history has a particular significance since much of the military history of the Britain over the last two centuries or so is the history of colonial involvement. Many of the campaigns fought by the British armed services were either against colonised peoples or to protect imperial territory from other colonial powers. Thus the recent forebears of many of Britain's citizens who are not white were either enemies or colonial subjects. In these circumstances, it may be difficult to view their descendants as co-nationals – whatever their formal citizenship – because they lack both the common origins and the ethnic homogeneity which the British national myth, with its claims to a uniquely long history, requires. We do not know enough about how minority ethnic communities view the armed services or the extent to which they consider the military as a prospective career.<sup>54</sup> However, there is evidence about attitudes to the military in the population as a whole. Reports suggest that '[w]hen asked what makes them proud, after their families and

nationality, British people opted for the more traditional British institutions such as the Royal Family and the Armed Forces'.<sup>55</sup>

### ***6. The armed services and representing 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain***

The burden of history and tradition that we described above creates a situation in which the armed services are seen, and to some extent see themselves, as symbolically representative of a political community that is being superseded by a much more ethnically diverse Britain. One way of addressing this might be to seek explicitly to recover the historical contribution of the forebears of Britain's minority ethnic citizens to its military history, through a much more visible public celebration of their contribution to past military successes, for example in both World Wars of the twentieth century. During 2000, for example, a travelling exhibition of photographs, supported by pages on the MOD website, attempted to convey this message through the slogan *We Were There*<sup>56</sup> Even if pursued with commitment, however, such a strategy is not without its dangers. Recovering the contribution of the forebears of Britain's minority ethnic citizens to its imperial history could prove something of a double-edged weapon because that history has a dimension of exploitation and exclusion. Traditional patterns of social exclusion have, from the standpoint of the more ancient national communities comprising the UK, constituted a restricted form of diversity within an imperial British identity, which has lasted longer than the formal identity of the empire itself. In this context, from the perspective of minority ethnic communities, the armed services could be seen as quintessentially socially exclusive organisations – white, male and class based in which minority ethnic groups were conditionally included as servants or the equivalent or as hired imperial warriors (as we indicated earlier in the paradigm case of the Gurkhas).<sup>57</sup> Drawing attention to the fact the *We Were There* could as easily stir painful memories as stimulate a desire to recover an ancestral patriotic commitment. The dangers of such a perception would be greatly strengthened if, as is possible on current trends, any success in recruitment drives were to have differential success among different minority ethnic communities. It is not difficult to envisage an eventual *over*-representation of those from the 'black' (rather than Asian) groups with all the

potential this could have for differential casualty rates producing debates somewhat resonant of the US experience during and after the Vietnam War.<sup>58</sup>

All of this suggests that pursuing a strategy based on the concept of diversity could offer a solution to current, and possible future, policy dilemmas for the armed services only if it were connected with a much more explicit acceptance of the diversity of the wider political community. This would require a more fundamental reassessment of what it meant to be British in the 21<sup>st</sup> century together with a more refined assessment of what would be entailed in being representative of such a nation. However, herein lies another dilemma because the character and shape of that diversity is becoming less clear.

As we saw above, the evidence on occupational and social mobility suggests that conventional categories underplay ethnic diversity both in terms of range and the patterning of change in experience. They also fail to capture in any precise way, the subtleties of individual and collective identities: these are more dynamic and complex than conventional British conceptions of ethnic difference allow, and there is evidence that significant processes are afoot which are increasingly challenging many taken for granted assumptions about ethnic, and for that matter national, identities. Nor are these processes confined to the identities of Britain's minority ethnic citizens.

Commentators have noted how the process of political devolution within the United Kingdom is leading to a reinvigoration of longstanding national identities among both the Scots and the Welsh. Hand in hand with devolution is a growing regional agenda, at both national and EU levels, which has the potential to reawaken regional identities, which have long appeared dormant. An interesting by-product of these developments has been the way in which Englishness as an identity has been increasingly posed as a question for public debate.<sup>59</sup> As the dominant national group in Britain, it was not necessary, until recently, for most English people to reflect upon their relationship with English or British identities. With the increasing assertiveness of other national identities within Britain, however, the English are being forced to confront the question of what

exactly marks them off from others, although so long as English nationalism remains relatively quiescent (in part precisely *because* of its dominance within the UK) recurrent talk of the ‘break-up’ of Britain seems overdrawn.<sup>60</sup>

Interestingly, to ask the question ‘Who are the English or British?’ appears to be a novelty only if we lack an historical perspective. Linda Colley has argued that the British nation was invented in the wake of the 1707 Act of Union. It was forged as a national identity in and through a series of conflicts, notably with France, over a period of about a century and a half. So successful was this process that, until brought into question by recent developments, the existence of a British national identity was rarely, if ever, challenged. Yet it was quintessentially a political project in which a new set of essentially ethnic boundaries was consciously erected and celebrated.<sup>61</sup>

The instrumental character of this process draws our attention to the fact that current attempts to rediscover some primordial essence of an *English* identity are fundamentally misplaced. As Colin Kidd has shown, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century there were at least eight versions of the English story – all of them related to different political projects ranging from Royalism to Leveller radicalism.<sup>62</sup> A common problem for all of them was how to weave the diverse histories of the various groups out of which England had emerged, into a coherent national story. It was not an easy task. As late as 1867, *The Times* noted:

...there is hardly such a thing as a pure Englishman in this island. In place of the rather vulgarised and very inaccurate phrase, Anglo-Saxon, our national denomination, to be strictly correct, would be a composite of a dozen national titles...<sup>63</sup>

If the question of what constitutes a British or English identity is not new, it is no less real for those who find it necessary to confront them at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given the confluence of the above two sets of debates about nationality and ethnic difference, the consequent general questioning about British identity opens the way for a more nuanced understanding of

ethnic diversity. However, it may also lead to defensiveness about identities thought to be under threat. In this connection, some have argued that, until recently, it has been difficult to celebrate English identity in the educational curriculum because the ideology of some versions of multiculturalism has, in its attempts to celebrate non-English cultures and remove any sense of the superiority of one culture over another, sometimes regarded any attempts to praise the 'host culture' as racist or exclusionary.<sup>64</sup>

Such a nuanced appreciation of ethnic diversity would need to be based on an overarching *narrative* for British national identity, debates over which are becoming more significant. This narrative would recognise the distinctive contributions of the different ethnic communities that comprise modern Britain while at the same time highlighting a set of values to which all of its citizens need to subscribe.<sup>65</sup> Such civic values are rooted in the history of the country – a history that while having a dimension of imperialism, domination, exclusion and exploitation also has one characterised by liberty, parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and tolerance – precisely the values that multiculturalism has, in practice, frequently failed to recognise in sometimes one-sided accounts of English identity. The more long established national communities at the core of what is now a more ethnically diverse Britain have developed these values. Indeed, both in the past (as with Jewish and other immigrant populations) and now, such values provide some of the key attractions for those who wish to escape poverty and oppression in other parts of the world. As many members of the armed services themselves claim: such values as decency, tolerance, and fair play lie at the heart of British military culture, indicating that those who paint the history of the armed services solely in the colours of imperial exploitation have missed the complexities involved. Thus in connecting themselves with the narrative we have outlined the armed services need not envisage as radical a reform of their traditional culture as some of their more hostile critics might wish to suggest.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The British armed services have a well-established pattern of under-representation of minority ethnic citizens, which current government policy is seeking to reverse. One of the difficulties with this policy is that it is underpinned by a concept of representativeness that has not been fully thought through. As a result, it is quite possible that even with the commitment of further resources to the setting and achieving of recruitment targets for minority ethnic citizens, the goal of closing the gap between this aspect of the social profile of the armed services and wider British society will not be achieved. We have suggested that, instead of relying on a concept of statistical or proportional representation, the armed services would be better served by an approach based on delegative representation. This, in turn, might be harnessed to the current enthusiasm in Britain for invoking the discourse of diversity when issues of equity and representation are at stake. This approach would, in principle, be able to take advantage of recent developments in the nature of national and ethnic differences within the United Kingdom and begin to address the citizenship case for greater equity, albeit in a more sophisticated way than is characteristically enshrined in equal opportunities orthodoxy in the UK. It would not, however, offer a solution to all the armed forces' practical problems. This is because, while achieving statistical representativeness would directly address the business case related to problems of recruitment and retention, delegative representativeness (or diversity) clearly would not.

Does this mean that the business and citizenship cases for equity are at such fundamental odds that the only solution is to choose between them? We suggest not, but only if the business case is conceived more widely than in terms of recruitment and retention. In other walks of life in the UK – notably those with a public service dimension – business cases are increasingly constructed on the basis of service delivery criteria. In other words, in such settings, a key operational argument for greater equity is the need to serve the needs of an increasingly ethnically diverse population or client group. This has been a central argument underpinning recent initiatives in the British National Health Service, for example.<sup>66</sup> Clearly, such arguments are more easily made and comprehended in those aspects of service where personal care is being delivered. Given what we

have said about the changing parameters of national and ethnic identities in Britain, it is not difficult to see how parallel arguments, fusing the citizenship and business cases, could be constructed for the armed services.

Critically, however, we also claim that this aspect of military personnel policy cannot be developed successfully in isolation from a broader political project that is focused on the question of British national identity. It will not be easy to develop a narrative for British national identity for the twenty-first century, which we argue is a necessary basis for policy on the participation of minority ethnic communities in the British armed services. One difficulty is that this narrative could become merely a restatement of a traditional assimilationist or integrationist agenda, one that does not do justice to the complexity of minority ethnic identities *or* indeed of the identities of the more long-standing communities within the UK. Such a traditional agenda would be ill attuned to the real ethnic diversity of modern Britain, and constantly be wrong footed by its dynamism as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century unfolds. There are also some serious issues of timing and responsibility. It is one thing to ask the armed services to construct a post-imperial identity, which all members of modern Britain could aspire to join. It is quite another to ask them to develop this in isolation from and before government and society as a whole takes the lead in developing the broader framework in which this military project can be developed.

This is, emphatically, not an argument for inaction on the part of the armed services. Nothing in this paper should give comfort to those who, for whatever reason, would prefer that the armed services be allowed to duck responsibility for their own recruitment and employment policies and practices. Continued progress, however limited, in increasing the numbers of minority ethnic recruits, at all levels and in all arms, is arguably essential to sustaining the armed forces' legitimacy claims in relation to civil society as a whole. Our discussion is, however, intended to highlight the fact that practical problems in delivering fully on current commitments are in part a product of real conceptual dilemmas surrounding notions of representation, identity and diversity.

These are issues that bear not only on the armed services but also on British society as a whole. It is ultimately at the national level that they will have to be resolved.

Post-Print



**Table 1: Minority ethnic participation in the British armed forces:**

	<u>Regular personnel</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Other Ranks</u>	<u>Royal Navy (Off/OR)</u>	<u>Royal Air Force (Off//OR)</u>	<u>Army (Off/OR)</u>
<b>1998</b>	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.7 (0.9/0.7)	1.2 (1.2/1.2)	1.0 (0.9/1.1)
<b>2001</b>	1.7	1.2	1.8	1.0 (1.1/1.1)	1.1 (1.3/1.0)	2.4 (1.2/2.5)

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Source: Defence Analytical Services Agency, 2001

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This point is acknowledged by the UK government's Strategic Defence Review 1998, The Strategic Defence Review, (Cm 3999, July 1998). Hereafter SDR. See also C. Dandeker and L Freedman, "The British Armed Services", *Political Quarterly*, 73, 4 (October 2002): 465-475

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, [http://www.army.mod.uk/servingsoldier/usefulinfo/equality/ss\\_hrpers\\_eq\\_w.html](http://www.army.mod.uk/servingsoldier/usefulinfo/equality/ss_hrpers_eq_w.html), (accessed 06 September 2002).

<sup>3</sup> We are conscious that it might be objected that a number of institutions and organisations that have dragged their feet on equality issues have frequently disclaimed responsibility for their own inaction, blaming either the victims of their exclusionary policies or the wider society. We are, it should be clear, not endorsing such positions. For many organisations, relatively small changes in recruitment and selection practices can have significant effects on their employment profiles. We contend, however, that the British armed services face particular difficulties because of the centrality of issues of national identity to their very constitution and *raison d'être*. It is precisely because they are called upon to represent the nation in both practical and symbolic ways that we argue that armed services cannot, by themselves, be expected to address and solve deep-rooted problems about the nature of British national identity in the twenty first century. Without a resolution of those problems, however, we argue that it is difficult to see how they can realistically deliver current government commitments. This is not, however, an argument for inertia and inaction. There is clear scope for further effort in pursuit of current goals. The armed services still have some way to go in convincing the public that they have effectively addressed past exclusionary policies and practices. It is also arguable that there is plenty of scope for increasing the numerical representation of minority ethnic groups such that it approached, more closely than hitherto, current numerical targets.

<sup>4</sup> If there is a parallel in Britain to this US experience, it is in the conditional inclusion and differential treatment of Britain's imperial subjects in the colonial armed forces. However, as we argue below, this heritage has specific, and rather different, implications for the British case.

<sup>5</sup> D. Mason, *Race and Ethnicity in Modern Britain*, Second edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000),

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<sup>6</sup> The key government documents here are: on domestic strife, *Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion*, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>; on the international context, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven - Integration With Diversity in Modern Britain*,

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(Nationality, Immigration & Asylum White Paper 07/02/2002), downloadable from

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk) <http://wood.ccta.gov.uk/homeoffice/hopress.nsf>. (accessed February 12 2002)

For a thoughtful journalist's comment see, Melanie Phillips, "They CAN be both Moslem and British" The Daily Mail, (London, Monday December 10 2001): 10

<sup>7</sup> D. Coleman and J. Salt (eds.) Ethnicity in the 1991 Census, Volume one: Demographic characteristics of the ethnic minority populations, (London, HMSO, 1996), 9-10. The 2001 Census contained a revised question that did offer respondents selecting 'white' a further sub-set of choices and other new categories did permit greater opportunities for recording mixed origins and for affirming 'hybrid' identities. There is to date, however, little evidence that these revisions have been reflected in a more sophisticated understanding of ethnic diversity in most policy-making circles, although we understand that the MOD's Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) is currently seeking to address these conceptual and categorical issues. (Personal communication).

<sup>8</sup> SDR para 41. See also C. Dandeker and D Mason "The British Armed Services and the Participation of Minority Ethnic Communities: From Equal Opportunities to Diversity?", The Sociological Review 49, 2 (May 2001): 219-233

<sup>9</sup> Dandeker and Mason, "British Armed Services", 220-1

<sup>10</sup> These two logics can be applied to dimensions other than ethnicity, gender for example. See C. Dandeker and M.W Segal, "Gender Integration in Armed Forces: Recent Policy Developments in the United Kingdom," Armed Forces and Society, 23, (Fall 1996): 29-47.

<sup>11</sup> We do not know enough about the extent to which serving in the armed services provides opportunities for later civilian life and employment. Of the 18,000 who left the armed services in 2001, the 13,000 who had served 5 or more years were covered by the official Resettlement Package. Of the remaining 5,000 those who have served for 3 to 5 years were eligible for job seeking assistance, while those with less than three years service received no special assistance. Overall 85% of all leavers get work within six months, but the breakdown by category of leaver is not known. This issue is connected with a broader concern for the health and welfare of ex-service personnel on the part of the UK government, which has led to the formation of a new Veterans' Agency and a junior MOD minister who has specific responsibility for this area of service life. (Personal communications with MOD officials.) On current arrangements for resettlement of military personnel into civilian life, including employment, in the case of the British Army - the largest of the armed services – see <http://www.army.mod.uk/unitsandorgs/ets-new/Resettlement.htm>. See also C Jessup, Breaking

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Ranks: Social Change in Military Communities, , (London and Washington: Brassey's 1996), 194-197. On veterans, see <http://www.veteransagency.mod.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> This figure is derived from the 1991 Census, now more than ten years out of date. Interim population projections by the Office for National Statistics suggest that data from the 2001 Census are likely to reveal a significant increase in the size of the minority ethnic population.

<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to be precise about the presence of minority ethnic groups in the military before the late 1980s as '...the services did not practise any formal system of ethnic monitoring in the period 1969-87 and, arguably, only in 1997 began to have a proper understanding of their ethnic composition.' 'By mid-1996, a comprehensive system of ethnic monitoring in the Regular Army had been introduced.' S. Crawford, "Race Relations in the Army," in, *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century*, ed. H. Strachan, (London and Portland OR: Cass, 2000), 140.

<sup>14</sup> Figures drawn from the Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) [http://www.dasa.mod.uk/servstats/tsp2/ns\\_initframe.htm](http://www.dasa.mod.uk/servstats/tsp2/ns_initframe.htm) (accessed 28 January 2002). The figures include trained and untrained regular personnel, excluding, 'Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised Reservists.'

<sup>15</sup> *The Officer*, (September/October, 2001): 5.

<sup>16</sup> See DASA, <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/servstats/servstats.html>; [http://www.dasa.mod.uk/servstats/tsp2/ns\\_initframe.htm](http://www.dasa.mod.uk/servstats/tsp2/ns_initframe.htm) (accessed 21 January 2002). The NATO figures are cited in *The Officer*, (September/October, 2001): 5. See also Vicki Nielsen, *NATO Review*, Women in Uniform, Web edition Vol. 49 - No. 2 (Summer 2001): 26-27, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2001/0102-09.htm> (Accessed 20 January, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Defence Committee, Second Report, *The Strategic Defence Review: Policy for People*, Vol. 1, (Report and Proceedings of the Committee, Session, 2000-01), 29-1, printed 14 February 2001, Defence Committee, para 42, xxii.

<sup>18</sup> Defence Committee, para 43, xxii.

<sup>19</sup> SDR para 39.

<sup>20</sup> SDR para 41.

<sup>21</sup> On the history of debates on equal opportunities in Britain see the review in J. Edwards, *When Race Counts: The morality of racial preference in Britain and the United States*, (London: Routledge 1995). See also D. Mason "Equality, opportunity and difference: the limits of the diversity paradigm", in *The Changing*

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Politics of Gender Equality in Britain, ed. E. Breitenbach, A. Brown, F. Mackay and J. Webb (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2002), 83-101

<sup>22</sup> N. Jewson and D. Mason, "The theory and practice of equal opportunities policies: liberal and radical approaches", *Sociological Review*, 34, 2 (May 1986): 307-334; N. Jewson and D. Mason, "'Race', employment and equal opportunities: towards a political economy and an agenda for the 1990s", *Sociological Review*, 42, 4 (November 1994): 591-617; N. Jewson et al., *Formal Equal Opportunities Policies and Employment Best Practice*, (Department for Education and Employment Research Series No. 69, 1995)

<sup>23</sup> Jewson and Mason, "Theory and practice"; D. Mason, "Competing conceptions of 'fairness' and the formulation and implementation of equal opportunities policies", in *Race and Local Politics*, ed. W. Ball and J. Solomos (Macmillan, 1990): 45-61

<sup>24</sup> Jewson and Mason, "Theory and practice"

<sup>25</sup> Jewson et al., *Ethnic Monitoring Policy and Practice: a Study of Employers' Experiences*, (Employment Department Research Paper No. 89, 1992); Jewson et al., "Formal Equal Opportunities Policies"; P. Iganski, et al., *Recruiting Minority Ethnic Groups into Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting*. (English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting, *Researching Professional Education Series*, Number 7, 1998).

<sup>26</sup> N. Jewson et al. *Ethnic Minorities and Employment Practice: a study of six organisations*, (Employment Department Research Paper no. 76, 1990); Jewson et al., "Ethnic Monitoring Policy"; Jewson et al., "Formal Equal Opportunities Policies". It is lawful to target resources to help members of disadvantaged groups, for example, to increase their educational preparedness, as part of an attempt to increase their representation in an occupational sector, as it is to establish targets for that representation and management procedures to check progress against such targets. It is not lawful (or socially acceptable) to practise positive discrimination to ensure quotas of minority groups are met in an occupation.

<sup>27</sup> See C. Bourne and J. Whitmore, *Anti-Discrimination Law in Britain*, 3rd. edn., (London: Sweet and Maxwell 1996); UK Employment Department, *Equal Opportunities Ten Point Plan for Employers*, (London, ED, 1991).

<sup>28</sup> Jewson et al., "Ethnic Monitoring Policy"; Jewson et al., "Formal Equal Opportunities Policies".

<sup>29</sup> Compare P. Iganski and D. Mason, *Ethnicity, Equality of Opportunity and the British National Health Service*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publications, 2002), 151

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<sup>30</sup> See the discussion in Dandeker and Mason, “British Armed Services”, 2001

<sup>31</sup> See Dandeker and Segal, “Gender Integration in Armed Forces”.

<sup>32</sup> It is important to remember the distinction between management targets and quotas. See endnote 26.

<sup>33</sup> See for example, C. Dandeker and A. Strachan, “Soldier Recruitment to the British Army: A Spatial and Social Methodology for Analysis and Monitoring”, *Armed Forces and Society*, 19, 2 (Winter, 1993): 279-290 and Hew Strachan, “Reassessing Recruitment Strategies for the Armed Services” in *New People Strategies for the British Armed Forces*, ed. A Alexandrou, R Bartle and R Holmes (London and Portland OR, Cass, 2002), 100-115. But see A. Hussain and M. Ishaq, “British Pakistani Muslims’ Perceptions of the Armed Forces”, *Armed Forces and Society*, 28, 4.

<sup>34</sup> T. Jones, *Britain’s Ethnic Minorities*, (London, PSI 1993); T. Modood, et al., *Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1997)

<sup>35</sup> P. Iganski and G. Payne, “Declining racial disadvantage in the British labour market”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19, 1 (1996): 113-134; P. Iganski and G. Payne, “Socio-economic re-structuring and employment: the case of minority ethnic groups”, *British Journal of Sociology*, 50, 2 (1999): 195-216

<sup>36</sup> P. Iganski and G. Payne, “Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion: Britain’s Minority Ethnic Groups”, paper presented to Cambridge Stratification Seminar, Claire College, Cambridge, 19-21 September, 2000

<sup>37</sup> Modood, et al. *Ethnic Minorities*

<sup>38</sup> C. Brown, *Black and White Britain: The Third PSI Survey*, (Aldershot, Gower, 1984); UK Department of Education and Science, *Education for All: The Report of a Committee of Inquiry in the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*, Cmnd 9453, (London, HMSO 1985); D. Drew, ‘Race’, *Education and Work: The Statistics of Inequality*, (Aldershot, Avebury, 1992); Jones, *Britain’s Ethnic Minorities*

<sup>39</sup> Jones, *Britain’s Ethnic Minorities*: 32; Modood, et al. *Ethnic Minorities*; T. Modood and T. Ackland, *Race and Higher Education*, (London, Policy Studies Institute, 1998.); T. Modood and M. Shiner, *Ethnic Minorities and Higher Education: Why are there differential rates of admission?*, (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> T. Modood, “Ethnic minorities’ drive for qualifications” in *Race and Higher Education*, ed. Modood and Ackland (London, Policy Studies Institute, 1998.)

<sup>41</sup> The Policy Studies Institute, and its predecessor Political and Economic Planning, has carried out a series of surveys of the minority ethnic populations of Great Britain dating back to the mid-1960s. These represent

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the single most complete, and detailed, longitudinal data set on the situations of Britain's minority ethnic citizens.

<sup>42</sup> Modood, et al. *Ethnic Minorities*

<sup>43</sup> See the discussion in Mason, *Race and Ethnicity*.

<sup>44</sup> A. Hussain and M. Ishaq, "British Pakistani Muslims' Perceptions"

<sup>45</sup> R. Kandola and J. Fullerton, *Diversity in Action: Managing the Mosaic*, (London: Institute of Personnel and Development, 1998); R. Kandola et al., "Managing diversity: succeeding where equal opportunities have failed", *Equal Opportunities Review*, No. 59, (January/February, 1995): 31-6

<sup>46</sup> Kandola and Fullerton, *Diversity in Action*; Kandola et al., "Managing diversity"; R. R. Thomas jnr., *Beyond Race and Gender: unleashing the power of your total workforce by managing diversity*, (New York: AMACOM, American Management Association, 1991).

<sup>47</sup> See C. Dandeker and J. Gow, "Strategic Peacekeeping and Military Culture", in *Peace Operations Between War and Peace*, ed. E. A. Schmidl (London and Portland OR: Frank Cass, , 2000): 58-79. See also S. R. Crawford "Racial Integration in the Army - An Historical Perspective", *British Army Review*, 111, (December 1995): 24-28 and S Crawford, "Race Relations in the Army", in *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Hew Strachan (London and Portland OR, Cass, 2000), 139-155.

<sup>48</sup> *Strategic Defence Review*, Supporting Essay 9, para 17.

<sup>49</sup> K O Dunivin, "Military Culture: Change and Continuity", *Armed Forces and Society*, 20, 4, (Summer 1994): 531-547.

<sup>50</sup> On Scotland see M. Fry, *The Scottish Empire*, (Tuckwell, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> See T. Gould, *Imperial Warriors: Britain and the Gurkhas*, (London, Granta Books, 1999). On Empire and British culture, see D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire*, (London, Penguin Allen Lane 2001).

<sup>52</sup> British citizenship is defined by the British Nationality Act of 1981, which supplanted all previous nationality laws and came into effect on the 1 January 1983. Under the Act, three separate kinds of citizenship were created, in place of citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies. These are: ' 1. British Citizenship, for people closely connected with the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man 2. British Dependent Territories Citizenship, for people connected with the dependencies [including territories such as Anguila, Bermuda, the Falkland Islands] 3. British Overseas citizenship, for those citizens

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of the United Kingdom and Colonies without connections with either the United Kingdom or the dependencies.’ (Immigration and Nationality Directorate). The key point concerning British Citizenship is that such citizens are defined as being ‘closely connected with the United Kingdom, including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man...[They] have the right to live permanently and are free to leave and re-enter the United Kingdom at any time.’

It is possible to become a British citizen in one of two ways. The first is by registration when, for example, those who became British Dependent territories citizens, can apply to register as British Citizens so long as they have lived in the United Kingdom for five years. It is also possible for foreign nationals (and this includes citizens of the Commonwealth and the Republic of Ireland) to apply for naturalisation. Applicants must ‘be 18 or over, not be of unsound mind, be of good character, have sufficient knowledge of English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic... and *stay closely connected with the United Kingdom* [emphasis added]. (See Home Office UK, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, <http://194.203.40.90/default.asp?pageid=16>). These citizenship rules determine who can join the armed services. There is a difference regarding those who can join the enlisted ranks and those who apply to become officers of British Army. Current rules exclude from the officers' corps those who are not born in the UK or its territories (or who have not been resident in the UK for at least five years), whereas for the enlisted ranks the rules state that if 'applicants reside outside the United Kingdom, they will only be eligible to enlist if they are exempt from immigration control: that is to say they have been given indefinite leave to reside and work in the United Kingdom under Immigration rules' (from [www.army.mod.uk/careers/enquiry/sol/entry\\_require.htm](http://www.army.mod.uk/careers/enquiry/sol/entry_require.htm)). As with the rules for citizenship, reviewed above, the material point is the connection with the United Kingdom. The armed services (especially the Army) actively recruit from the Commonwealth, for example from Fiji, South Africa, Kenya, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand. It is possible that, given the current shortages in the armed services (approximately 8,500 overall with most in the Army), there will be even great efforts to recruit from overseas.

<sup>53</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1701-183*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992)

<sup>54</sup> But see Hussain and Ishaq, “British Pakistani Muslims’ Perceptions”.

<sup>55</sup> Responses to these questions vary a good deal by region and age with, for example, those over 65 being most proud of the Monarchy and the Welsh being more proud of the nationality than anywhere else in the UK. Interestingly it is the Welsh who are most positive about the Armed Forces (91%), along with people aged over 65 (91%), over half of whom are extremely proud. Finally, ‘of the institutions that respondents



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said they were proud and ashamed of, the survey asked them to select their top three. The importance of the family (80%) far outranked anything else and although nationality (40%) came second, it scored only half as much as family. Armed Forces (16%) came third. Public transport (34%), the government (27%) and the NHS (18%) were ranked in the top three of which the nation is most ashamed. (See Nationwide Building Society Survey <http://www.nationwide.co.uk/mediacentre/PressRelease.asp?ID=329>) Furthermore, according to recent poll data, the armed services rate quite highly in terms of the degree to which they attract the confidence of the general public. For example, in a survey of parents' attitudes towards the examination system in British education, 84 per cent of 'have "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of confidence in the exam system - more than those who have confidence in the armed forces (81%), the police (77%) and the legal system (60%).' Yet the figure of 81 per cent is quite high and the contrast with the legal system is significant. <http://www.mori.com/polls/2001/edexcel.shtml>. As for the issue of the armed forces as a prospective career, In a survey of 10-16 year old school children in England and Wales in 1996, 1998 and 2001, MORI found that while an average of 13 per cent placed Army/Navy as a preferred choice of career (the other most desired categories were professional sport (18) vet (15) law (15) teacher (13), police (9). However, Army/Navy rated highly in the two occupations they would least like to do (19) followed by dentistry (17) in 1996, yet with this figure rising significantly to 32 per cent in 2001. There are no data on breakdown by gender or minority ethnic communities, although 'the data are weighted by age, sex and region to Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and Welsh Office data.'

<http://www.mori.com/polls/2001/emta-topline.shtml>. The breakdown by gender on some of the questions asked, e.g. knowledge of occupations such as engineering, are at

<http://www.mori.com/polls/2001/emta.shtml>

<sup>56</sup> See the Website version at: <http://www.mod.uk/wewerethere/> - accessed 22 March, 2002

<sup>57</sup> In fact, the armed services are far less class based than they once were and less than the public often thinks. The great majority of Sandhurst cadets, for example, now come from State Schools. This is not to deny the persistence of social exclusion in the more traditional regiments such as the Cavalry. See R G L Von Zugbach and M Ishaq, "Officer Recruitment: The Decline in Social Eliteness in the Senior Ranks of the British Army", in *British Army and Society*, ed. H. Strachan (London and Portland OR. , Cass 2000), 75-86. On class and the armed forces see also Eric Joyce, *Armed Forces and the Man – Renewing the Armed Services*, (Fabian Society 1997).

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<sup>58</sup> There is debate in the literature on the extent to which black Americans were over represented in the casualties of the Vietnam War. Moskos and Sibley Butler regard this as a myth. See C C Moskos and J Sibley Butler, *All that We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration, The Army Way*, (New York, NY: Twentieth Century Fund Book, Basic Books, Harper Collins, 1996): 8-10. D R Segal, however, argues that during the Vietnam War, 'for the first time in the twentieth century, rather than being underrepresented or excluded from combat, blacks were more likely to be drafted, to be sent to Vietnam, to serve in high-risk combat units and to be killed or wounded in action'. See D R Segal, *Recruiting for Uncle Sam: Citizenship and Military Manpower Policy*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, , 1989), 110, citing M Binkin, M Eitelberg with A J Schexnider and M M Smith, *Blacks in the Military*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1982), 32. The difference in interpretation may depend on a number of issues including, whether one refers to the period of the war as a whole or particular years, and whether one is referring to Army casualties or military casualties overall. Thus, while blacks were over represented in the Army's combat arms, these arms were underrepresented in the overall casualties, where aviators from Army Navy and Air force (which included few blacks) were over-represented. All that having been said, African-Americans are over represented in the Army relative to their proportion of the wider population. However, they are more over represented in the combat support and combat service support branches than in the combat arms. If one compares African-American combat units with support units, African-American are underrepresented in the combat arms. However, if one compares African-American combat troops with the African-American military age population of the United States, they are over represented. Black representation in combat units has been declining, and they are virtually absent from Special Forces, and are underrepresented in the officer corps. This may raise some questions about the idea that the military is an excellent example of an institution where blacks routinely give orders to whites, as blacks tend to be employed in the lower reaches of the management structure. In making these points, the authors would like to acknowledge and are grateful for personal communications from both Professors Moskos and Segal.

<sup>59</sup> See D. McCrone, and R. Kiely, "'Nationalism and Citizenship", *Sociology*, 34, 1 (February 2000): 19-34

<sup>60</sup> V. Bogdanor, "Shouting 'Britain' from the back," *Times Literary Supplement*, (February 8, 2002): 28-29.

<sup>61</sup> Colley, *Britons*

<sup>62</sup> C. Kidd, *British identities before nationalism: ethnicity and nationhood in the Atlantic world, 1600-1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

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<sup>63</sup> Quoted in J. Walvin, *Passage to Britain: immigration in British history and politics*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin in association with Belitha Press, 1984), 19.

<sup>64</sup> *Routes of Racism*, by Roger Hewitt, (Trentham Books, produced jointly for the International Centre for Intercultural Studies, Institute of Education, London and Greenwich Council's Central Racial Equality Unit and Greenwich Youth Service, 1996). See also I. A. MacDonald, *Murder in the playground: the Burnage report. Report of the Macdonald Inquiry into racism and racial violence in Manchester schools* (London: Longsight, 1989). For alternative views on the inadequacy of multicultural education see: D. Gillborn, 'Race', *Ethnicity and Education*, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1990); D. Gillborn, *Racism and Antiracism in Real Schools*, (Buckingham, Open University Press, 1995); and S. Tomlinson, *Multicultural Education in White Schools*, (London, Batsford, 1990). For a detailed discussion of competing versions of multiculturalism and anti-racism see S. May (ed.), *Critical Multiculturalism: Rethinking multicultural and antiracist education*, (London, Falmer Press, 1999).

<sup>65</sup> These values would have to involve rather more than the following suggestion: '...fortunately the test for Britishness is a perfectly simple one. It consists in wishing to continue to be represented in the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster and voting for parties which favour such continued representation.' V. Bogdanor, "Shouting 'Britain': 29. Compare the discussion in Parekh, B. *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (The Parekh Report), (London: Profile Books, 2000).

<sup>66</sup> See Iganski and Mason, *Ethnicity, Equality of Opportunity and the British National Health Service*.