

**Ethnicity, 'Race' and Place:  
experiences and issues of identity and belonging in  
rural minority ethnic households**

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# **Ethnicity, 'Race' and Place: experiences and issues of identity and belonging in rural minority ethnic households**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to make visible the presence and voices of minority ethnic households in rural communities by addressing the 'place blindness' in research on ethnicity / 'race', and the ethnicity / 'race' blindness in rural literature. The overall aim of this thesis is to develop an understanding of the lived experiences and perspectives of minority ethnic households and individuals in parts of rural Scotland, and the Highlands and Islands in particular. The emphasis is on exploring the contingent, flexible and changing interaction between ethnicity / 'race' and rurality. This is achieved by drawing on four separately commissioned studies which were undertaken between 1998 and 2004, and were re-analysed for the purposes of this thesis.

Within the context of these studies, the thesis examines the ways in which the social and spatial demography of rural minority ethnic households, and particular conceptualisations of rural have been mobilised to shape ideas and practices about belonging in parts of rural Scotland. In particular, the studies explore the ways in which minority ethnic households, parents/carers and young people across the four studies have felt they have been 'invisible' in relation to policy and service delivery issues, and developed strategies to overcome their marginalisation.

The thesis concludes that the relationships, experiences and practices based on ethnicity / 'race' have to be understood as being grounded in specific spatial, national, local, historical and material contexts which are dynamic. It stresses the need to move away from binary accounts portraying minority ethnic groups as always 'passive victims', and the 'host' communities as invariably 'perpetrators' of racism, by recognising the importance of taking into account the cross-cutting nature of individual identities and experiences, deconstructing 'white' and recognising the countervailing forces of constraints and agency within this context.

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me and is based on my own work, except where acknowledgment is made below.

Philomena J F de Lima

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# **Chapter 1 Introduction**

## **Introduction**

This thesis is about the views and lived experiences of minority ethnic households and individuals in rural areas. The aim is to explore and understand the contingent, flexible and changing interaction between ethnicity / 'race' and rurality, using Scotland as the context. The thesis seeks to demonstrate that relationships, experiences and practices based on ethnicity / 'race' have to be understood as being grounded in specific spatial, national, local, historical and material contexts which are changing.

Chapter 1 commences by establishing the background and rationale for the thesis, and identifies its main focus. A brief discussion of the definitions of terms used, and their conceptual basis, then follows. Thereafter, an overview is given of four empirical studies that I undertook, which form the basis of the thesis, together with the policy context which helps locate the four studies. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis.

## **Background and Rationale**

Although the sociology of ethnicity / 'race' has experienced significant theoretical and empirical changes in the past decades which have led to new and developing areas of research, these have evolved mainly in an urban context. This privileging of the urban frame of reference among academics can be traced back to the early origins of the study of ethnicity / 'race', initiated by the Chicago School in the United States and followed by academic researchers in Britain in the 1960's (Solomos 2006, p.viii; Knowles 2003). Ethnicity and 'race' were central concepts in the Chicago School's explanation of the development and use of urban places and spaces.

Although there was from the early 1990's a growing acknowledgement among rural social geographers of the presence of many 'others' in rural communities, the tendency was to promote specific conceptualisations of rurality which, until recently, continued to render minority ethnic groups invisible (Murdoch and Pratt 1993; 1994; Philo 1992; 1993; Sibley 1995). This invisibility continued until about 2001/2, despite attempts by some writers in

England to raise the issue from the late 1980's onwards (Agyeman 1989; Agyeman and Spooner 1997). These trends in literature and research with regard to both ethnicity / 'race' and rurality resulted in the reinforcement of notions of ethnicity / 'race' being conceptualised within predominantly urban landscapes. Consequently, urban has become associated with 'blackness'/diversity and rural landscapes with 'whiteness'/homogeneity. These associations have strongly influenced notions of belonging/identity and place. The consequence of these binary conceptualisations has until recently resulted in a lack of academic focus on ethnicity / 'race' in rural areas, and an under-emphasis of the relevance of ethnicity / 'race' in rural contexts as urban has come to be the implicit spatial norm.

The 'place blindness' - i.e. the experiences of urban minority ethnic groups are taken as the norm: a norm which is rarely made explicit - at the local level was challenged by two trends from the mid 1990's onwards. Firstly, the publication of the Jay (1992) report on the experiences of minority ethnic people in an English rural community outside Birmingham, was followed by a plethora of regionally commissioned reports in different parts of rural England (e.g. Derbyshire 1994; Dhalech 1999a; Kenny 1997; Nizhar 1995). Secondly, a changing policy and legislative context in relation to race equality was beginning to evolve and is discussed below. The combination of these two trends led to the first Scotland wide study of minority ethnic groups in rural Scotland, 'Needs not Numbers' (de Lima 2001), almost nine years after the publication of the Jay (1992) report in England. While this was followed by a small number of public sector commissioned studies (e.g. de Lima 2001; de Lima et al 2005; Netto et al 2001) on minority ethnic households, the voices of rural minority ethnic residents have been largely absent from academic literature on ethnicity / 'race' and rural literature in Scotland.

## **Focus of this Thesis**

This thesis addresses this deficit by arguing that: (i) the experiences of minority ethnic households in rural communities are informed and shaped by, amongst other factors, their location in rural communities, and cannot simply be assumed from the research on ethnicity / 'race' which has taken urban as the spatial norm; (ii) the prevalence of particular conceptualisations of rural encompassed in notions of the 'rural idyll', have reinforced their 'invisibility'; (iii) the ways in which ethnicity / 'race' and place are experienced are socially

constructed and contingent on place, time and other factors; and (iv) rural minority ethnic households are not just victims, but are also developing adaptive strategies despite constraints.

One of the main foci of this thesis is to contribute to the growing body of debate and discussion on the relationship between rurality and ethnicity / 'race'. Drawing on a small body of recent academic literature (e.g. Neal and Agyeman 2006a), this thesis argues that: (i) the relationships, experiences and practices based on ethnicity / 'race' are not expressed in a vacuum but are situated in specific contexts (e.g. spatial, national, local and so on); (ii) the identities and experiences of belonging amongst minority ethnic households in rural communities across Scotland are informed and shaped by, inter alia (e.g. ethnicity, gender age, socio-economic background and their personal coping strategies), their location in rural communities and the specific characteristics of their demographic profile which traditional approaches to ethnicity / 'race' have failed to take into account; and (iii) the lived experiences of rural minority ethnic households cannot be understood without taking into account the ways in which the characteristics of the population – e.g. small size, scattered households, and diverse ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds – interact with the diverse geographies of rural areas in Scotland, and the Highlands and Islands in particular, to produce specific experiences in relation to issues of identity and belonging.

This thesis seeks to make visible the presence of minority ethnic households in rural communities using Scotland as the context for exploring their experiences over a period of six years. It seeks to achieve this in two ways: (i) by deconstructing the hegemonic dominance of 'white' discourses that have come to characterise rural spaces, whilst simultaneously exposing the invisibility of rural minority ethnic households and their absence from policy making, accessing services, and academic literature on rural communities; and (ii) by developing some in-depth insights and understanding of their experiences of living in Scottish rural communities. This thesis seeks to explore in more depth the ways in which conceptualisations of rural have been mobilised to provide a basis for notions of who belongs/does not belong from the perspectives of rural minority ethnic households/individuals. It aims to understand what it is about rural areas in Scotland, and areas such as the Scottish Highlands and Islands in particular, that have rendered minority ethnic groups 'invisible' in relation to policy and service delivery issues. It seeks to enhance

our understanding of the ways in which this invisibility is manifested in rural contexts and the impact it has had on the lives and experiences of minority ethnic people living in rural communities.

Just as it is widely acknowledged that rurality and notions of space are socially constructed, so it is increasingly accepted that there is no ‘single monolithic racism’ (Neal 2002, p.442). On the same basis, the ‘deficit models’ underpinning research and debates on rural minority ethnic groups, and portraying minorities as being homogenous, victims, with fixed and rigid identities, are being challenged (Robinson and Gardner 2004; 2006). The emphasis is on recognising racism as plural, diverse and flexible, contingent on the relationship between spatial factors and national identity (Goldberg 1993; Back and Solomos 2003; Neal 2002; Williams 1999). However, many of the theoretical discourses on the ‘othering’ processes in relation to ethnicity / ‘race’ in particular, have tended to be in the context of England and English landscapes (Agyeman and Spooner 1997; Neal 2002; Neal and Agyeman 2006b) with some small exceptions in Northern Ireland (Connolly 2006) and Wales (Robinson and Gardner, 2004; 2006; Williams 1999). This thesis aims to build on these theoretical discourses and empirical studies undertaken in other parts of Britain, with a view to applying and enhancing our understanding of how minority ethnic groups experience life in rural communities in a specific context – that of rural Scotland and the Highlands and Islands, in particular.

Finally, the thesis seeks to counter the predominant tendency in rural research to portray rural minority ethnic households as ‘victims’. It addresses this by highlighting the importance of also taking into consideration the varying views, experiences and strategies adopted by individuals/households, drawing on their diverse backgrounds in relation to issues such as gender, culture/faith, socio-economic factors and age as well as place.

In addressing the issues described above, this thesis draws on four separately commissioned studies (discussed below, see also Table 1.2). Prior to an exposition of the studies, the next section addresses the conceptual basis of key terms – rural and ethnicity / ‘race’ – used in this thesis.

## **Defining rural and ethnicity / 'race'**

Although this thesis does not seek to address, in any detail, the many well-rehearsed and highly debated controversies surrounding concepts such as rural and ethnicity / 'race', it is important to acknowledge the contested nature of these concepts (e.g. Bulmer and Solomos 1999; Miles 1995; Murdoch and Pratt, 1997; Philo 1992). A brief overview of these concepts is provided in this chapter to set the context and to acknowledge the complexities and the diversities embedded within seemingly homogenous categories, such as 'rural' and ethnicity / 'race'. It is also important to understand how these terms will be used in this thesis. The conceptual and theoretical basis of these concepts are explored and discussed further in Chapter 2.

### **Defining 'rural'**

An important aspect of making sense of the experience of minority ethnic households living in rural areas is determined by understanding how 'rural' is defined and conceptualised. In Scotland, a review undertaken by Copus et al (1998) revealed that the dominant emphasis with regard to definitions of 'rurality' has been on population-based measures. However, over the years, a number of different definitions of 'rural' have evolved, depending on the purpose for which a definition is required. The most commonly used definition has tended to be population measures supplemented from time to time by the use of other indicators, such as economic activity, car ownership, age structure and inter alia, to develop typologies of rural areas (Barnes undated; Cloke 1977; Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) 2000). In 2000, in Scotland previous definitions were superseded by a Scottish Executive<sup>1</sup> six-fold, as well as an eight-fold, urban-rural classification using settlement size and remoteness at the postcode unit as the two criteria (See Table 1.1). However, in a number of official documents, the typologies if used at all (as not all data is disaggregated) may vary according to the issue or policy being considered – from a six-fold to an eight fold classification. In addition in some cases 'accessible rural' and 'remote rural' may be collapsed

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Executive replaced the Scottish Office following devolution and the election of a Scottish Parliament in 1999. However since May 2007, with a change in administration it is now called the Scottish Government. In this thesis the terms used relate to the period under discussion.

into ‘rural’ Scotland and indeed, in some instances, a simple binary of rural-urban may be used (Scottish Executive 2000a; 2007).

Based on this classification system, rural Scotland accounts for 98 percent of Scotland's landmass, 21 percent of the population (the Scottish population is estimated to be around 5 million) and 20 percent of employment. Although, the density of the Scottish population is on average 0.66 per hectare, it is less in some remote communities, for example 0.08 per hectare in areas such as the Scottish Highlands. However, it is widely acknowledged that rural Scotland is not a single entity and encompasses diverse areas from remote rural and island areas to those closer to larger urban settlements and towns (Scottish Executive 2007).

**Table 1.1: The Scottish Executive, Scottish Household Survey ‘Typology’ of Rural and Urban Scotland (Six Fold Definition)**

Large Urban Areas	Settlements of over 125,000 people.
Other Urban Areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 125,000 people.
Accessible Small Towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and within 30 minutes drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more.
Remote Small Towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more.
Accessible Rural	Settlements of less than 3,000 people and within 30 minutes drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more.
Remote Rural	Settlement of less than 3,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more.

(Scottish Executive 2004, p.24)

Although, these official definitions are important in providing accurate spatial information about the rural population, it is also important to acknowledge that the notion of place and space is socially mediated, and that ‘rurality’ is socially constructed:

‘Rurality is a symbolic shorthand which has meaning for most people, conveying a shared if implicit understanding of the countryside. This shared understanding of what is rural in turn influences our actions.’ (Shucksmith et al 1996, p.4)

However, the notion of ‘shared understanding’ must not be exaggerated; one’s views of what is rural may only be partially shared with others, and rural spaces are subject to often diverse and competing claims (see Shucksmith et al 1996; and also to be discussed further in Chapter

2). It is this socially constructed nature of 'rural' as expressed by Shucksmith et al (1996): '...rural Scotland is what and where we think it is, since rurality is essentially a social construction.'(p.4), which this thesis expands on. Furthermore, drawing on Murdoch and Pratt (1993), this thesis argues that it is important to acknowledge that particular conceptualisations of 'rural' reflect different configurations of power which are often 'concealed'. They go on to argue 'rather than try to 'pin down' a definition of rurality or the rural, that we should explore the ways in which rurality is constructed in a variety of contexts.' (p.423). In relation to this thesis, the contexts include some cases of rural areas across Scotland and the Highlands and Islands, as well as a changing policy and legislative context over six years.

### **Defining ethnicity / 'race' and deconstructing 'white'**

Ethnicity / 'race' and racism, like rural, are highly contested terms that have generated a great deal of debate and controversy as well as a vast body of literature and theoretical perspectives (Knowles, 2003; Essed and Goldberg 2001; Miles 1995). Bulmer and Solomos (1999) argue that ethnicity / 'race' have acquired a higher level of significance in debates at the beginning of this millennium, replacing the focus on class and other social inequalities. The 'colour line', observed as an important facet of twentieth century society by Du Bois in 1903 (Dubois 1989), has persisted into the twenty-first century, as evidenced by two trends: the persistence of disadvantages and discrimination based on 'socially structured racial inequality' and the power of 'racial ideas' in mobilising movements and political parties with fatal consequences – for example as witnessed in Eastern Europe following the break up of the former Soviet Union (Bulmer and Solomos 1999, p.3-4) .

Although the socially constructed nature of these concepts, especially with regard to 'race', given the biological origins of the term, is widely recognised, as argued by Rattansi and Westwood (1994), there are no 'unambiguous, water-tight definitions of ethnicity, racism and myriad terms in-between' (p.53). Despite the ambiguities and uncertainties attached to the concept of 'race', Omi and Winant (2002a) suggest that it continues to play a critical role in 'structuring and representing the social world. The task for theory is to explain this situation' (Omi and Winant 2002a, p.124). 'Race' has value as an analytical concept due to two key factors: the social meanings attached to differences based on purported physical markers such

as colour and appearance; and, the notion of differences and inequality embedded in discourses on 'race' and reproduced on the one hand as ideas, and on the other reflected in the ways in which the 'social order' is 'racialised'. (Fenton 1999, p.6)

While the concepts of ethnicity and 'race' have evolved from different intellectual, historical, social and political traditions, they often operate together and share some common characteristics. For example, 'race' and ethnicity are created or made in particular circumstances and contexts, conveying a sense of location alongside other social locators (e.g. class, gender, etc) and operating on individual lives (Knowles 2003, p.18-19; p.201-203). Consequently, in the context of this thesis, the terms ethnicity / 'race' are often used together as a reflection of the complex relationship between the two concepts and the increasing trend towards challenging the tendency to contrast the biological characteristics of 'race' with the cultural aspects of ethnicity (Gunaratnam 2003). Hall (2000) also supports the idea of a bi-directional relationship between the two concepts:

'Biological racism privileges markers like skin colour, but those signifiers have also been used by discursive extension, to connote social and cultural differences ...the biological referent is therefore never wholly absent from discourses of ethnicity, though it is more indirect. The more 'ethnicity' matters, the more its characteristics are represented as relatively fixed, inherent within a group, transmitted from generation to generation, not just by culture and education, but by biological inheritance, stabilized above all by kinship and endogamous marriage rules that ensure that the ethnic group remains genetically, and therefore culturally 'pure'.'(p.223)

However, the use of terms such as 'ethnic minorities' and 'Black' have been challenged because they tend to assume a homogeneity amongst diverse groups based on their common experience of racism, and thus fail to recognise the impact of racism for different groups, based on variables such as religion, gender or social class (Modood 2000; Anthias 1992; Anthias 1998a; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). The fact that not all groups which have a distinctive culture and are in a minority may be categorised or may self-identify as 'ethnic minorities' or 'Black', has also sometimes been ignored. Indeed, in some parts of the UK, particularly in England, it can be argued that groups categorised as 'ethnic minorities' may in

fact be in the majority. It is difficult to find 'ethnic' or other labels, which are unambiguous and acceptable to the diverse communities, and writers such as Rattansi and Westwood (1994, p.59) suggest 'one way of handling the debate on definitions is to acknowledge the wide, varying and rich connotations which may be harnessed to varying contexts'.

At a more practical level, the problems of drawing boundaries around concepts such as ethnicity / 'race' are widely acknowledged. This is reflected in the controversies surrounding the ethnic categorisation adopted for the 1991 and 2001 Censuses (e.g. Ballard 1996; Cole 1993; Fenton 1999), and ongoing discussions about categories to be adopted for the 2011 Census (Homes and Murray 2008; Macdonald et al 2005). The most controversial element of the census categorisation in the UK has been the inconsistent approach adopted, whereby some groups are categorised by 'colour' – for example, 'black'/'white', while ethnic differences within the 'white' and within the 'Black African' population especially, are ignored – and others by ethno-national (e.g. Pakistani)/geographical factors. Whilst these categories represent a pragmatic response to historical migration trends, they also perpetuate conceptual confusion in the social categorisation of groups (Ratcliffe 2004).

Increasingly, categorisation based on 'colour' has been challenged, on the grounds that it is not only closely related to the concept of 'race' in terms of phenotype, but also implies a homogeneity of experience and a denial of diversity amongst the groups identified as 'white' and 'black' (Macdonald et al 2005; Modood et al 1997; Modood 2000; REAF 2001). The Scottish Government recently commissioned a study to test a proposed set of questions on national and ethnic identity amongst a range of groups representing different ethnicities in Scotland using cognitive interviewing (Homes and Murray 2008). The resultant report, while making recommendations, highlighted some confusion about how terms such as 'ethnic group' or 'black' were understood. They also acknowledged the limitations of the census categories in the light of changing ethnicities and ethnic groups, the subjective nature of identity and the flexible ways in which individuals may define themselves.

One of the consequences of the racialisation of categories has been the tendency to conflate ethnicity with 'non-white', resulting in little or no understanding of the 'racialised identities of the ethnic majority.' (Nayak 1999, p.177) Dyer (1997, p.2) explores how, through imagery

and language, 'white people' will refer to or speak about the 'blackness' or 'Indian-ness' of people they know or see in the street in everyday interactions, and yet make no reference to the 'whiteness' of white people they interact with. He demonstrates how images and cultural narratives privilege 'whiteness', and the ways in which 'non-white' is racialised and accorded less status. While recognising diversity (e.g. class, gender and sexuality) among 'white' people, 'whiteness', as Dyer (1997, p.1) argues, is not something that has to be explained: it is perceived as the norm and is equated with being human, while 'non-white' is defined as 'the other':

'...the equation of being white with being human secures a position of power. White people have power and believe they think, feel and act alike and for all people; white people, unable to see their particularity, cannot take into account other people's; ...white people set standards of humanity by which they are bound to succeed and others bound to fail... White power none the less reproduces itself regardless of intention, power differences and goodwill, and overwhelmingly because it is not seen as whiteness but as normal.' (Dyer 1997, p.9-10)

Although Dyer (1997) does appear at times to make generalisations about all 'white' people, the important point in his argument is that he draws attention to the prevailing tendency to conflate ethnicity with 'people of colour'. This in turn has led to obscuring, and at times, an avoidance of addressing power relationships and differences between and within so called majority ethnic (the 'Scots' or 'English') and minority ethnic groups, and to the treatment of all ethnic groups as homogenous. The latter has not only been evident in relation to research on ethnicity, but also in the policy and service delivery arenas where the so called majority white ethnic groups' experiences and norms are ubiquitous; that is, they provide the invisible background against which the behaviours/experiences and norms of all other minority ethnic groups are othered (Dyer 1997; Nayak 1999). This has at times led to a focus on the internal behaviours and cultures of specific minority ethnic groups as being responsible for their 'lack of integration' or poor access to services at the expense of the power of the majority communities in determining the rules of engagements which may be discriminatory (Joppke 2004).

Coming back to the use of terms such as ethnicity / 'race', the issue is not about whether such terms exist or not, but rather that racial (biological) and ethnic (cultural/kinship) frames of reference continue to exist in a 'dense' and complex relationship with each other, and shape people's actions and give meaning to their social world with varying consequences (see also Anthias 1992; Gilroy 1992; Gunaratnam 2003; Omi and Winant 2001a; 2001b). It is for this reason, therefore, that these terms have to be retained for the purpose of social science analysis and are used together in my thesis. While acknowledging the continuing controversies on categorisation of groups and the inherent dangers of promoting essentialist views of ethnicity / 'race' (see Gunaratnam 2003), the research discussed in this thesis employs the term 'minority ethnic' to refer to people who belong to ethnic groups which are in the minority. In three of the studies (i.e. Studies 1-3) in this thesis, the focus was on 'visible' minorities (e.g. people of African, Asian, Middle Eastern and South American origin). The term 'visible' minorities is used to describe people who are non-white in preference to the term 'black' due to the controversial nature of the latter in Scotland (REAF 2001). Study 4 discussed in this thesis went beyond the traditional focus on 'visible' minorities and included all those who identified themselves as 'minority ethnic' reflecting the changing ethnicities in rural areas.

The term 'minority ethnic' is employed to reflect the fact that British society comprises many different ethnic groups, of which the Scots, Welsh and the English are also ethnic groups, as argued by Bhavani (1994, p.5): '...everyone has an ethnicity. To use ethnicity to discuss the location of black people is inaccurate'. However, the significant issue from the point of view of the studies discussed in this thesis is the location of individuals/groups as members of a majority or minority ethnic group. Within this context, it is important to acknowledge that visible or physical differences may not always be the only marker of racialised exclusion and discrimination in rural spaces' (Neal and Agyeman 2006c, p.9). For example, New Age Travellers or Gypsy Traveller communities experience discrimination (Hetherington 2006; Bhopal 2006). The term 'households' rather than communities is employed in this thesis, to underline the fact that referring to 'communities' in a context where minority ethnic people are scattered and have limited opportunities for meeting and developing associations with others from a similar background is misleading (Magne 2003).

## **Overview of Studies Discussed in this Thesis**

I have undertaken a re-analysis of four studies which provide the empirical basis of this thesis. I undertook these studies between 1998 and 2004 (see Table 1.2). The policy and legislative context, which is discussed in the next section, is important in helping to make sense of the chronology, and the focus of the studies, and provides an understanding of the impetus that led to the funding of the studies.

**Table 1.2: Overview of Studies Discussed in the Thesis**

Date	*Reference Thesis/Title in of Original Research	Funder	Description of Research	Methods used	Sample size	Chapter in Thesis
1998-1999	*Study 1 Needs not Numbers	Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)	Exploratory study of minority ethnic households in four rural communities in Scotland	1991 Census analysis and local data where available Literature Review Semi- structured interviews (31) Questionnaires (7 returns) (Adapted version of the interview schedule)	38 households	4 and 5
1998-1999	*Study 2 Parents' Experience of Primary schools	Centre for Education and Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES)	Understanding the experiences of primary school children in the Highlands from the parents'/carers' perspectives.	Semi- structured interviews (14)	14 parents/carers	6
2001-2002	*Study 3 Experiences of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds	Highland Wellbeing Alliance /Univ of Stirling	Understanding experiences of minority ethnic young people living in the Highlands	Literature Review Semi-structured interviews (18)	18 young people	6
2003-2004	*Study 4 Mapping ethnicity in the Highlands and Islands	North Forum on Widening Access	Understanding issues around post school education decision making and experiences in the Highlands and Islands	2001 Census analysis and local data where available Literature Review Semi- structured interviews (11) Focus groups (67 participants) Questionnaires (34 returns) (Adapted version of the interview schedule)	112 individuals	4 & 7

\*In this thesis the studies will be referred to as Study 1, Study 2, etc.

## **Policy and Legislative Context**

Leaving aside the specific rural dimension of ethnicity / 'race' issues, it is widely acknowledged that, with a few exceptions (e.g. Bowes et al 1990; 1991; Miles and Muirhead 1986; Miles and Dunlop 1987), minority ethnic groups in Scotland generally attracted limited sociological and policy interest before devolution. The reason for this lack of interest has been attributed to a number of factors: the relatively small size of the minority ethnic population in Scotland; the dominance of the national question in Scotland, where England has been seen as the 'other'; and the portrayal of the Scots as being tolerant due to their own experiences of being an oppressed nation at the hands of the English (Arshad 2000; 2002; Miles and Dunlop 1986; Miles and Muirhead 1986; Williams and de Lima 2006).

Before the election of the first Scottish Parliament in 1999, ethnicity / 'race' rarely featured on the Scottish agenda, let alone on the rural agenda. Consequently, when it came to making sense of the lives of minority ethnic groups in Scotland generally, let alone those living in rural areas, anyone with an interest in race equality issues was working from a very low research base (Henderson and Kaur 1999; Netto et al 2001). It was against this background that Study 1 – the first Scottish wide study on rural minority ethnic households – was funded by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and undertaken in 1998-9 (de Lima 2001). The main aims of the study were to identify the presence and social demographic features of minority ethnic households in four rural areas across Scotland, and to explore their perceptions and experiences of life and accessing services in rural communities.

In 1999, devolved Scotland inherited a fairly weak infrastructure for addressing race equality, with large parts of the country without any organisations involved in promoting race equality or supporting victims of racism (de Lima 1999; Williams and de Lima 2006). Research, funded by the CRE in 2001, into how local agencies were addressing race equality issues in rural areas across Britain suggested that evidence of activity on the issue before 1999 was scant (de Lima 2002a; de Lima 2004). Much of the increase in public sector activity post 1999 can be mainly attributed to two factors which more or less coincided with the period during which Study 1 was conducted and subsequently published in 2001: these were the recommendations arising from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, 1999) and the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000).

With regard to the former, an inquiry was launched by the then Home Secretary to investigate the murder of a young man called Stephen Lawrence in London. The aim of the inquiry was to learn lessons for the ‘investigation and prosecution of racially motivated crimes’, which led to what is known as “the Macpherson Report” (The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, 1999, Prelim). While many of the recommendations in the Macpherson report were directed towards the police services, it was widely recognised that the implications were much wider and led to a number of initiatives at the national and local levels. For example the Scottish Executive produced an Action Plan for Scotland which set out plans for collecting data on racist incidents and promoting multi-agency working at a local level (REAF 2001; Scottish Executive.nd).

Recommendations arising from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report (1999) and what was widely perceived as a lack of effective policies addressing race equality issues led to strong arguments for the extension of the Race Relations Act 1976. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into force in 2001 and complemented the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 making racist violence and harassment a specific offence (Race for Justice nd). It extended the scope of the 1976 Race Relations Act to include all the functions of public authorities by placing an enforceable positive duty (General Duty) to promote race equality. For example, this meant that public organisations are under legal obligation not to discriminate on grounds of race in functions such as service delivery, employment and policies. As part of the requirement of the Act, public organisations are required to examine all their functions and policies to ensure that there is no ‘unwitting’ discrimination (National Treatment Agency for Substance Abuse 2003).

The impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999), and the requirements imposed by the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) on public agencies led to an increasing recognition of the need for a better understanding and evidence base concerning ‘race’ in Scotland as a whole (Scottish Executive 2000d). This coincided with devolution in Scotland and the election of a Scottish Parliament in 1999. Having a Scottish Parliament made it more possible for previously marginalised groups to influence policy in a way that had not hitherto been possible with a Westminster government. There appeared to be more opportunities to influence policy changes, and individuals representing diverse interests and sectors were

increasingly co-opted to serve in short life groups established by the Scottish Executive (de Lima 2005; REAF, 2001; Scottish Executive, 2000d; Williams and de Lima, 2006).

It is important not to exaggerate the influence of Scottish devolution on addressing race equality issues in practice; for example in 2008 the Scottish Parliament has only one minority ethnic representative. Nonetheless, in contrast to the relative inactivity on race equality issues at a strategic level in pre-Devolutionary Scotland, there have been some noticeable changes. This is reflected in the efforts made to redress the information deficit that existed in relation to rural minority ethnic groups, and to the commissioning of a range of research which included rural perspectives and evidence (Scottish Executive nd; Williams and de Lima 2006). One of the first examples of such activity was an audit of research on minority ethnic groups in Scotland which included a chapter on rural minority ethnic issues (Netto et al. 2001). Study 1 played an important role in putting the issue of rural minority ethnic households on the ethnicity / 'race' policy agenda in Scotland.

There are at least three significant factors that led to the commissioning of Studies 2, 3 and 4: (i) the changing policy landscape particularly following Scottish devolution and the need for evidence; (ii) the changing legislative framework that required public sector bodies at national/regional and local levels to put in place race equality policies and schemes. This in turn generated the need for more specific types of information at the regional/local levels which led to the commissioning of studies in the Scottish Highlands and Islands; and (iii) a growing acceptance amongst policy makers that racism was an issue in Scotland that required to be addressed. The geographical focus in Studies 2, 3 and 4 on the Highlands and Islands provided an interesting context for exploring ethnicity issues. For example, given the remoteness of the region, it seemed likely that issues of ethnicity / 'race' would potentially be seen as less relevant. This had been reflected in the experiences of minority ethnic households on the ground in Study 1. There were also pragmatic reasons for focusing on the Highlands and Islands. It is where I have been based and had developed contacts during Study 1, which is an important consideration when conducting research on rural minority ethnic households and shall be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Studies 2 and 3, undertaken in the Highlands, are considered together in Chapter 6 of this thesis. Study 2 involved minority ethnic parents/carers with children of primary school age, whilst Study 3 focused on children and youth from minority ethnic backgrounds. There were at least two other factors that helped shape the research focus for the two studies: firstly, concerns about maintaining identities/culture; and secondly, the need for information in response to specific policies, in this instance, the 5-14 school curriculum framework and social inclusion. Each of these are briefly discussed below.

Turning to the first of these factors, an emerging theme arising out of Study 1 suggested that rural minority ethnic households consistently expressed concerns about the challenges that they and their children faced in maintaining their identities in an environment where there were not many households from the same cultural/ethnic and/or faith backgrounds. In addition, the opportunities for engaging in their cultural/religious practices were minimal. The latter was especially evident in the case of those living in remote areas such as the Highlands and Islands.

Secondly, there was a growing interest in addressing race equality issues in specific sectors and policy areas in response to the legislative framework discussed above and changing policy context. For example, in relation to Study 2, in preparation for changes in the 5-14 curriculum framework, the Centre for Education and Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) was commissioned to undertake research on the views and experiences of minority ethnic parents with children of primary school age in Scotland. Aware of the paucity of information on race equality in rural areas, I was commissioned by CERES to undertake research on rural minority ethnic households in the Highlands. This led to Study 2 which focused on 14 minority ethnic parents/carers with children of primary school age from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds across the Highlands, and formed part of a larger study which included samples from across Scotland (Arshad and Syed 1998).

In relation to Study 3, the policy emphasis on social inclusion with the potential to focus on specific themes (such as young people, health, etc) led to the funding of a number of Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPS) across Scotland (Communities Scotland 2007). The concept of social inclusion/exclusion, like ethnicity / 'race' and rurality is the subject of much

contestation (see de Lima 2003). It is not the intention of this thesis to review this in detail but to provide a brief overview to help set the policy context which led to the commissioning of Study 3 (as well as Study 4 discussed below). In the UK, the concept of social exclusion came into prominence with the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit in 1997 by the Labour Government. The Social Exclusion Unit's remit extended only to England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland developed their own strategies and organisational frameworks for addressing social exclusion/inclusion. Following responses to a consultation paper 'Social Exclusion in Scotland' in 1998, the 'Scottish Social Inclusion Network' (SSIN) was established to help shape Government policy on social inclusion in Scotland (Scottish Office 1999). In 'Social Inclusion: Opening the Doors to a Better Scotland', social inclusion was defined as:

'...a term applied to the complex set of linked problems centred on the lack of opportunity and diminished life circumstances, including unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, poor health and family break down.' (Scottish Office 1999, p.59)

The Scottish Government's programme was based on three priorities: excluded **young people; inclusive communities; and the impact of local anti-poverty action** (their emphasis, Scottish Office 1999, p.54). Since the initial document on social inclusion, there were a range of reports on milestones, target setting and monitoring of targets as well as the allocation of funding for research and initiatives such as the Pathfinder Projects, and Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs) (e.g. Scottish Executive 2000c; 2002). Although the focus on specific themes did provide an opportunity to address issues such as race equality, reviewing the literature and policy documents, de Lima (2003) argued that this was rare:

'While there have been some attempts to address issues of 'race' and ethnicity and to take 'institutional racism' seriously, there are a number of recurrent themes which emerge, suggesting that there has been limited success with regard to the 'mainstreaming' of 'race' / ethnicity within the discourses and policy interventions on social exclusion/inclusion in Scotland. The overwhelming emphasis on economic or labour market participation, the lack of interrogation of the notion of a 'homogenous

cultural majority’ which underpins policy discourses and the lack of ‘race proofing’ the social inclusion milestones and targets has resulted in an inconsistent and piecemeal approach to issues of ‘race’ / ethnicity.’ (p.1)

The SIP focus in the Highlands and Islands was on young people where a number of local projects were supported in specific geographical areas identified as meeting the SIP criteria. It was recognised that given the small numbers of minority ethnic households present in the region they were unlikely to be included in the samples for the larger SIP studies on young people that were being conducted (Erskine and Macivor 2000). In any case, as ethnicity was not embedded across all the SIP projects, the commissioning body (Highland Wellbeing Alliance<sup>2</sup>) agreed to fund a separate project on young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in Highland region - Study 3 in this thesis (de Lima 2002b). Whilst not ideal, in the sense that ethnicity was not embedded in the so called ‘mainstream’ SIP research and work with young people in general, at least it indicated that there was some interest on the part of public agencies to understand the experiences of young people from minority ethnic households living in the area.

Finally, the policy context that led to the commissioning of Study 4, was as a result of a combination of the social inclusion agenda in Scotland described above, and an emphasis on widening the participation of so called ‘under-represented groups’ in further and higher education. The latter led to the establishment of regional fora across Scotland; the North Forum on Widening Participation being one covering the Highlands, Moray, the Islands of Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. It identifies its mission as:

‘To work in partnership to increase the number of people from under-represented groups in the North of Scotland who progress on to higher education and to work

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<sup>2</sup> Highland Wellbeing Alliance is a consortium of public sector agencies involving Highland Regional Council, Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Northern Constabulary and NHS Highland. The geographical areas covered by HIE and Northern Constabulary extend beyond the Highlands. HIE remit includes Argyll and the Islands, Moray, Highland, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. The Northern Constabulary remit includes Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles.

together to reduce barriers to progression between education sectors.’ (North Forum  
nd)

The need for a better evidence base for widening participation in further and higher education led to the commissioning of Study 4 involving minority ethnic adults in the Highlands and Islands (de Lima et al 2005). The study focused on the interaction of diverse ethnicities with other forms of social identity (e.g. social class and gender) in relation to post school education as well as their experiences of living in the communities of the Highlands and Islands.

## Overview of Thesis

Chapter 2 reviews aspects of three strands of literature relevant to this thesis. Firstly, the ethnicity / 'race' literature which has been primarily urban focused is reviewed. Secondly, the rural literature which has sought to deconstruct notions of the 'rural idyll', and highlight the impact of particular constructions of rurality on groups and voices considered to be 'others' is examined. Thirdly, a review is undertaken of policy and action orientated research on the rural minority ethnic population in the UK rural context. From the perspective of this thesis and the review of literature, it is argued that: (i) whilst the ethnicity / 'race' literature does provide useful insights in terms of the socially constructed as well as contingent and flexible nature of ethnicity / 'race', the predominantly urban focus limits its generalisability; (ii) despite a growing recognition amongst rural researchers (e.g. Cloke and Little, 1997; Philo, 1992; 1993) that specific conceptualisations of 'rural' have resulted in marginalising groups and individuals from a sense of belonging to rural places on grounds of their gender, age, beliefs, ethnicity, culture and sexuality, the inclusion of minority ethnic perspectives have been largely absent until very recently (e.g. Chakraboti and Garland, 2004a; Neal, 2002; Neal and Agyeman, 2006a); (iii) whilst the action and policy orientated research identifies some consistent issues that emerge in relation to rural minority ethnic experiences, it is important to avoid treating them as homogenous and as 'victims'.

Chapter 3 sets out a methodological review of the fieldwork processes, and methods employed in the four studies undertaken between 1998 and 2004. In this chapter, I explore and discuss the factors that influenced my methodological approach and evolving perspectives in relation to the studies, the challenges in undertaking the research, and how my own location, as someone from a minority ethnic background living and working in rural Scotland, shaped the research.

Chapter 4 addresses the issue of demography in relation to rural minority ethnic households, in order to counter the prevailing tendency to deny their presence in rural communities. The primary focus in the context of this thesis, and particularly in relation to Studies 1 and 4, was to highlight the presence of minority ethnic households in the rural areas covered by the studies, their spatial distribution as well as their social demography. The chapter starts by providing a brief summary of the main demographic trends and characteristics of the minority

ethnic population in general, as well as that of the rural minority ethnic population. It then presents an analysis of data based on the 1991 Census undertaken for Study 1, and 2001 Census undertaken for Study 4. The chapter highlights the challenges of obtaining, as well as the pressures to obtain, accurate data on rural minority ethnic groups. It highlights the dilemma of focusing on numbers, particularly in a context where the rural minority ethnic population has tended to be small, diverse and scattered, and where the predominant tendency among rural service providers is to privilege economies of scale as a principle for addressing the needs of rural communities.

Chapter 5 considers the baseline work undertaken in Study 1 which sought to address the dearth of information on rural minority ethnic households in Scotland, and to make the presence of rural minority ethnic households and their experiences visible. Given the lack of previous research, this initial research, across four rural communities in Scotland, was exploratory. Overall, in this chapter, I argue that rural minority ethnic households were ‘invisible’ as far as policy and service delivery was concerned, yet felt highly ‘visible’. The particular characteristics of the rural minority ethnic population (i.e. their small size, diversity and dispersed settlement patterns), combined with the privileging of the principle of economies of scale for service planning/delivery, and an emphasis on specific notions of ‘rurality’ (e.g. homogenous, ‘welcoming’ and the strength of social networks) led to their ‘invisibility’, and to weak institutional infrastructures, especially in the remote rural communities of the Highlands and the Western Isles. This in turn, made it more difficult for rural minority ethnic households to access appropriate services, and consequently, more likely that they would experience social and cultural isolation, as well as strong pressures to assimilate.

Chapter 6 develops one of the recurring themes which had emerged from the re-analysis of Study 1 (Chapter 5): rural minority ethnic households, particularly in the remoter rural areas, consistently expressed concerns about maintaining their cultures/faith and ethnic identities, especially in relation to their children. Within this context, education was perceived as an important site for addressing issues of ethnicity / ‘race’ and identity. Focusing on the Scottish Highlands, this chapter explores the complex interactions between ethnicity / ‘race’ and other forms of social identity by re-analysing two studies undertaken in the Highlands; one from the

perspectives of minority ethnic parents/carers with children in primary school (Study 2), and the other from young minority ethnic people (Study 3). In the context of the thesis, this chapter focuses on two of the research themes. Firstly, it seeks to demonstrate that one of the issues that differentiates rural minority ethnic experiences from their urban counterparts, is the absence of opportunities for ‘incidental’ meetings in public spaces (such as public transport, markets, etc), and the ‘racialisation’ of spaces which makes contact within and between different ethnic groups more challenging, reinforcing feelings of cultural and social isolation. Secondly, it argues that ethnicity interacts in complex ways with location, individual commitment within agencies, culture, faith and socio-economic factors resulting in diverse views and experiences among rural minority ethnic households, thus challenging the tendency to portray all minority ethnic households as ‘victims’.

Chapter 7 explores the experiences of minority ethnic individuals in the next life course stage – that of post school education in the Highlands and Islands, drawing on a re-analysis of Study 4. Reflecting the changing ethnicities of the rural minority ethnic population, this chapter seeks to build on Chapter 6 by exploring the complex relationships between ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background, using the post school education context as a case study, to explore and provide a more in-depth account of the differences within the rural minority ethnic population. The complex factors (e.g. structural, institutional, spatial and individual) that shape the take up and experiences of post school education, and life in communities are explored. In this way, the chapter seeks to move away from passive accounts of minority ethnic households, in order to provide a more balanced explanation of the role of structure and agency in the way in which rural minority ethnic households negotiate life, including post school education in rural communities.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 8) commences by arguing that developing an understanding of the lives of Scotland’s rural minority ethnic households, not only addresses a gap but contributes more generally to developing a more nuanced understanding of the interaction of ethnicity, ‘race’ and place beyond urban areas. It argues that despite the presence of minority ethnic households in rural communities, the prevalence of essentialist connections between culture and place (i.e. ethnicity / ‘race’ as not being relevant to rural contexts, and mainly an urban ‘problem’) has resulted in the neglect of rural minority ethnic households’ voices, and

experiences in rural research, policy making and practice, as well as an absence of discussion of the ethnicity of the so called ‘majority white’ communities. Secondly, the chapter argues that ethnicity and ‘racism’ are contingent on context, are complex and flexible: Scotland and the Highlands and Islands, in particular, provide a specific context (in terms of small numbers in any one minority ethnic group, diversity and dispersion, as well as expectations of rural communities) in constraining and/or enabling a sense of belonging, and identities, and in making sense of the differences within and between rural minority ethnic households. Thirdly, it emphasises the importance of moving away from binary perceptions – i.e. that minority ethnic groups are ‘passive victims’, and the host communities are ‘perpetrators’ of racism – by recognising the role of agency in the various strategies (with regard to developing alliances and accommodating differences) adopted by rural minority ethnic households, for example in the educational as well as other contexts. Fourthly, the chapter highlights the significant contribution made to understanding the complex, changing and contingent nature of the interaction between ethnicity / ‘race’ and place, by focusing on the experiences of rural minority ethnic households in Scotland, and the Highlands and Islands in particular, drawing on four studies conducted over a period of six years. And finally, the chapter considers the challenges of undertaking research on rural minority ethnic households and a focus for the future.

## **Chapter 2 Ethnicity, ‘Race’ and Rurality – Review of Literature**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature to contextualise the four studies and provide a framework for making sense of the lives and experiences of minority ethnic groups in rural areas. In undertaking this review, the chapter draws on three broad strands of literature: ‘race’ and ethnicity; rurality, ethnicity / ‘race’; and relevant policy/action orientated literature on rural minority households.

This chapter focuses on a review of literature relating to the complex interactions between rurality, ethnicity, ‘race’, flexible identities and multipositionality within a UK context predominantly, but also drawing on some literature from outwith the UK (e.g. Essed, 2002; Keating 2008; Omi and Winant 2002; Ray 2003), where appropriate. The specificity of the historical and policy contexts is considered critical to the argument in this thesis. Other possible areas to review may have been international literature on the issues discussed in this chapter, the literature on sectarianism and on demands and constraints on housing in relation to minority ethnic groups. The focus on mainly UK literature was primarily because historical and policy contexts differ from one country to another and were considered to be not directly transferable given the foci of the thesis. Furthermore, while there is a body of literature on sectarianism (e.g. Bruce et al 2004; Devine 2000) and on constraints and demands in housing in relation to minority ethnic groups (e.g. Harrison et al 2005; Robinson et al 2005), for the purposes of this thesis, the literature on ethnicity, ‘race’ and flexible identities and multipositionality was considered to be appropriate for a number of reasons. Firstly, ‘ethnicity’ is a more inclusive concept as it encompasses the flexibility to include sectarian/faith as well as cultural issues. Secondly, sectarianism tends to foreground identities based on faith or particular beliefs, which contrasts with the thesis focus which is to explore the multi-dimensional aspects of identity within the broader focus of ethnicity / ‘race’ amongst other social markers. Thirdly, sectarianism as discussed in the Scottish context is not necessarily appropriate to understanding the context of most rural areas included in this study and making sense of the experiences of participants across the four studies. And, finally, the literature on constraints and demands in housing is grounded in a very specific policy area, while the focus of this thesis was in using literature and concepts which were not contextually

bound to help make sense of their contingency. In summary, for the purposes of this thesis, the theoretical literature on the socially constructed nature of ethnicity / 'race' and the ideas of multiple/flexible identities which are contingent on context, are interactional and shaped by constraints as well as choices was considered to provide a helpful lens to illuminate the experiences of rural minority ethnic participants in the four studies.

In this chapter, it is argued that although the emphasis on the socially constructed, as well as the contingent and flexible nature of ethnicity / 'race' in the ethnicity / 'race' literature provides some helpful insights, its urban focus limits its ability to make sense of the experiences of rural minority ethnic households. In addition, rural literature, whilst emphasising the contingent and socially constructed nature of rurality, and recognising the impact of specific conceptualisations of 'rurality' as resulting in the marginalising of some groups, has rarely addressed the experiences of minority ethnic perspectives. However, the recent engagement of sociologists in addressing this gap is facilitating greater discussion and possibilities with regard to including rural minority ethnic experiences by combining the insights of the 'cultural turn' in geography and the 'spatial' thinking in sociology (e.g. Neal and Agyeman 2006a). This has resulted in a greater emphasis on the contingent and social constructed nature of ethnicity / 'race' and rurality, providing a useful lens through which to make sense of rural minority ethnic perspectives and experiences.

And finally, in reviewing the predominantly empirical/policy/action orientated research, it is argued that there are some consistent themes that emerge which suggest that some of the experiences of rural minority ethnic households are distinct from both their urban counterparts, as well as from rural residents in general. It is argued that it is important to acknowledge the contingent and complex nature of ethnicity / 'race' as it interacts with other forms of social identities, as well as the adaptive strategies of rural minority ethnic households. Striking a balance between deterministic approaches and those that emphasise the subject as 'active', between reductionist and pluralist explanations, and macro and micro level approaches, are key challenges facing anyone studying 'race' and ethnicity.

## **‘Race’ and Ethnicity**

Rather than rehearse in detail the wide ranging debates on ‘race’, racism and ethnicity, in this section, a brief review of some of the key issues which have emerged from some of the literature since the 1990’s is provided, with a view to assessing the relevance of these in making sense of the experiences of minority ethnic communities living in rural areas. Beginning with a review of the literature on ‘race’ and ethnicity, this section includes the following: a discussion of some of the cross cutting issues that emerge from this literature focusing on the issue of flexible and anti essentialist approaches to ethnicity / ‘race’; ethnicity and the role of public spaces in promoting ‘social integration’; and concluding with a discussion on ‘ethnicity, ‘race’ and place.

### **‘Race’**

As highlighted in Chapter 1, definitions and uses of the terms ethnicity / ‘race’ are highly contested, and each has a long history and body of literature which will be briefly reviewed in this section, beginning with the concepts of ‘race’ and racism (Bulmer and Solomos 1999; Law 1996; Mason 2000a; 2000b; Ratcliffe 2004). The use of terms such as ‘race’ and racism has been challenged. For example, most notably by Miles (1995), on the grounds that racism in particular is an ‘ideological construct’ and the continued use of the term only serves to reinforce the tendency of those who wish to maintain the significance of biological differences. Miles (1995), and others (e.g. Anthias 1992; Brah 1994; Gilroy 1992; 2002; Omi and Winant 2002a; 2002b) also acknowledge that the issue is not about whether ‘race’ or racism exists or not, but rather that racial frames of reference continue to exert influence on people’s lived realities. ‘Race’ and racism are widely perceived as social constructs, where differences are constructed and based on non-existent biological differences which are thought to be expressed in cultural, ideological, political and economic activities. These concepts not only encompass ideologies and beliefs, but also social actions and social structures which impact on people’s lives, as highlighted by Bulmer and Solomos (1999):

‘... racism is an ideology of racial domination based on (i) beliefs that a designated racial group is either biologically or culturally inferior and (ii) the use of such beliefs to rationalise or prescribe the racial group’s treatment in society, as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment.’ (p.5)

The changing context of the 1990s aroused wide ranging debates in sociology about the nature and direction of societal change, which can be summarised in key themes such as Post-Fordism, Risk Society, or overarching concepts such as postmodernism and post structuralism. The so called 'cultural turn' in sociology has led to a move away from privileging structure, transforming the nature of debates on 'race', racism and ethnicity, and emphasising the emergence of so called 'new identities' and 'new ethnicities' (e.g. Brah 1998; Gilroy 2002; Hall 1995; Donald and Rattansi 1995). The extent to which culture and/or structure are important in explaining 'race' and racism, and the issue of 'new identities' are subject to contestation. Nevertheless, it is important to locate the trends in debate and argument on issues of 'race' and racism into historical context, and avoid bipolar arguments on 'structure' and 'culture' as argued by Brah et al (1999):

'... notions of multiple racisms, new ethnicities and new definitions of processes of identity formations are helping to provide fresh sociological frameworks. If the latter position is addressing the key concerns of culture, identity, subjectivity and difference, a main strength of the former position has been to place on the map such issues as social reproduction of racist ideology, state regulation of racism, institutionalised discrimination and cultural exclusion.' (p.3)

Furthermore, the tendency of previous approaches to 'race' in portraying minority ethnic groups as homogenous with little acknowledgment of differences within and between these groups has also been challenged. Previously, taken for granted definitions of majority (as white) and minority (as black), and even the use of 'black' (see Modood et al 1998; 2000) to describe the common experiences of 'non-white' minorities, have been criticised on the grounds that such concepts promote the view that ethnic identities are 'ahistorical, unitary, universal and unchanging categories.' (Brah et al 1999, p.2)

The following ideas have framed much of the discussion and research on minority ethnic groups since the 1990's (Bulmer and Solomos 1999; Brah et al 1992; Modood et al 1997), and are important in making sense of the lives of rural minorities in this thesis: (i) 'race' and racism as ideological phenomena, and/or the socially constructed/contingent nature of these

concepts (Miles 1995; Omi and Winant 2002a; 2002b; Winant 1994); (ii) the ways in which structure – culture (macro-approach) and action (micro-approach) interact in the context of ‘race’ (e.g. Essed 2001; Fenton 1999; Knowles 2003); (iii) recognising differences and diversity amongst minority ethnic groups (e.g. Brah et al 1999; Modood 2000; Modood et al 1994); (iv) anti-essentialism/anti-reductionism, and identity as multiple/flexible and contingent (e.g. Anthias 2001; Brah et al 1999; Donald and Rattansi 1995; Modood 2000) and (v) challenging the idea of racialised minorities as victims, and the emphasis on human agency (e.g. CCCS 1984; Essed 2001; Gilroy 1992; 2002).

### **Ethnicity**

As with ‘race’, ethnicity is also the subject of a long tradition of debate and discussion, and is often viewed as an alternative means of conceptualising human diversity which is more rooted in the social and/or cultural. It is possibly for the latter reason, and the potential, partly at least, for self-definition, that ethnicity is perceived as a more acceptable term by sociologists. However, the term in post-war Britain has come to be associated with ‘minorities’. This has led to a tendency to equate ethnic groups with minorities, a term which has most commonly been used to refer to British citizens and their descendants from Africa, the Caribbean and Asian sub-continent. The conflation of ethnic group with people of colour has led to the racialisation of the term ‘ethnic group’ as previously argued in Chapter 1 (see also Dyer 1997). This view is also reiterated by Guibernau and Rex (1999), who argue that ethnic group, for example in Britain, is commonly used ‘to classify minorities and inferiors, whereas majority and dominant groups do not see themselves as ethnic at all’. (p.4)

There are differences in views on ethnicity, some of which overlap with those of ‘race’. One of the main issues centres on the degree to which ethnic identities are negotiable and the significance of culture and heritage in particular. On the one hand, some approaches have emphasised the primordial aspect – representing a set of close relationships, obligations and social practices based on kinship ties and long standing cultural traditions, and which individuals internalise through the process of socialisation (Geertz 1963; Shils 1957). On the other hand, the situational/instrumental approach to ethnicity emphasises the idea that ethnic claims may be mobilised to achieve specific objectives (individual or group) depending on the context (Fenton 1999; Mason 2000a).

Barth (1969) and Wallman (1994) suggest that instead of emphasising cultural features, ethnicity is best understood by focusing on the boundaries and the processes of ethnic identification:

‘The critical focus of this investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses. The boundaries to which we must give our attention are of course social boundaries, though they may have territorial counterparts.’ (p.15)

Ethnicity, therefore, is perceived as more a matter of processes by which boundaries between groups are created and maintained rather than a matter of the internal content of ethnic categories. Central to this conceptualisation of ethnicity is not some ‘objective criterion’ of cultural differences, but rather the process by which one group constructs its distinctiveness from another. The boundaries between groups can be real or symbolic, invisible or visible. The markers used to define the boundaries vary and may include territory, history and language amongst other things (Cohen 1998; Cohen 1994; Mason 2000a; 2000b; Wallman 1979; 1994).

The strength of Barth’s analysis of ethnicity is that it represented a move away from static accounts of culture by portraying ethnicity as context dependent and a flexible resource to be drawn upon which could vary with time and place. This view provided the basis of situational approaches to ethnicity in the 1990’s (e.g. Fenton 1999) and also reflects the emphasis on ethnicity / ‘race’ as a social construct which is contingent, as highlighted in the work of Anthias (2001), Brah et al (1999) and Omi and Winant (2002a), for example. However, Barth’s (1969) privileging of ethnic identity as providing the overriding framework for interaction led to the obscuring of the dynamic nature of ethnicity as well as to what Appiah (1996) calls the ‘imperialism of identity’ (See also Sen 2001). His analysis also ignored the role and power of ‘others’ in defining ethnicity, and assumed that ethnic identity is inclusive of the full range of social identities which may be available to individuals and groups in a society. Consequently, Barth (1969) does not really address the question of how ethnicity articulates with other social divisions (e.g. class, gender and sexuality) in shaping identities

(Brah et al 1999; Lyman and Douglas 1973; Ratcliffe 2004). Rather his approach appears to imply that ‘individuals should utilise their ethnic identity in a unitary, constant and strategic manner’ (Solomos and Back 1996, p.130-131). The failure to consider the multiple ways in which people may choose to construct their identities led to a tendency where different sources of identity were set up as mutually exclusive categories in the 1970’s and 1980’s. For example, this was reflected in discussions about British born Asian and Caribbean children. It was assumed that if they asserted their ‘ethnicity’, this equated with them rejecting being ‘British’.

Increasingly, however, studies have attempted to demonstrate that individuals from specific ethnic backgrounds may invoke different aspects of their identity depending on the situation, the specific objectives and the attitudes and behaviour of others (Harrison et al 2005; Mason 2000a). For example, someone from a Pakistani background may identify themselves as being Muslim and/or Scottish/British depending on the situation (Hussain and Miller 2006; Saeed et al 1999). Situational theorists (e.g. Erikson 1999; Fenton 1999) perceive that ethnicity is both ‘socially constructed’ (viz. claims based on ancestry, language and culture), ‘socially grounded’ (viz. in the lives of families, schools, economic and political structures), and influenced by access to power. While Barth (1969) recognised actors on both sides of the ‘boundaries’ as implicated in the production of ethnic and ‘racial’ definitions, he did not fully explore the extent to which ethnic identities may arise out of self-identification, ascription by others, and issues of social power in defining ethnic boundaries. For example, those classifying particular groups as ethnic from the outside may do so based on physical characteristics or culture, whilst an ethnic group may classify itself differently (Guibernau and Rex 1999). The balance between self definition/ascription and issues of power in enabling or constraining the ability of individuals or groups to assert their identities are important factors to take into account in debates on identity:

‘Claims are made about the constitution of communities, both collectively and individually, but these claims are made in contexts of unequal power which moderate the ability of individuals and collectivities to make their claims hold, or to sustain favourable and resist unfavourable representations.’ (Fenton 1999, p.25)

Increasingly the debates in relation to ethnicity and ‘race’ in the British context appear to converge around similar core concerns, and the next two sections identify some cross-cutting issues which are relevant to understanding the main focus of this thesis – i.e. rural minority ethnic households.

### **Moving towards flexible and anti essentialist approaches to ethnicity / ‘race’**

Debates on ethnicity in the 1990s were affected by similar trends in the academic debates highlighted in the section on ‘race’, and coalesced around similar issues, two of which are particularly relevant to this thesis: (i) the emphasis on the socially constructed nature of identity which emphasises multiple explanations/anti-essentialism, and plural identities which are contingent, fluid and flexible; and (ii) the exercise of agency and identity choice. Turning to the first of these, the anti-essentialist/reductionist focus critiqued approaches which privileged explanations based on single explanatory factors (i.e. culture, biology, economy, social class and so forth). Brah (1996, p.92) describes essentialism as ‘referring to a notion of ultimate essence that transcends historical and cultural boundaries’. Essentialism, in the context of this discussion on ethnicity / ‘race’, portrays human subjects, and practices as inherent and ‘fixed embodiments’ of culture/biological factors: ethnic or racial identities are privileged over all other forms of identity. However, this has been challenged by those who emphasise the contingent and situational aspects of identity (Anthias 1992; 1998a; 1998b; Arber 2000; Payne 2000; Yuval-Davis 1997). As Sen (2001) for example, argues:

‘A person can be Nigerian, an Ibo, a British citizen, a US resident, a women, a philosopher, a vegetarian, a Christian, a painter and a great believer in aliens who ride on UFOs – each of these groups giving the person a particular identity which may be invoked in particular contexts.’ (p.322)

Closely associated with this anti-essentialist trend is the emphasis on the concept of identity as fluid and flexible – ethnic identities are perceived as interacting with and existing alongside other social identities. Omi and Winant (2002a) write:

‘Thus ‘race’, class and gender (as well as sexual orientation) constitute “regions” of hegemony, areas in which certain political projects can take shape... it is crucial to

emphasise that ‘race’, class and gender are not fixed and discrete categories and that such regions are by no means autonomous. They overlap, intersect and fuse with each other in countless ways.’ (p.132)

The acknowledgment that people are not just ‘defined by a set of binaries’, but are ‘multi-positioned’ in complex ways is also taken up by Arber (2000) who argues that:

‘... all of ‘us’ and all of ‘them’, are multipositioned, implicated in unequally empowered ways of understanding and doing; that people share positioning in common and yet are not simply defined by sets of binaries; black/white, working class/middle class, female/male ... positioning is something strategic, a coalition, a way of resistance, a precursor of agency and yet and at the same time something contingent and relational, mediated by and mediating, a criss-crossing of understandings and ways of doing.’ (p.46)

These trends in understanding identity closely resemble the concept of ‘situational ethnicity’ espoused by Fenton (1999) who argued ‘ ... no one is a full time ethnic, at least not in the same way in all settings’(p.95). The emphasis on ‘race’ and ethnicity as dynamic concepts situated in fluid, contested and changing social structures, and impacting on different groups in varying ways, and at different times across diverse spaces, also led to the recognition that there was a need to develop an ‘analysis according to specificity of experience’ (Bhavani 1994, p.4). This resulted in a variety of studies focusing on differences within and between minority ethnic groups, as well as making links to the wider UK and global contexts (e.g. Anthias 1992; Harrison with Davis 2001; Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995; Werbner and Modood 1997).

Whilst it is important not to overstate the anti-essentialist argument, the main significance of emphasising the socially constructed, contingent and flexible nature of ethnicity / ‘race’ from the perspective of this thesis is that it makes possible the development of a more nuanced understanding of the complexities that underpin interactions and social structures that privilege ethnicity / ‘race’, taking into account both the context as well as other forms of social identifications. For example, Yuval-Davis (1997) highlights why ‘ethnicity cannot be

reduced to culture' and why culture cannot be viewed in purely essentialist and structural terms:

'Gender, class, political and other differences play a central role in the construction of specific ethnic politics ... Ethnic projects mobilise available relevant resources for their promotion. Some of these resources are political, others are economic, and yet others are cultural ... Class, gender, political and personal differences mean that people positioned differently within the collectivity could sometimes, while pursuing specific ethnic projects, use the same cultural resources for promoting opposed political goals.' (p.194)

What is disappointing in these accounts of ethnicity / 'race' is that while 'specificity of experience' has usually been taken to mean a focus on differences within and between minority ethnic groups, the spatial norm of urban on which much of the discussion is based has rarely been made explicit or called into question. In the majority of approaches and studies reviewed in this thesis, there is little or no evidence of any awareness of the possible spatial limitation of their studies. This is especially evident in their generalisations about ethnicity / 'race'. In general, studies of ethnicity / 'race' have focused on urban areas in Britain which have experienced immigration over a relatively long period of time, and have sizeable communities of minority ethnic populations. This is in direct contrast to the experience of rural areas, and is the focus of discussion in the next two sections of this chapter.

Moving on to consider the second issue – i.e. the extent to which ethnic identity is a matter of choice and/or ascription. Fenton (1999) argues for a balanced approach:

'Ethnicity is a game which two can play and indeed there must be two to play. ... Wherever these relationships are unequal they are constraining and even where they are not formally unequal the individual is subject to the same sets of social expectations both within his or her own groups and from that of 'others'. Systems of ethnic classification are, therefore, as with all social behaviour, compounds of constraint and choice.' (p.18-19)

Identities based on ethnicity / 'race' cannot be seen to be imposed, but may be perceived as an outcome of negotiation, political struggle and social context. 'Race' and ethnicity are categories which 'are best conceived as political resources, that are used by dominant and subordinate groups for the purpose of legitimising and furthering their own social identities and social interests' (Solomos and Back 1996, p.207). However, this has to be balanced against the prevailing inequalities and power relations which exist in society. Whether or not ethnic identity is mobilised in a particular context may, therefore, be a matter of the specific situation and choice. There is no one to one relationship between culture and identity. At an individual level, the importance and intensity that ethnicity assumes as part of individual consciousness and awareness will vary depending on the context in which action takes place. The latter could be argued to be different for rural and urban areas as shall be highlighted in the next sections of this chapter and the thesis. Sen (2000) while arguing that individuals do exercise choice in terms of which identities they choose to prioritise and give recognition to, highlights the constraints:

'The freedom that we actually have to choose our identity, especially in the way others see us, can often be extremely circumscribed... In general, whether we are considering our identities as we ourselves see them, or as others see us, we choose within particular constraints.' (p.326)

Fenton (1999) emphasises the importance of guarding against the view that ethnic identities are/are not taken up at will. Solomos and Back (1996) write that:

'...it is important to remember that identities based on 'race' and ethnicity are not simply imposed, since they are also the outcome of resistance and struggle in which racialised minorities play a key and active role.' (p.207)

Emphasising choice in taking up ethnic and other identities, while simultaneously acknowledging that these choices like most other choices are exercised within some constraints, has been important in challenging the perception that 'racialised minorities' are invariably victims (Gilroy 1992; Modood 1998; Omi and Winant 2002a; Sen 2001; Winant

1994). This literature has emphasised that minority ethnic groups/individuals are agents who may be actively involved in opposing their subordination through alternative political, civic and cultural movements, and individual actions. However, the tendency has been to assume that minority ethnic populations are of considerable size, spatially concentrated, and can be mobilised easily, consequently limiting the generalisability of the research to rural areas. Overall, the literature provides little insight into understanding the challenges, and adaptive strategies of rural minority ethnic households who may be small in number, diverse and scattered: this is the focus of this thesis.

### **Ethnicity and the role of public spaces in promoting ‘social integration’**

One of the persistent concerns with regard to ethnicity / ‘race’, particularly in urban settings, has centred on issues of ‘integration’ or ‘cohesion’ (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007; Parekh 2000; Parekh Report 2000). While the intention of this review is not to address the debates that are ongoing in relation to ‘integration’ and ‘cohesion’ in great depth, there are some issues that are important to address in the light of recent discussions with regard to community regeneration and redesign in urban areas incorporating notions such as ‘public spaces’:

‘Public spaces (including high streets, street markets, shopping precincts, community centres, parks, playgrounds, and neighbourhood spaces in residential areas) play a vital role in the social life of communities.’ (Warpole and Knox 2007, p.2)

However, in this context public space is not just about spatiality:

‘...public space is better understood less as a predetermined physical space, and more as an experience created by an interaction between people and a place. In other words, public space is co-produced through the active involvement of the user. This shift from a place-based to a user led understanding enables the quality of public space within a neighbourhood or even a whole city to be assessed in terms of how well it supports a range of ‘public experiences’, such as belonging and companionship, risk-taking and adventure, and reflection and learning.’ (Mean and Tims, 2005 p.10)

The concept of ‘public space’ is strongly connected with the work of Habermas (1991) and his notion of the ‘public sphere’ as referring to a collective body of persons (‘the public’) and encompasses notions of spatiality as well as ‘the social sites where meanings are debated.’ (Carnegie Trust UK nd; see also Calhoun 2005). Against this background public spaces are seen as vital to the community, civic and cultural life of communities (Holland et al 2007). However, both ‘public’ and ‘spaces’ are highly contested and open to different interpretations (see also Sennett 1993; Tonkiss 2005). Even in the literature which explores the role of public spaces in contributing to ‘community cohesion’, it is widely acknowledged that not everyone is equal with respect to access and use of public spaces. Indeed public spaces can appear threatening and unsafe to some groups on grounds of, for example, age, ethnicity / ‘race’, faith, gender and social class (Holland et al 2007; Warpole and Knox 2007). Literature on minority ethnic groups has often highlighted the experience of racism in public spaces, such as streets and in community settings (Chahal and Julienne 1999; Lemos 2000a&b). From the perspective of this thesis, while the racialisation of public spaces is an important consideration to take into account, recent research discussed in this section of the review has highlighted the role of public spaces in urban areas, and cities in particular, in facilitating the two way ‘integration’ of culturally diverse and new communities. These provide important insights for further exploring the conditions for facilitating interaction between diverse communities in different settings.

It is argued that public spaces in cities provide a number of potential opportunities for positive encounters between settled and new communities, as well as between communities which may come from diverse ethnicities (Ray 2003; Dines et al 2006). Ray (2003) in the context of the United States stresses the importance of, inter alia, street design, management of schools and public transport in creating such opportunities:

‘It is difficult to overestimate the value of public transportation investments in facilitating social inclusion and access to opportunities in cities where employment is scattered in nodes throughout the metropolitan area. Even in a small city like Lowell, Massachusetts, (one of the Building the New American Community Project communities) transportation is a key factor in integration. The termination of public bus service immediately following the afternoon rush hour has been identified as a

major impediment to new refugees and immigrants taking advantage of evening English-language training courses.’ (p.1)

Dines et al (2006) explored the importance of public spaces as places of interaction in a multi-ethnic community in East London. They focused on both ‘routine’, but particularly incidental (or ‘serendipitous’) encounters in public spaces such as residential streets, markets, as well as green spaces such as parks. The authors argue that casual social interaction can be divided in two types: ‘routine encounters’ are those that take place on a regular basis; whereas ‘serendipitous encounters’ involve both frequent and irregular use of spaces:

‘Routine meetings between people are principally seen to take place where people’s everyday paths are most likely to cross: semi-domestic spaces (such as forecourts to flats and houses) and residential streets but also local shopping centres... Unexpected meetings were often described with the most enthusiasm, and where these were associated with a particular space so the importance of this space as a social arena was enhanced. For instance, an Indian man in his late sixties enthused about a local market: ‘People we haven’t seen for a few years suddenly we’ll see them in the market. “Hello! Where are you living? Where have you disappeared?” That’s the social thing about markets.’ (Dines et al 2006, p.15)

They argue that informal encounters arising from ‘serendipitous encounters’ were particularly valued by residents:

‘...the exchanges at the local market, the hustle and bustle of a shopping street, the brief conversations on residential streets – were often key to people’s attachments to their local area...’ (Dines et al 2006, p.18)

Whilst acknowledging the importance of organised activities (such as associations, clubs, etc), the study highlights the salience of public spaces in enabling contact between different ethnic groups as well as being an important factor in feelings of wellbeing. Participants in the study cited how people they knew who had left the area (mainly to suburbs) were leading very much more private lives and made little use of public spaces. The study concludes that:

‘People need a variety of public spaces within a local area to meet a range of everyday needs: spaces to linger as well as spaces of transit; spaces that bring people together as well as spaces of retreat.’ (Dines et al 2006, p.xii)

Despite its urban centric focus, Dines et al (2006) offer some interesting insights and possibilities for exploring access to public spaces in rural areas and the potential impact that the presence or absence of such spaces may have on rural minority ethnic and ‘majority’ community interactions in rural communities. Some limited discussions of the significance of public spaces in rural areas exists in relation to young people as well as older people. For example, the importance of providing social spaces for young people in rural areas was identified as a priority by research undertaken in rural Scotland (Accent Scotland Mauthner 2006). More recently there have been some very preliminary discussions on the importance of public spaces (e.g. post offices, shops, community facilities and transport) in enabling older people in rural areas to maintain good social connections and in contributing to their health and wellbeing, while also recognising that public spaces can be excluding on a variety of grounds, including ethnicity (Eales et al 2008; Keating 2008).

### **Ethnicity, ‘race’ and place**

One of the main issues that unites much of the literature that has been reviewed is the unquestioning assumption that issues of ethnicity / ‘race’ and racism are predominantly situated in the urban context where the majority of minority ethnic groups are located. The emphasis on ‘specificity’ of experiences has rarely taken into account rural spaces and contexts. This is addressed in the next section of this chapter.

The assumption in much of the theorising on the subject, including the discussion on public spaces above, assumes that ethnic groups of reasonable size, living in close geographical proximity in mainly urban areas, and consequently much of the previous research has not considered the experiences of minority ethnic groups living in rural areas. This urban focus has not only meant that rural minority ethnic households and their experiences have largely been ignored, but it has also, possibly inadvertently served, to reinforce the prevailing binary conceptualisation of urban as cosmopolitan where ethnicity / ‘race’ is highly relevant, and

rural as homogenous where ethnicity / 'race' is not relevant. As a result, the research has prioritised the study of minority ethnic groups in urban spaces, leading to the unintended consequence of reinforcing the prevailing assumptions that ethnicity / 'race' and racism are mainly of concern to urban policy makers, as highlighted in the third section of this chapter. This contrasts with the evidence which suggests that the chances of being a victim of a racist assault were reported to be higher, pro rata, in rural than in urban areas, and in areas where the minority ethnic population is small in number (Chahal and Julienne 1999; Rayner 2001; 2005, Virdee 1997).

## **Rurality, Ethnicity / 'Race'**

### **Overview**

Having set the context, this section of the literature review focuses on two aspects of the literature on rurality, with a view to assessing the extent to which issues of ethnicity / 'race' have been addressed, and the insights they offer in making sense of rural minority ethnic experiences. These two aspects include the debate on the urban/rural divide and concepts of rurality, and a discussion of the presence of 'others' in rural communities.

Paralleling the changes in academic discourses on ethnicity / 'race', there have also been transformations, mainly led by rural geographers in the ways in which 'rurality' has been defined and conceptualised (see Chapter 1; also Philo 1992; Murdoch and Pratt 1997; Cloke and Little 1997; Cloke 2004). These transformations potentially provide an opportunity to combine the insights of both literatures in developing a lens through which ethnicity / 'race' might be understood in rural places. Phillips (1998) in his review of 'rural social geography' charts the progress of the sociological imagination within rural geographical discourses, starting from what he describes as a 'restricted sociological imagination which shied away from considering phenomena which were immaterial and clearly politicised' (p.121), to academic discourses and foci which have introduced 'political economy' approaches in the late 1970's and 1980's to cultural and post-modernist turns in the 1990's. The 1970's and 1980's focus on issues of social class in particular increasingly gave way to a recognition that rural areas are 'also in many respects a racialised nationalised, aged, sexualised and gendered space.' (Phillips 1998, p.136)

Consequently, since the 1990's academic discourses have sought to challenge the myth of the 'rural idyll' by engaging with a wide range of issues including poverty, social exclusion and gender (Cloke and Little 1997; Cloke 2003; Milbourne 1997; Shucksmith et al 1996). However, it is only in the last five years or so that social scientists have begun to explore the ways in which rural places and ethnicity / 'race' interact and impact on each other. The impetus for this has emerged from a variety of contexts, including policy responses to global and demographic developments as well as recent academic interest. With regard to the latter, Neal and Agyeman (2006c, p.11) suggest that the '... the spatial turn in sociology and the cultural turn in geography ...' has led to a growing interest in the relationship between rurality and issues of ethnicity and identity. This in turn is reflected in a small but growing number of academic publications from a sociological perspective on the topic (Chakraboti and Garland 2004a; Neal 2002; Neal and Agyeman 2006a).

### **Urban/rural divide and concepts of rurality**

The basis of the long standing denial that ethnicity / 'race' (especially given its conflation with people of 'colour' as argued in Chapter 1) has any place in understanding rural life, has been a particular conception of 'rural' that has been unchallenged by critical social science analysis (Chakraboti and Garland 2004a; 2004b; Moody 1999). As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, although it is important to recognise that ethnicity / 'race' is one aspect of people's identities, evidence discussed later in this chapter demonstrates that rural minority ethnic households also experience racism and discrimination/disadvantage. Making these experiences visible, Cloke (2004, p.18) argues, is an important 'first step to a more socially inclusive future.' In order to achieve this, there are at least two important issues to address. Firstly, what is it about the conceptualisations of rurality that have led to rendering minority ethnic people invisible? And secondly, what social and cultural mechanisms 'position people of colour' as being 'out of place' in rural communities? (Agyeman and Spooner 1997, p.199).

As highlighted in Chapter 1, the notion of rurality is complex. Cloke (2004, p.19) argues that at one level, rurality is seen as characterised by a combination of three material characteristics: predominance of land based industries, despite increasing evidence of the diminishing importance of these (see for example Hope et al 2000); large tracts of land which are not developed; and small scale settlements. At another level, a 'cohesive identity based on

respect for the environmental and behavioural qualities of living as part of an extensive landscape' is also a perceived feature of rural communities. The particular meanings and understandings prevalent about rurality are in turn drawn from these characteristics based on contrasting notions of rural and urban. They are reflected in historical notions of place found in the works of sociologists such as, for example, Durkheim (1997) and Tönnies (2001), and in notions of what is described since the 1990's as the 'rural idyll'(Cloke and Little 1997; Milbourne 1997). In this context, a number of cultural attributes are given prominence as symbolising characteristics of rural life and communities. This is, for example, reflected in a study undertaken in rural Scotland by Findlay et al (1999) and many others (e.g. Jedrej and Nuttall 1996; Philo 1992; Shucksmith et al 1996):

'Rural was presented as inherently good, safe... Rural people enjoyed a slow pace of life, caring communities, and a strong sense of belonging and personal knowledge of neighbours and friends.' (Findlay et al 1999, p.85-86)

By contrast, respondents in another rural study in Scotland perceived cities as 'a setting where individuals are strangers to each other but linked through impersonal instrumental relations...' (Jedrej and Nuttall 1996, p.20). The close association of rural with nature is perceived as having quality of life enhancing benefits by enabling a life style that is 'socially cohesive, happy and healthy living, at a pace and quality which differs markedly from the city.' (Cloke 2004, p.19) 'Rural' is, for some people, portrayed as providing an escape from the harsh realities of urban life. By contrast, a study of mental health undertaken in the Scottish Highlands, reported that people with mental health problems felt that the lack of anonymity and stigma associated with their condition, led to feelings of social isolation (Philo et al 2002). One of the weaknesses in the literature on the 'rural idyll' is the tendency to perpetuate assumptions about individuals as uncritically buying into the notions that the concept appears to encompass, suggesting a lack of agency in how rurality is perceived and mobilised.

Despite the ideological power attributed to these notions encompassed in the 'rural idyll', their simplistic nature has increasingly been challenged on at least three inter-related points. Firstly, the consequence of using binaries such as urban/rural is to encourage essentialist

accounts, reinforcing stereotypical and outdated constructions of place. Rural areas do not exist in a vacuum and are subject to the same national and global influences as urban areas, increasingly calling into the question not only the distinction between rural and urban, but also the notion of a monolithic and unchanging rurality (OECD 2006). Instead, rurality is described as being:

‘...no longer one single space, but a multiplicity of social spaces... each of them having its own logic, its own institutions, as well as its own specific network of actors.’ (Mormont 1990, p.34)

Rurality, argue Murdoch and Pratt (1997), is ‘...contingent, fluid, detached from any necessary, stable socio-spatial reference point.’ (p.58)

Secondly, it is increasingly acknowledged that rural life is more complicated and diverse than that suggested by the use of the term ‘rural idyll’, or by focusing on the rural/urban dichotomy. Both these conceptualisations have led to obscuring differences between rural places, and the diversity of experiences within and between rural communities by privileging homogeneity of place and experience. Rural areas, and the experience of them are diverse. Within Scotland, the remote rural areas of the Highlands and Islands are not the same as those close to metropolitan areas. At a UK level, different ideas of nationhood in the devolved countries (for example, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) are also important in shaping ideas of ruralities as well as the lives of rural people (Bryden 2007; Neal and Agyeman 2006b; Robinson and Gardner 2006; Williams et al 2003).

Thirdly, growing rural research has highlighted issues such as poverty, social exclusion and homelessness challenging the ‘rural idyll’ and portraying what Cloke (2004, p.21) calls ‘distopic’ features of rural life (see also Cloke and Little 1997; Cloke 2003; Shucksmith et al 1996). These ‘distopic’ features are reflected in the media images following a number of crises (e.g. foot and mouth) challenging the distinction between rural and urban lives.

Despite efforts to counter the concept of the ‘rural idyll’, the notion continues to endure and to exercise some influence. This is reflected in at least three contexts; firstly, in accounts of

counter-urbanisation (Findlay et al 1999; Halfacree 1997); secondly, in the ability of rural interests to mobilise on specific issues (Milbourne 1997); and thirdly, in literature produced by agencies in rural areas with regard to attracting people to visit, work and live in them (Hijobs nd; The Highland Council nd; Taylor 2005). However, since the 1990's, a number of writers have sought to challenge the hegemonic influence of the myth of a common rural culture. They have achieved this by highlighting the ways in which such conceptualisations of rurality have led to marginalising groups and individuals from a sense of belonging to rural places on grounds of their gender, age, ethnicity, culture and so on (Cloke and Little 1997; Philo 1992; 1993).

With rural areas, increasingly being portrayed as dynamic, with diverse populations, differences between and within rural communities, and with 'distopic' tendencies characteristic of rural life, Shucksmith et al (2006) suggest that:

'... academics now tend to reject the idea of essential differences between rural and urban areas, largely because economic and social processes transcend such boundaries and as empirical studies have exploded simplistic rural-urban dualities. The social constructivist arguments, which are the basis of contemporary academic approaches to the 'rural', instead view rurality as an imaginary concept, which has different meanings to different people and whose meanings and symbols may be manipulated and contested as part of social struggles. Against this, 'rurality' has powerful and continuing resonance in lay discourses, such that 'rurality may be invisible only to the clever'.' (Shucksmith et al 2006, p.5)

### **Challenging homogeneity and addressing the presence of 'Others' in rural areas**

The emphasis on 'rurality' as a social construction, which mainly emanated from social/cultural geographers in England from the 1990's onwards, coincided with a general interest amongst social theorists and political geographers on the interaction between spaces and social relations (e.g. Lefebvre 2005; Massey 1994; Soja 2000). While the latter interests were mainly urban, the outcomes of their thinking were similar to those of the social and cultural geographers working on rural issues – i.e. an emphasis on exploring spaces as:

‘... socially produced and ‘made’; that this production and making of space incorporates gendered, raced and ethnicised, sexualised, classed social power and political relationships; that spaces are never inert and immobile but are constantly subject to social and economic change and processes of reproduction and reinvention and that within these processes, contestations, claims and counter claims will be key drivers and shapers.’ (Neal and Agyeman 2006b, p.4)

Two major sources of exploration about the experiences of minority ethnic groups in rural areas include: (i) academic developments in rural social and cultural geography, and spatial thinking in disciplines such as sociology; and (ii) a variety of locally commissioned reports by public sector agencies on the experiences of rural minority ethnic residents which is discussed in the next section below.

Turning to the academic developments, knowledge of how ‘rurality’ has been constructed, and the role of academics in defining who the ‘knowers’ are, and what kinds of knowledge are privileged, has increasingly come under scrutiny since the mid 1990’s (Murdoch and Pratt 1993; 1997; Sibley 1995). Sibley (1995, p.37) draws attention to the neglect of perspectives other than ‘white ones in the literature’ on rural. However, despite the growing emphasis since the 1990’s on the importance of giving voice to diverse ‘rural others’, the majority of accounts of rural life still continue to view the connections between rurality and culture through the lens of ‘typically white middle class narratives’ (Philo 1992, p.200). Philo (1992, p.200) argues that there has been a tendency to portray rural populations as ‘...white and probably English, straight and somehow without sexuality, able in body and sound in mind, and devoid of any other quirks of (say) religious or political affiliation.’ This has been evident at least in the lack of attention paid to ‘visible’ minority ethnic households (Agyeman and Spooner 1997; Chakraboti and Garland 2004a).

These early trends in discussions in social and cultural geography, and the more recent engagement of a small number of sociologists in rural sociology, particularly in the English context, have opened up opportunities to address previously neglected issues, including ethnicity / ‘race’ issues (see Chakraboti and Garland, 2004a; 2004b; Neal and Agyeman 2006a; 2006b). In addition to highlighting the heterogeneous nature of rural spaces, another

contribution of the literature on the socially constructed nature of spaces has been to recognise that spaces (landscapes) are not neutral and that spaces and people are mutually constitutive of each other. They both shape and convey particular ‘cultural attitudes and activities’, and are ‘sculpted’ by human interaction and ‘social relations’ (Neal and Agyeman 2006, p.3; see also Relph 1996). These insights have been important in addressing how power relations in rural areas have led to particular hegemonic ideas embodied in notions such as the ‘rural idyll’. This has, in turn, resulted in the privileging of mainly middle class perspectives of rural, and the ‘othering’ of a wide range of perspectives and people who are seen as not fitting into the prevailing images of ‘rural’:

‘... that rural studies... have all too rarely taken as an explicit point of departure the variegated constituents of rural areas – the diverse peoples found there, identified according to various criteria both by themselves and by those around them, and many of whom are very much ‘other’ than ‘Mr Average’.’ (Philo 1992, p.200)

In addition to the increasing recognition of the contingent and socially constructed nature of rurality, the importance of understanding the mechanisms through which specific meanings attached to the concept are included or excluded are also emphasised by Murdoch and Pratt (1997):

‘... taking Other ruralities seriously means that we must attend to the frameworks or organisation that allowed the so called Others to disappear from view and then to re-emerge in the light of academic attention.’ (p.58)

The trend, emphasising the plurality of rural spaces and voices, has led to research which has sought to give a voice to, and understand the mechanisms through which specific groups and their experiences might be marginalised or included – for example, women, those in poverty, the homeless and those described as ‘incomers’ (Hughes 1997; Little 1997; Milbourne 1997; Shucksmith 2000; 2004). Despite a plethora of locally commissioned reports that have sought to make visible the ‘otherness’ of people from minority ethnic backgrounds, there has been relatively little academic debate and literature on ‘racialised otherness’ (some exceptions are Neal and Agyeman 2006a; Chakraboti and Garland 2004a).

This absence is even more evident in literature on rural Scotland where the predominant focus has been on ‘incomers’, who are mainly part of a counter migration trend (i.e. urban migration into rural areas), and English people (Jedrej and Nuttall 1996; Findlay et al 1999; 2004).

Apart from a brief mention in Shucksmith and Phillip’s (2000) review on social inclusion, which acknowledged that some groups, such as women, elderly people and ethnic minorities, were more likely to face exclusion than others in rural areas, an audit of research on minority ethnic groups in Scotland (Netto et al 2001) revealed that literature on rural Scotland (e.g. Shucksmith et al 1996; Hope et al 2000) had neglected to address the presence and voices of minority ethnic groups in rural communities. On the question of why issues of ethnicity and ‘race’ have been ignored in rural debates, there are a number of closely related factors. The lack of problematisation of ethnicity within the rural context has led to the underplaying, if not ignoring, of the relevance of ethnic heterogeneity in rural areas: ‘the rural racialised other has certainly been given less attention than alternative othered groups.’ (Cloke 2004, p.26; see also Chakraboti and Garland 2004a). This neglect is partly a result of at least four factors: (i) the urban bias in the sociology of ethnicity and ‘race’ (highlighted previously in this chapter); (ii) a general lack of interest among sociologists in contributing to the discussions on the conceptualisation of rural; (iii) the tendency among agencies and rural residents to deny, what Cloke (2003, p.3) labels, ‘transgressive presences and practices’ from rural spaces, in this instance associated with ethnicity / ‘race’ and the denial of the relevance of these in rural areas; (iv) and the privileging of particular voices amongst academics working in rural areas. Sibley (1995) referring to the discipline of human geography in particular argues that:

‘The post modern enthusiasm for difference seems rather unconvincing when the presence of authors other than white ones in the literature is such a meagre one, but it is clearly difficult to shake Eurocentric and imperialistic impulses in a subject whose history is so bound up with colonialism.’ (p.137)

In addition, the ‘invisibility of whiteness as an ethnic signifier’, the conflation of ethnicity with people of colour, echoing Dyer’s (1997) views discussed in Chapter 1, and the association of diverse ethnicities/cosmopolitanism with urban, has also led to rendering minority ethnic groups invisible in rural communities. Agyeman and Spooner (1997) were

amongst the few writers to challenge the absence of discussion on ethnicity in rural areas in the English context:

‘For white people 'ethnicity' is seen as being ‘out of place’ in the countryside, reflecting the Otherness of people of colour. In the white imagination people of colour are confined to towns and cities, representing an urban, ‘alien’ environment, and the white landscape of rurality is aligned with ‘nativeness’ and the absence of evil and danger. The ethnic associations of the countryside are naturalised as an absence intruded upon by people of colour.’ (p.199)

Research, mainly in England (see Agyeman and Spooner 1997), demonstrated the long established links between ideas of rurality, ethnicity and ethnic purity. The purity of rural areas is often juxtaposed with the pollution of urban areas, and cities have been aligned with ‘racial degeneration’. Agyeman and Spooner’s (1997, p.199-100; see also Kinsmen, 1995; Daniels 1992; 1993) work also highlighted how, particularly in the English context, the close association of the rural landscape with English national identity (which is equated with being ‘white’), has resulted in the exclusivity reflected in the denial of the presence of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in rural areas. Although the work of Agyeman and Spooner (1997) was important in highlighting the invisibility of minority ethnic groups against a ‘white’ hegemonic rural discourse, there appears to be no research on the association of the landscape with national identity/ethnicity in the Scottish context.

The closest Scotland has come to dealing with racism in a rural context until the last five years or so, is in relation to the issue of ‘incomers’ and the ‘Englishing of Scotland’. The debate on who is ‘local’ and who is ‘an incomer’ in a rural context has provided an opportunity to debunk the myth of rural communities as ‘homogenous’. The specific characteristics associated with being ‘local’ are belonging based on having roots and ancestry locally; the ‘incomer’, on the other hand, is associated with negative characteristics such as lack of roots, not belonging, recent arrival and being a fugitive (Findlay et al 2004; Jedrej and Nuttall 1996; McIntosh et al 2004). These assumptions mean that not all those who live in rural areas feel they can participate in the community or gain entry into the ‘community of neighbourliness’ (Day 1998; Jedrej and Nuttall 1996; McIntosh et al 2004; Shucksmith et al

1996). While this research is useful in highlighting the experiences of newcomers into rural areas, the focus has tended to be mainly on the experiences of the English migrating into rural areas of Scotland with little consideration of where other ethnicities fit into this framework.

## **Public Policy/Action Research on Rural Minority Ethnic Groups**

This section charts the development and findings of the public policy driven/action research, undertaken mainly at the local/regional levels, to provide a context and help make sense of the findings of the four studies in this thesis. This growing research played an important role in addressing the gap in literature related to ethnicity and 'race', and paved the way for issues of ethnicity to be addressed in discussions on rurality and 'others' discussed in the previous section.

### **Overview**

From the mid 1990's to around 2002, much of the research on rural minority ethnic households sought to make their presence visible and highlight their experiences of life in rural communities. This led to a concentration on three main issues: (i) identification of rural minority households, often in terms of numbers to demonstrate their presence; (ii) evidence of the ways in which structures (interpreted to include institutions, laws, and customs/traditions/expectations) had a constraining or determining influence in creating feelings of marginalisation. In addition, issues such as barriers to accessing services and experiences of racism/discrimination were also highlighted; and (iii) recommendations were made for addressing their marginalisation and experiences of racism and overcoming barriers to accessing services.

Much of the early research was commissioned in response to committed individuals and local organisations pursuing the issue at a local level and a growing awareness among public sector agencies of the importance of addressing equal opportunity issues (Craig et al 1999; Dhalech 1999a; 1999b; Henderson and Kaur 1999). Given the lack of previous information, the tendency in this early research was to privilege accounts of rural minority ethnic households as homogeneous and as 'victims' of the system. The efforts of minority ethnic groups to counteract these experiences or in developing coping strategies were rarely explored. Consequently, static and essentialist accounts of minority ethnic households tended to be perpetuated. Little attention was paid to the ways in which ethnicity articulated with others aspects of identity – for example gender, age, socio-economic and so on – or to specific spatial contexts. Nevertheless, this research played a vital role in making the argument about

the relevance of ethnicity to rural contexts, which more recent rural literature and research, particularly in the context of England and Wales, has been in a position to develop further.

More recent research (around 2002 onwards) has stressed the importance of taking into account the diversity among and between rural minority ethnic households, across different rural geographies and national contexts (e.g. Neal and Agyeman 2006a; Robinson and Gardner 2006). Rural spaces are not neutral but imbued with meanings which are derived from the dialectic relationship that exists between people and place, as expressed by Relph (1976, p.34): 'people are their place and a place is its people'. Places convey cultural and social meanings, which often are subject to competing claims, resulting in the inclusion of some people and the marginalisation of others.

The emphasis in the recent literature is on privileging conceptualisations of ethnicity / 'race' and rurality as socially constructed. Within this context, the contingent, flexible and diverse nature of perspectives and experiences of rural life are stressed, and represents a move away from accounts that portray rural minority ethnic households/individuals as predominantly 'victims' (Neal and Agyeman 2006a; Robinson and Gardner 2004; 2006). It has also enabled a more nuanced understanding of rural minority ethnic experiences by drawing on the trends in both the ethnicity / 'race' literature and rural literature of plural identities which are contingent, flexible and changing. To some extent, this more recent focus has also coincided with a changing policy (e.g. Labour Government policies to address social exclusion or inclusion in Scotland) and legislative framework – for example the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)) previously discussed in Chapter 1. These developments have provided public agencies with an impetus and the drive for more in-depth data on specific aspects of rural minority ethnic experiences and lives to underpin their policies (de Lima 2003; Netto et al 2005).

This section now turns to a consideration of topics that have been identified from the review of this literature as being relevant to this thesis. The review is organised under two broad headings: the 'invisibility' of rural minority ethnic households which discusses issues concerning access to services, racial harassment, isolation and maintaining cultural identities;

and multiple identities and issues of choice/constraints focusing on children, young people and adults within the context of education in particular.

### **The 'Invisibility' of rural minority ethnic households**

Since the publication of Jay's report (1992) 'Keep them in Birmingham' and Fife Regional Council's report in Scotland (1991) 'Race Equality in Fife', a plethora of locally/regionally commissioned reports followed, mainly in the English context (Derbyshire 1994; Dhalech 1999a; Garland and Chakraborti 2002; Kenny 1997; Nizhar 1995). In addition, organisations such as Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO 1994), National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO 2000) and a publication by Henderson and Kaur (1999), all expressed concern about the lack of attention given to race equality issues in rural areas and argued that these should be given greater priority. Much of the research discussed in this context was about making the presence of rural minority ethnic people visible, in order to raise awareness of the relevance of addressing race equality issues in rural areas and to make recommendations for addressing inequalities and discrimination.

Despite some limitations (e.g. small sample sizes, and the tendency to treat minority ethnic groups as homogeneous) of the rural studies, in general, the research revealed that the ways in which minority ethnic groups experienced rurality was complex (de Lima 2001; Netto et al 2001). On the one hand, their experiences were similar to those of the general rural population in areas such as access to transport and restricted employment opportunities; on the other hand, like their urban counterparts, they experienced similar barriers in accessing appropriate services and facilities; thus highlighting similarities in experiences on a range of issues across the rural/urban divide in Scotland (Stevenson Ltd 2003). What the studies also consistently revealed was that minority ethnic communities in rural areas were often in a paradoxical situation which was distinct from that faced by their urban counterparts.

The characteristics of minority ethnic groups (that is, in terms of their number, diversity and dispersion) combined with their rural location, and the prevalence of weak infrastructures for addressing race equality, added another dimension to their experience, creating different dynamics and pressures. For instance, on the one hand they were invisible, in that their presence was not widely acknowledged and their particular needs were not recognised in

policy and delivery of services; yet on the other hand, they were highly visible within the community, and because of their small numbers, they were more likely to feel vulnerable to racial discrimination and harassment (Chahal and Julienne 1999; Lemos 2000a, 2000b; Rayner 2001; 2005). The ‘invisibility’ of minority ethnic groups in rural communities has, as already argued in this chapter, been attributed to their presence being strongly associated with urban areas. This is despite the fact that research drawing on the 1991 and 2001 Censuses has shown that there was a presence (albeit small) of minority ethnic households across most, if not all, local authorities across England and Scotland, discussed in Chapter 4 (Dalton and Hampton 1994; Goldsmith and Makris 1994; Reeve and Robinson 2004a; 2004b; Robinson et al 2005; Scottish Executive 2004).

Research has consistently highlighted that a combination of factors have shaped the experiences of rural minority ethnic households. These include: their demographic characteristics (e.g. small in number, diverse ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds); spatial dispersion; the persistent denial of their presence; the lack of economies of scale in delivery of services tailored to their needs; and a weak infrastructure for addressing race equality issues (Dhalech 1999a; 1999b Garland and Chakraborti 2002; Magne 2003). For the purpose of this thesis, three main issues which emerge from the literature with regard to their experiences are summarised below: (i) access to services, focusing on education in particular; (ii) experiences of racial harassment; and (iii) challenges faced by rural minority ethnic households in maintaining their cultural identities.

#### **Access to services – numbers rather than needs or rights**

Although minority ethnic households and groups face similar challenges to other rural residents, research has shown that service planning, and provision in rural areas in particular, privileges the ‘economy of scale principle’, which is based on urban models of service delivery (Pugh 2004). This has led to service provision that treats diverse communities as if they are homogeneous, particularly with regards to minority ethnic households. This homogeneity is based on treating the views and values of the dominant ‘white’ majority as the norm, as highlighted by The Lincolnshire Forum for Racial Justice (LFRJ 1999):

‘It is clear, despite some interesting and significant advances, that statutory and mainstream voluntary service providers within the county are overwhelmingly white and ethnocentric... On the whole there is still a tradition of organisations offering what they see as “colour-blind” services, i.e. service provision is open (in theory) to everyone regardless of race, colour or creed, and a resistance to “special provision” for particular groups.’

The attitude that race equality issues were irrelevant to rural areas because of their small numbers continued to prevail well into 2001 (de Lima 2002a). The following response received from a Chief Executive of a Scottish rural local authority in the course of undertaking a project for the Commission for Racial Equality was not untypical:

‘In view of the very small percentages involved, we do not feel that we can contribute to your research in anyway. As it is the Council has no research documentation in connection with this matter.’ (de Lima 2002a, p.14)

This viewpoint reflects an internalisation of the widely held belief that ‘given the small numbers there is unlikely to be a ‘problem’. A recurrent theme that emerges from much of the research is a ‘numbers led’ rather than needs or ‘rights’ led approach (de Lima 2001). In addition, there appeared to be an assumption that somehow it is the presence of minority ethnic people that is associated with problems: ‘You are constantly being told there is ‘no problem here’. Being black here is a huge problem.’ (de Lima 2002a, p.30)

It is important to acknowledge that there has been some increase in activity on race equality issues in rural areas which may be attributed to, for example, the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) and the Race Relations Amendment (2000) Act. Nevertheless, the slow, and in some cases lack of, progress in addressing the needs of rural minority ethnic households in relation to services has continued to be highlighted (de Lima 2006; Garland and Chakraborti 2002; Pugh 2004; Robinson et al 2005). Despite the lack of information on specific services (such as health, education, housing, business advice, advocacy etc), much of the research confirms that rural minority ethnic households tend to experience barriers in accessing appropriate and relevant services in general. Their situation, compared to their urban

counterparts, is acknowledged as being compounded by issues of population size, dispersion and heterogeneity, and also the lack of recognition of their presence, and the prevalence of urban models of service delivery, as already highlighted. Experiences of discrimination at point of access, delivery, and when using services, are well documented (e.g. Craig and Manthorpe 2000; Dhalech 1999a; Dhillon 2006; Stevenson Ltd 2003). Overall, there are three recurrent barriers to services that emerge from the research: poor access to information and advice, language and communication issues and capacity building issues.

Firstly, poor access to information and advice. Underpinning much of the poor access to services was a lack of knowledge about relevant sources of advice and information and how to access these. This was compounded by at least three factors: language and communication barriers, discussed below; lack of knowledge and skills amongst rural provider agencies of how best to address the needs of diverse and dispersed minority groups; and an emphasis on an urban model of delivering services which has focused on economies of scale in the delivery of services (de Lima 2006; Garland and Chakraborti 2002).

Secondly, language and communication barriers were evident even in relation to those who had lived in rural areas for a relatively long period of time. Their inability to speak English or communicate effectively combined with the lack of adequate English language learning provision and translation/interpreting facilities impacted on people's ability to access work, services and engage with the wider communities in which they lived.

Thirdly, there were also barriers concerning capacity building, representational issues to influence services (planning and delivery) and policy decisions, and lack of leadership amongst key decision makers. Building capacity, given the heterogeneous and scattered nature of the households is challenging (Magne 2003). Often, rural minority ethnic households were so isolated that they themselves were unaware of other minority ethnic households in the area and internalised the prevailing dominant ideology; "that there are not many households like them", and so, they should not expect their needs to be met. While the internalisation of this perception could be part of their survival strategy, it can also result in minority ethnic households putting up with a great deal - "fitting into the system", rather than challenging it (de Lima 2005).

Local workers employed to address race equality issues in rural areas tended to find themselves operating in isolation, and were often overwhelmed by the scale and nature of the issues to be addressed (Dhalech 1999b). In addition, they also faced scepticism about the relevance of race equality and the prevalence of racism in rural areas, as illustrated by a quote from a co-ordinator of the Powys Victim Support in Wales:

‘We had to overcome a great deal of scepticism. One response that sticks in my mind is “You are surely not suggesting that we are going to have race riots in Ystrad?”’  
(Powys Victim Support 2000, p.11)

There is a tendency to be over reliant on the commitment of individuals; making the nature of racial equality work precarious:

‘During the period when a governor was appointed with special responsibility for them, bilingual pupils began to be integrated into the school, but with the departure of this individual, the management and governors moved closer to ignoring them again ... compliance with legislation (e.g. Race Relations act 1997; the Children’s Act1989) depended in large measure upon an agent (in this case the governor/researcher) who was prepared, and able, to confront the passive attitudes that prevailed.’ (Kerry 1998, p.62)

### **Experiences of racism**

The issue of racism and racial harassment<sup>3</sup> received greater attention in rural areas following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) than had been the case previously. While people from minority ethnic backgrounds are just as exposed to discrimination and racist abuse in rural areas as in urban areas, the vulnerability of minority ethnic individuals/households to racism (verbal and physical) is heightened in rural areas, or areas where the population size is

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<sup>3</sup> Racial harassment includes verbal or written abuse, physical attacks on persons or property and behaviour deemed to be intimidating. It is the motive of the perpetrator, that is racial hatred, and the impact on the victims - for example, distress or fear caused - which makes an act into ‘racial harassment’ (Lemos 2000, p.4).

small (Chahal and Julienne 1999; Lemos 2000b; Rayner 2001; 2005; Virdee 1997). This is compounded by their greater visibility, fears of reprisals in small communities where people may be all known to each other, and the lack of mechanisms to address the phenomenon and provide support for victims. Furthermore, in rural areas, racist practices and attitudes may often go unchallenged in the absence of routine contact with minority ethnic people.

In discussing issues of racism and racial harassment, it is important to keep in mind the data constraints. The quality of information, and the way in which incidents are recorded, categorised and presented are inconsistent, making it difficult to compare statistics across areas and even within areas. Furthermore, the increase in levels of recorded racial incidents reported have to be interpreted with caution due to both under-reporting and under-recording of incidents (de Lima 2002a; 2005). With these limitations in mind, research has, however, consistently highlighted the prevalence of racial harassment and discrimination in the day to day lives of minority ethnic households living in rural areas (Garland and Chakraborti 2004a; Magne 2003; The Robert Gordon University and Grampian Racial Equality Council 2004). Verbal abuse was the most common form of racist abuse experienced, however this did not preclude other incidents such as physical assaults, damage to property and acts of vandalism, and some groups appear to be more at risk than others: for example, those from 'visible' minorities and Gypsy Travellers (de Lima 2002a).

Based on Home Office figures on racist incidents in England and Wales, Rayner (2001) reported that minority ethnic individuals in low density ethnic areas were at greater risk of being attacked on racial grounds. For example in England, Northumbria topped the list and was closely followed by Devon and Cornwall and South Wales. Drawing on the prevalence of racist incidents in Britain according to the size of the minority ethnic population in police authority areas, he noted that the safest areas were those with the largest ethnic minority populations (e.g. London). In contrast, minorities in rural areas were two to four times more likely to have experienced racism. For example, he notes: '... Northumbria Devon and Cornwall, and most of all Wales and Scotland – prove the most dangerous.' (Rayner 2005, p.16). Commenting on Scotland, he notes the difficulties in obtaining more detailed breakdown of racist incident statistics by police authority area. Citing Scottish Executive figures that there were 3,801 recorded racist incidents in Scotland in 2002/3, he goes on to

argue: ‘We can say that, with an ethnic minority population of just over 100,000 according to the 2001 census, Scotland as a whole is one of the 10 worst areas in Britain.’ (Rayner 2005, p.16). The trends identified by Rayner (2002; 2005) were also supported by local evidence across rural Britain where such data has been available, (Suffolk Multi-agency Forum Against Racial Harassment 2001; RAHMAS 2001). Often, a racial harassment incident is not a “one off” event, but part of a series of ongoing experiences, in the words of one rural worker:

‘People are ‘spat at’ on a daily basis ... they put up with it because they have got to live here. In the past when they have contacted the police they did nothing, so people feel why bother?’ (de Lima 2002, p.18)

In general, apart from the importance of improving the reliability of data in this area, there is also a gap in research on the impact of racial harassment on the lives of minority ethnic individuals/households in rural areas (RAHMAS 2001). Furthermore there is a tendency to treat minority ethnic groups as homogenous with little understanding of how racial harassment impacts on particular age groups, genders or ethnicities.

### **Isolation and maintaining cultural identities**

A recurrent theme which emerges from the literature is the experience of social isolation, and the challenges that minority ethnic households experience in maintaining their cultural identities in what is perceived as a mainly ‘mono-cultural’ environment. The ‘mono-cultural’ environment has often been associated with ‘whiteness’, lack of others from similar ethnic backgrounds, prevalence of stereotypes, and strong pressures to assimilate. The sense of isolation is exacerbated by a lack of interest and understanding about other cultures in rural areas. From a minority ethnic perspective contact with others from a similar ethnic background is considered important in helping to cope with feelings of social exclusion and isolation (Magne 2003). For instance, Mike Prescott described his experience of ‘being black in the countryside’ at a NCVO Conference (Dhillon 1994):

‘England’s so called green and pleasant land is not like the inner cities. It is a mythical picture of the countryside that racists will go to any lengths to preserve.

Living in a rural area is very different for Black people compared to living in towns and cities. It is even more stressful.’ (p.16)

‘The cause of stress was attributed to the lack of access to a ‘multi-cultural community’, as well as to the entrenched attitudes and stereotypes of ‘black people’ as ‘the natives, uncivilised, ignorant, having no refinement ...’ (Dhillon 1994, p.15)

However, not all minority ethnic people experience rural life in this way (an issue discussed further in the next section). For example, Robinson and Gardner (2004, p.95) in the context of Wales highlight the fact that some of their research participants perceived being ‘different’ as having social benefits: ‘Some interviewees enjoyed standing out, being “exotic”, and welcomed the increased attention that they would garner as a result ...’ Research conducted through the ‘Black Families Talking Project’ in London between 1994 and 1996 (Lee and Murie, 1999) indicated that many ethnic minority communities coped with feelings of exclusion and isolation from the ‘white’ majority through a strong cultural identity of their own, strengthened by community spirit, group meetings, and cultural and religious networks. The importance of community networks based on a shared sense of identity and solidarity are some of the factors identified as critical in facilitating not only inclusion and social capital, but also in maintaining health and prosperity (Wacquant and Wilson 1989). However, in rural areas the tendency for such social networks to exist has been much less due to the low numbers of people from minority ethnic groups, their diversity and the distances people have to travel. For example, Magne (2003) in a study undertaken in Devon draws attention to the particular challenges faced by rural minority ethnic households:

‘... there are not communities of Black and Minority Ethnic people living in co-ethnic clusters, and that due to the diversity of place of birth, most Minority Ethnic people have little in common with one another in terms of ethnic identity. As a consequence, it is inherently difficult for Black and Minority Ethnic people to find co-ethnic peers outside of their family and establish social relationships.’ (p.5.10)

The situation is exacerbated in rural areas by limited access and availability of public spaces of the kind that one may find in urban areas (discussed in the last section). The consequence

is one of limited opportunities for incidental social interactions, despite efforts on the part of minority ethnic households to fit in. This situation is made more difficult by the strong expectations in rural areas that newcomers should ‘assimilate’ into the local cultures (Garland and Chakraborti 2002; Jedrej and Nuttall 1996; Magne 2003). Derbyshire (1994, p.33) found that those who succeeded in fitting in on terms set by the majority community found a high level of acceptance, but this was also at a cost: ‘Here I keep a large part of myself hidden. It’s like I have two lives’. The pressure to conform was also highlighted by a participant in another study:

‘The society takes away your identity and gives it back when it wants to. You are an ‘honorary white’ when it suits them. If you are wealthy and middle class and if you do the right thing, you have the right accent, then you experience less racism.’ (de Lima 2002a, p.45)

This quote also reflects the complex ways in which ethnicity and social class interact in shaping experiences. Maintaining self-esteem and a sense of identity in the absence of others from a similar background is felt acutely by minority ethnic groups living in rural areas. This is brought into sharp focus particularly for households with children growing up in a ‘white’ mono-cultural rural environment and is discussed below.

### **Multiple Identities and issues of choice**

While the early research discussed above has been important in highlighting the prevalence, extent and nature of inequalities and racism in rural areas, it would be a mistake to assume that racism is monolithic (see for example, Connolly 2006; Robinson et al 2005). Not all minority ethnic people living in rural areas have negative experiences, nor are they all ‘passive victims’ and homogenous. Three major weaknesses of much of the policy orientated research discussed above are: (i) a tendency to underplay the role of agency amongst minority ethnic households by privileging particular experiences; (ii) the treatment of the population as homogenous; (iii) and the lack of recognition of the diversity of rural spaces. To a large extent, it is important to recognise that the earlier research was undertaken in response to the lack of recognition of racism in rural areas and the importance of getting ‘rural racism’

recognised: however, more recently, there have been a few exceptions which have sought to address these gaps (Robinson and Gardner 2004; 2006).

Research has highlighted that minority ethnic people in rural areas identify multiple advantages to living in their area, such as 'peace and quiet', lack of crime and generally a better quality of life, just like other incomers to rural areas. A limited number of studies have shown the lengths to which minority ethnic households will go to overcome social isolation and maintain links with their cultures, challenging the predominantly 'victim' status attributed to them. A study in Leicestershire (Scoon 1998), for example, found that members of minority ethnic households living in rural villages travelled to cities such as Derby, Nottingham or Leicester, for leisure, cultural and religious facilities. Similar practices including the establishment of faith and non-faith groups led by minority ethnic people have also been documented in other rural areas, such as the South-West of England (Magne 2003).

There is also a dearth of research that addresses the diverse nature of communities and rural places; for example, there have been instances of rural communities rallying around minority ethnic families and individuals in situations where they have been threatened with deportation (Hughes 2008, p.15); thus challenging the blanket stereotyping of rural residents as antagonistic and racist towards newcomers. This emphasises the importance of understanding the context/specificity of the rural communities involved.

Although, in much of the urban literature on ethnicity, it is widely acknowledged that there is a complex inter-relationship between ethnicity and factors such as culture, gender, age, religion, class, and disability, an analysis of these complex inter-relationships has been limited in the rural context. The few studies which have explored these interactions suggest that some groups may be more at risk to experiences of racial discrimination, harassment and isolation in rural situations (e.g. Goldsmith and Makris 1994; McKinney 2001; Scourfield et al 2005). The literature on the interaction between ethnicity and factors such as gender, age and socio-economic background is explored below, by focusing on the experiences of three groups which are relevant to this thesis and Studies 2, 3 and 4 in particular: the perspectives of minority ethnic children, youth, and post school education decision making in relation to individuals aged 16 years and over (See Table 1.2 in Chapter 1).

### ***Minority ethnic children and youth***

Despite a growing body of literature, albeit mainly in an urban context (Arshad et al 2004), an audit of research in 2001 acknowledged that there was a dearth of research on children, youth and the impact of ethnicity in Scotland as a whole, let alone in rural areas:

‘Although the proportion of young people in the minority ethnic population is larger than in the majority population, their views and experiences have been under-researched. Little is known of their educational and career aspirations, an area which is of obvious importance given the current concentration of minority ethnic people within a limited range of occupations, industries and types of business. The lack of attention to children’s views and experiences of social care services is also of concern.’ (Netto et al 2001, p.164)

This gap has also been highlighted in other parts of the UK. Scourfield et al (2005) in the context of Wales, for example, argue that compared to the extensive literature that exists on ethnic identity in relation to adults, little is known or understood with regard to children’s and young people’s views of how identities are constructed and negotiated generally. This gap is even more noticeable in rural areas. With the exception of a few small scale studies (e.g. Nayak 1999 in England and Scourfield et al 2002; 2005 in Wales), there has been no research in Scotland which has sought to understand the impact of ‘place’, and especially rural places, on minority ethnic young people growing up in rural Scotland, and on their attempts to articulate their cultural identity and feeling of belonging within predominantly ‘white’ cultural settings.

Children and young people face additional pressures growing up in a rural context, arising from the lack of opportunities for socialising with others from a similar cultural background, and the prevalence of strong pressures to assimilate into the so called ‘mainstream culture’ (Scourfield et al 2005). For example, research has highlighted evidence of families adopting European names for their children, and of children trying to make themselves white by bleaching their faces (Derbyshire 1994; Suzin 1996). Sutherland (2004), growing up in Orkney as a ‘black’ child vividly describes his ambivalence about growing up there, and the lengths he went to, to be accepted by his peers:

‘I developed an intense ambivalence about Orkney and its people. On the one hand, I felt very much a native and was treated as such, while on the other, I was denied the possibility of real integration because of my perceived otherness. ... I expended all my energy deflecting attention by telling racist jokes and daring more than even the most deranged head cases.’ (Sutherland 2004, p.5)

The tendency for the social interactions of those from a ‘visible’ minority background to be racialised is reflected in the following experience recounted by a young girl when she moved to rural Wales with her family:

‘I am still in Comprehensive School and have got used to racist attacks by white people. I have finally accepted the fact that I am coloured and therefore white people will always look upon me with hatred and not human love.’ (Richards 1994, cited in NCVO, 1994)

In a review of research on children’s experience of racism, Barter (1999) argued that evidence suggested that children from minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to experience bullying than their white counterparts. In addition, the review suggested that children living in areas where there were few minority ethnic households were more likely to be vulnerable to racial abuse and its effects on them were heightened in the absence of support structures. A study into young people’s experience of racism in Glasgow revealed that for most participants, racism, although primarily based on skin colour also included any ‘prejudicial or exclusionary behaviour’ including that based on ‘race’, religion and ethnic background. Racism was a daily occurrence which the young people felt was not taken seriously by those in authority. Young people reported more overt experiences of racism mainly in educational institutions and on the street, with name calling being the most common experience (Hampton 1998).

Although much of this research refers to children and young people’s experiences in urban areas, research on children from ‘visible’ minority ethnic backgrounds, or from a different culture in a South Wales Valley where the population is predominantly ‘white’, found that

issues of identity were also perceived as being negotiated in 'racialised contexts' (Scourfield et al 2005, p.222). This reflects earlier research in mainly 'white' areas of England and Northern Ireland (e.g. Troyna and Hatcher 1992; Connolly and Keenan 2002). Identities were contingent on social context, and were characterised by complex relationships between individual identity and the 'collective' (e.g. class, Welshness, etc.) identities available. Scourfield et al (2005) argue that:

'Interviews with the children showed them to be using a variety of creative strategies to negotiate their identities in a challenging and racialised context ... Some maintain their identities with pride and for others the maintenance of a minority ethnic identity is put under extreme pressure.' (p.211)

The need to move beyond fixed and rigid notions of racialised identities, taking into account the multidimensional aspects of individual and group identities, has been emphasised by a number of authors as previously discussed (Brah et al 1999; Hall 1997). It is also supported by growing research on issues of identity generally. Saeed et al (1999), in their study of identity among young people of Pakistani origin in Glasgow, highlighted the complex, but flexible and constantly changing nature of identity, as well as the use of 'bi-cultural' identities (e.g. terms like Scottish-Muslim, etc.) by young people. Challenging the simplistic binary categories used to describe identity, they argue:

'Furthermore, this identity could challenge those who continue to use the simplistic discursive oppositions of British/Immigrant or indeed black/white. In short, an identity which is inclusive rather than exclusive, and intelligent rather than simplistic, needs to be fostered.' (Saeed et al 1999, p.840)

However, Saeed et al (1999) argue that whilst the employment of hyphenated identities amongst the young people of Pakistani origin may reflect their use of identity in flexible ways, for there to be fundamental changes in the way identities are conceptualised and enacted, there also need to be '... an equivalent flexibility in indigenous white formulations of what constitutes legitimate inclusive identity' (p.841). To achieve this, there is a need to

challenge the tendency to reify 'race' as a difference that is difficult to surmount, and its reliance on simplistic notions of equating 'blacks' as 'victims' and 'whites' as 'oppressors'.

Education in particular is widely acknowledged as an important site for the production of 'racial' and other identities, as well as being a mechanism for addressing social disadvantage. Overall, research has consistently highlighted similar issues which seem to persist: the lack of recognition of the cultural diversity of children and young peoples' experiences; the 'Eurocentric' emphasis in the curriculum; the lack of recognition and support for bilingual pupils; and, bullying and racial harassment (e.g. CERES 1999; Children in Scotland 2003; Netto et al 2001). However, with a few exceptions, research suggests that discussion of ethnicity or race equality in the educational context in general, and schools in rural areas, in particular, has tended to take place within fairly limited parameters: those of language provision, and occasionally, those of religious education and demonstrating aspects about one's culture (e.g. Arshad et al 2004). Nayak (1999) argues that education and schools in particular play a significant role in:

'... the production of racial identities via the curricula, beliefs, values and attitudes propagated. In this sense, they cannot be regarded as institutions which passively reflect or mechanically reproduce social relations of race.' (p.185)

Although the significance of education in producing 'racialised identities' is important irrespective of place, in rural areas and in areas where the minority ethnic population is small, it could be argued that the role of institutions such as education in addressing racialised identity issues may take on a greater significance. Drawing on ethnographic research in the North east of England, Nayak (1999) highlights the importance of opening up the debate on what constitutes 'legitimate inclusive identity'. He argues that it is important to challenge the previously discussed tendency to conflate ethnicity and 'ethnic minorities' with 'non-white', which has led to the neglect of 'white' ethnicities, and the portrayal of the latter as monolithic (see discussion in Chapter 1). In addition, he argues that because multiculturalism has mainly focused on the ethnicities of minorities, it can result in feelings of being left out among the 'ethnic majority' by failing to engage with 'whiteness':

‘Here whiteness is construed as normative, the blank canvass of experience ... The perception that some teachers had was that white, working class students had no culture, yet this was in direct contrast to how young people experienced ‘Geordie’ identity within their locality.’ (Nayak 1999, p.186)

A view reinforced by Rutherford (1997) in his discussion on the impact of multi-culturalism in the English context:

‘The celebratory language of multi-culturalism has tended to reproduce Asian and black British people as Other simply because it never took white English ethnicity, as problematic. Similarly white anti-racism in its disavowal of whiteness and English ethnicity ignored or denigrated white people’s emotional attachment to their ethnicity. Neither strategy provided the space to analyse whiteness and English ethnicity and make it a subject of debate.’ (p.163)

The work of Nayak (1999) and Scourfield et al (2005) highlight the multi-faceted and flexible forms of identities young people inhabit. These identities are located in a deeper understanding of the contingent nature of ethnicity / ‘race’ and the power relationships within which ethnicities are embedded, which are critical to developing a more inclusive identity.

### **Ethnicity and post school education context**

In their review of research on education and ethnicity in Scotland, Pawney et al (1998) highlight the dearth of research on this subject in general, and with regard to access, participation and attainment issues in post school education in particular. A number of authors (e.g. Hampton et al 1997; Walsh et al 1995) have suggested that the Scottish experience was likely to be different from the English, because the size of the minority ethnic population in Scotland was small, and did not form a critical mass as in England. However, the ways in which this experience was likely to be different was not really addressed by this research.

Against this background, the review in this section draws on literature on post school education (defined for the purpose of the thesis as further and higher education), mainly in the

English urban context. It discusses two issues that are relevant to this thesis: factors affecting decision making and experiences once in the system, particularly focusing on the multipositionality of minority ethnic individuals, and issues of choice.

### ***Post-school decision making and Multipositionality***

Various models have been used to make sense of post school educational choices in general. Broadly, a distinction can be made between two models: quasi-economic models that emphasise a process of individual information gathering, and rational choice (Kotler 1997; Moogan et al 1999); and those that provide a more socially embedded explanation (e.g. Ball et al 1998; 2000; 2002; Taylor 1992), which is relevant to this thesis.

Ball et al (2000) explore how individual perceptions and decisions about post school choices are conditioned by factors such as personal experience, differential skills and family social capital. Following a substantial cohort from an inner city school, and also a referral unit, they provide a broad analysis of the social context which conditions young people's post school choices. They demonstrate the interaction of factors such as class, gender and 'race' in influencing perceptions and decisions in relation to accessing educational opportunities. They argue that 'race' appears as a factor alongside the others:

'Very few of the young people referred to their social class or gender in any direct way – although some of the ethnic minority young people saw their race as a key aspect of their identity.' (Ball et al 2000, p.6)

The strength of what has been described here as the socially embedded explanation is that it relates individual decisions to a broader set of factors that might be perceived as constraining or broadening perceptions and possibilities. Young people do not make their educational choices based on a simple economic calculus in which all are equally placed in the educational and career market place, but are influenced by a wide variety of 'internal' and 'external' factors (Taylor, 1992). Internal factors include the degree of family support and encouragement which are considered to be important in making decisions about post school education. For example, Moogan et al's (1999) study which included minority ethnic participants found that word of mouth was the main source of information, with parents and

friends playing a critical role. Minority ethnic parents, in particular were more likely to encourage their offspring to go into higher education:

‘Almost all of the Asian informants, regardless of class or gender, felt that there was a strong ‘push’ factor with parents insisting on degree study. Asian parents stressed the importance of education in overcoming racial and socio-economic barriers.’ (Acland and Azmi 1998, p.78)

Other factors that were also important in making decisions about what to study were course content and location, while grade requirements acted as a constraint. The reliance on parents for information on post school educational opportunities identified by Moogan et al (1999) was particularly significant for first generation minority ethnic students, whose parents were not well educated and/or had no previous experience of higher education in the UK:

‘There was a feeling that although many parents wanted their children to take courses in subjects such as medicine, law or business studies, their understanding of higher education institutions was limited, as the majority had not been to higher education themselves. As a result, they could not provide adequate advice or support in their off-spring’s decision-making process.’ (Allen 1998a, p.71)

Furthermore, factors such as the encouragement and support given by the external environment to the potential student – for example, the quality and attitude of the school attended – and the quality of communication by post school institutions, also play a role in post school decision making. Within this context Ball et al (1998) argue that ‘race’ is an important factor:

‘The post 16 Education and training market ... is suffused, structured and inflected by ideas of ‘race’ and ‘racism’. Race is a significant analytical category in relation to all of the issues with which we are concerned. These are student choice, provider recruitment and marketing, access to courses and retention.’ (p.171)

Ball et al (1998) found that institutional approaches to recruitment, marketing, access and retention were racialised in the sense that the staff of the colleges involved in their study were aware of their market place and their student profile, albeit in a rather stereotyped way. They often had stereotyped views of the characteristics of, for example, 'Black' male students or 'Asian' students. These views were also sometimes internalised by minority ethnic students themselves. For example, they cite three 'Black' women who were concerned at the possibility of being in a college with a large number of 'Black' students, who were seen as possibly not being serious about their studies, and likely to 'distract' or 'harass' them (Ball et al 1998). Research evidence on the significance of 'ethnic mix' in post school institutional choices is not clear cut, as highlighted by the reaction of the black women students cited. Although Ball et al (2002) found that class was more important than 'ethnic mix' in making decisions about which university to attend, 25 out of 65 respondents cited 'ethnic mix' as a factor that affected their choice:

'Choice was, for some students, in part about sustaining aspects of their ethnic identity or having this identity valued and defended, or at least not having to defend or assert the value of their identity. Some higher education contexts were seen as more tolerant of difference, or perhaps more accurately, these were contexts where difference and diversity were 'normal'.' (Ball et al 2002, p.348)

Taylor (1992) reported that minority ethnic groups tended to apply to institutions near their homes, or to institutions that seemed to provide support, because they had a substantial number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The importance of ethnicity was also highlighted by Acland and Azmi (1998): almost all of the Asian respondents in their study did not wish to study in an institution or a city with 'few Asians':

'... the full-time prospectus was considered to be an important indicator of the suitability of the HE institutions for someone of their ethnic background. They looked to the prospectus and other pre-entry information for pictures of Asians or ethnic minority students to see if it was the sort of place they would fit in.' (Acland and Azmi 1998, p.79)

Marketing materials and prospectuses which not only presented welcoming images that projected diversity, but also followed it up with written information that demonstrated that institutions were serious about providing a supportive environment, appeared to be critical in attracting students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

From the perspective of this thesis, the literature review on post school decision making provides insights into the complexity of student choices and the dangers of treating minority ethnic individuals as a homogeneous category. It highlights the multifaceted nature of post school decision making, drawing on the complex interaction between class, ethnicity, personal experiences and backgrounds. However, one of the major weaknesses in the literature reviewed here is the focus on mainly urban minority ethnic experiences, where the provision of post school education is largely based, and there is a larger concentration of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Consequently, there is little understanding of how the geographical and demographic contexts of minority ethnic households may impact on post school decisions.

### ***Experience of post school education***

Once in the system, what are the experiences of minority ethnic students? A number of recurrent themes emerge centred on the curriculum, teaching and learning and relationships with peers that are relevant to Studies 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis.

The 'Eurocentric' nature of the curriculum in schools and universities can result in devaluing the cultures, values and identities of those from minority ethnic backgrounds, often resulting in a lack of confidence and feelings of isolation (e.g. Bains 2002; Brah 1996; de Lima, 2001). Osler (1999) in her study of undergraduates reports:

'Students' experiences of schooling appear to have had a significant influence on their expectations of higher education. Most of the undergraduates did not expect a multicultural curriculum within higher education; they were not surprised when black people's experiences were marginalised or ignored ... most had resigned themselves to learning contexts in which their own experiences and cultures were not considered.'  
(p.47)

This can be contrasted with the findings of Acland and Azmi (1998), where a number of the respondents in their study expressed disappointment and surprise that the curriculum did not include relevant minority ethnic experiences, for example, in history or social sciences, and that there were not enough minority ethnic writers included in the literature covered by courses. Providing specialist modules (e.g. equal opportunities) on selected courses was considered an inadequate response. These findings were also confirmed by a qualitative study undertaken by Allen (1998b), who argued that there was a strong:

‘... overall dissatisfaction in the way that anti-racism had failed to permeate their courses in a more rigorous way ... black students questioned the relevance of the curriculum when it failed to introduce their specific experiences of being black into the classroom and lecture hall.’ (p.88-89)

The author suggests that the students were driven to find an ‘alternative curriculum’ and bookshops which acknowledged black heroes, such as Malcolm X or Gandhi, in their attempts to counteract what they perceived as the ‘Eurocentric’ bias of the curriculum. On issues related to teaching and learning, Acland and Azmi (1998), and Allen (1998b) found that students expressed concerns about the way in which racism subtly affected the way staff interacted with minority ethnic students. Examples of staff/student interactions included insensitive comments being made by staff about minority ethnic people, the prevalence of stereotypes (e.g. ‘Asian parents are too strict’) and the use of ‘inappropriate ethnic metaphors’ (Acland and Azmi 1998; Bains 2002).

Osler (1999) found that her respondents were most critical when it came to discussing relationships with other students. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds often expressed feelings of social and cultural isolation (Allen 1998b; Hampton et al 1997; Osler 1999; Walsh et al 1995). The Asian women in Osler’s study (1999) also argued that decisions to wear western or traditional dress tended to affect the way in which others responded, often resulting in a lack of contact between themselves and other students. Minority ethnic students often had to choose to wear western, rather than traditional clothes to deflect racial harassment. Students who chose to wear traditional clothes such as the ‘Hijab’ (head scarf) encountered racial abuse and harassment. Allen (1998b) also highlights the subtle ways in which racism

operates: ‘... it is the glance and the unsaid.’ (p.87) Bains (2002) in her study of the experiences of South Asian university students also found that they expressed feelings of isolation from their peers, especially where there were few Asians on the course:

‘For many South Asian students of my generation, they were the first to attend university in their families. It is a leap into ‘White’ universities, where narratives of alienation and loss are acute.’ (p.6)

Even student led organisations were not immune from racism (see Acland and Azmi 1998). Partly out of choice, and partly to counter the ‘exclusionary tendencies of their ‘white’ peers’, students from minority ethnic backgrounds formed their own informal networks of support, and developed alliances with others from minority ethnic backgrounds. For example, Allen (1998b) found that African-Caribbean and Asian students had created a physical space, and a network in the University where they were studying. This informal network had both educational and political functions: they met to discuss the ‘pedagogies and practices of the institution’, as well as to discuss and work out strategies for problems they had encountered within the institution.

While this literature provides important insights into the ways in which ethnicity shapes the experiences of minority ethnic students in post school education, it tends to treat minority ethnic students as a homogenous group. Even the category ‘Asian’ encompasses a wide variety of ethnic groups – e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, etc. – whose access to post school education and experiences may vary (Connelly and Chakrabarti 1999). Furthermore, the urban emphasis of this literature does not necessarily address the experience of rural minority ethnic individuals who may experience even greater social and cultural isolation, as they may not be in a position to access support of others from the same background as them.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed three strands of literature – ethnicity / ‘race’, rurality and policy related/action orientated research – relevant to making sense of the experiences of rural minority ethnic households/individuals, including youth. The literature review has identified at least two gaps which this thesis seeks to address, as well as insights which the findings of the four studies discussed in this thesis shall explore.

With reference to addressing the main gaps, firstly this thesis focuses on addressing the invisibility of rural minority ethnic groups, which has emerged from the urban centric focus of the ethnicity / ‘race’ literature, and the monocultural and ethno-centric focus of the literature on rurality. Secondly, given the predominantly English focus of much of the literature on the rural minority ethnic population, the thesis aims to develop an understanding of the specificity of minority ethnic experiences in Scottish rural context.

Drawing on the literature reviewed in this chapter, this thesis seeks to enhance understanding of the contingent and complex nature of ethnicity / ‘race’ as it interacts with other forms of social identities, the challenges faced and adaptive strategies of minority ethnic households who may be small in number, diverse and scattered across rural areas. More specifically, the following key issues are examined in the light of the literature reviewed: firstly, the presence of minority ethnic people in rural areas, and their perspectives and experiences of rural life, taking into account some of the issues identified by the literature – e.g. access to public services, weak infrastructures for addressing race equality and so on; secondly, the nature of the impact that ideas encompassed by notions such as the ‘rural idyll’ have on rural minority ethnic households/individuals and children and young people in particular; thirdly, the contingent and situational aspects of identity which may mobilise a range of factors (e.g. ethnicity, faith and gender), and the ways in which minority ethnic children, young people and adults are ‘multipositioned’ in complex ways in rural contexts, focusing on the educational context; and finally, the uptake of ethnic and other identities by emphasising choice and adaptive strategies, while at the same time acknowledging that choices are also exercised within some constraints.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology: Researching Ethnicity / ‘Race’ in Rural Contexts**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology which shaped the processes and methods used in undertaking the four empirical studies discussed in this thesis between the years 1998 and 2004 (see Tables 1.2 in Chapter 1 and 3.1 in this chapter). The overall focus of this thesis is about developing an in-depth understanding of the complex interaction between ethnicity / ‘race’ and rurality, using Scotland as the context for exploring these issues. Drawing on four separately commissioned studies undertaken by me, a reanalysis was undertaken of the data for the purposes of this thesis.

The chapter focuses on: (i) the contribution of the different studies to the focus of the thesis; (ii) the methodological approach underpinning the studies; (iii) an overview of the methods utilised across the four studies and the re-analysis undertaken for the purposes of this thesis; (iv) a discussion of the methods used in each of the four studies, and (v) the challenges, but also the particular benefits to be gained by considering the four studies as a whole. The question of my positioning as a researcher in terms of the possible influence of my own biography – as an Asian woman living and working in rural areas – is also an important consideration. This is discussed as relevant within the context of this chapter.

### **Overall Contribution of the Studies to the Focus of the Thesis**

My overall methodological approach was informed by my interest in developing an in-depth insight into the complex interactions between ethnicity / ‘race’ and rurality. It seeks to explore, in particular, the ways in which rural minority ethnic households, experiences and practices are situated in specific spatial, national, local and other historical and material contexts. This interest was partly in response to my own geographical location in remote rural areas of Scotland since 1980; first of all, in rural Perthshire and then, in the Scottish Highlands. I was also curious about the lives of people like me – those from ‘visible’ minority ethnic backgrounds – who are often perceived as not being from the area. What also bothered me was that despite the presence of ‘visible’ minority ethnic households and

individuals in some of the most remote areas, mainly running small retail and catering businesses, they were absent in public spaces, such as for instance community centres, community events, in the forest or on the beach. It was the drive to understand this paradoxical situation – their invisibility yet feeling highly visible – and my background as a sociologist with an interest in exploring issues of difference and social justice that led me on a journey to approach agencies to fund research in this area.

It took nearly six years after the first Commission for Race Equality (CRE) funded study in England (e.g. Jay 1992) for the first Scottish study (Study 1) on rural minority ethnic experiences to be funded in 1998. My own experience of trying to persuade organisations to fund the initial study reflected the challenges faced by researchers in persuading funders that understanding ethnicity / ‘race’ in rural contexts was relevant to policy and service delivery development. One of the factors that facilitated the process of gaining support for Study 1 in particular, was the presence of a Head of Research in the CRE Head Office in London at the time, who had a strong personal interest in rural issues as he holidayed in the Highlands, and was familiar with the context: thus reflecting the importance of individual interest and commitment to race equality issues identified by the research reviewed in Chapter 2 (Kerry 1998; Powys Victim Support 2000).

The four studies on which this thesis is based reflect the development of knowledge, conceptual thinking and research concerning the relationship between ethnicity / ‘race’ and rurality over a period of six years. The studies contribute to these developments and the thesis focus in four main ways as elaborated below and highlighted in Table 3.1

**Table 3: Contribution of Four Studies: Chapters 4-7 to the Thesis Focus**

<b>Chapter Number and Titles in Thesis</b>	<b>Study/ Studies</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Thesis Focus</b>
<b>4 Addressing the invisibility of rural minority ethnic households and understanding their demography</b>	<b>1 &amp; 4</b>	Census 1991: Study 1 Census 2001: Study 4	Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the 1991 Census data undertaken for Study 1 and 2001 in relation to Study 4, in order to: (i) demonstrate the presence of minority ethnic people in rural areas in Scotland especially in the context of Study 1 and (ii) provide an understanding of their social demography including their diversity, particularly in relation to Study 4.
<b>5 The lived experiences of minority ethnic households in four rural communities</b>	<b>1</b>	Interviews Questionnaires	Chapter 5 aims to make the presence of rural minority ethnic households visible by exploring the ways in which specific notions of rurality and policies have impacted on minority ethnic households in four rural communities in Scotland. It also seeks to make sense of how their experiences are distinct from their urban counterparts and rural residents in general.
<b>6 Growing up in the Highlands: the experiences of minority ethnic parents/carers and young people</b>	<b>2&amp;3</b>	Interviews	Chapter 6 drawing on Studies 2 and 3 focuses on one of the recurring issues that emerged in Chapter 5: the question of maintaining the cultural/ethnic identities of children and young people in environments where there were not many households from the same ethnic or faith background. Using education as well as the broader rural context of the Highlands, this chapter explores the: (i) interaction between ethnicity/ identity and other factors such as socio-economic background and faith; (ii) constraints and opportunities in relation to exercising identity choices; and (iii) the adaptive strategies employed by parents/carers and young people in asserting and maintaining their identities, while at the same time adapting to the communities in which they reside.
<b>7 Minority ethnic experiences of post school provision in the Highlands and Islands: exploring differences</b>	<b>4</b>	Interviews Focus Groups Questionnaires	Reflecting the changing ethnicities of the rural minority ethnic population, chapter 7 seeks to understand in more depth the complex interaction between ethnicities, socio economic background, gender and their location in different parts of the Highlands and Islands in the context of post school education decision making as well as more generally in relation to their experiences of life in the Highlands and Islands. It seeks to understand the ways in which individuals overcome the specific challenges posed by living in rural areas.

Firstly, the studies build on each other. This has enabled a more dynamic account of rural minority ethnic households to be presented, whilst simultaneously highlighting the evolving and changing context (e.g. policies, demography and so on) and their experiences over a period of time. Study 1 (Table 3.1 and Chapter 5) was the first Scotland wide study ever conducted, which provided an overview of rural minority ethnic households. Its main focus was exploratory, taking into account different types of rurality, particularly in the absence of research in Scotland on rural minority ethnic households and their invisibility in research, policy and service delivery (previously highlighted in Chapters 1 and 2). To a large extent, the emphasis in this early research was on rural minority ethnic households as a ‘homogeneous group’.

However, as the argument about the relevance of ethnicity to rural contexts increasingly gained recognition, rural literature and research, particularly in the context of England and Wales in the last five years, emphasised the diversity amongst rural minority ethnic households, across different rural geographies and national contexts (discussed in Chapter 2, and see also Neal and Agyeman 2006a). This also coincided with a changing policy landscape (e.g. social exclusion/inclusion; community safety, etc) and legislative requirements (e.g. the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000), previously discussed in Chapter 1. These changing contexts gave rise to the need for research to develop a more nuanced understanding of issues affecting minority ethnic groups to underpin policy and service delivery developments, reflecting what Robinson and Gardner (2004, p.88) call an ‘action orientated’ phase. Drawing on these trends in rural research and policy, Studies 2-4 focused on the perspective of parents/carers, young people, and adults from diverse backgrounds within the context of education. The choice of the latter for the purposes of this thesis was partly pragmatic, but also partly because education is perceived as an important site for addressing issues of disadvantage, discrimination and promoting attitudinal changes (Nayak 1999).

The increasing focus on the diversity of the rural minority ethnic population from Studies 2 onwards, was partly a response to the requirement for evidence to underpin specific policies and also to a changing demographic context. The 2001 Census suggested that the rural minority ethnic population (‘visible’ minorities) had grown since 1991. Studies 1,2 and 3 focused mainly on ‘visible’ minorities for two reasons: much of the research suggested that being from a ‘visible’ minority ethnic background in rural communities increased the vulnerability of individuals/households to discrimination (Chapter 2; see also

Rayner 2001; 2005); and the policy emphasis was on minority ethnic groups which were conflated with 'visibility'. However, from 2002/3 onwards, there was a noticeable change in the minority ethnic population of the Highlands and Islands. This was reflected in an increase in the recruitment of agency workers from the former Communist countries in sectors such as tourism, fish processing and social care, and the small number of women from these countries who were marrying Scottish men using the internet. To reflect these changing trends, Study 4 adopted a more inclusive definition of 'minority ethnic' to include 'visible' and 'non-visible' minorities; thus highlighting the importance of taking into account the changing context of ethnicity / 'race', as well as recognising the socially constructed and contingent nature of these concepts.

Secondly, the spatial focus of all four of the studies was on rural areas. Study 1, covering a broad geographical focus, included four rural areas, whilst Studies 2-4 focused on the Scottish Highlands and Islands as a remote rural region which also encompasses different types of geographies (e.g. remote rural, small towns, city with a large rural hinterland and islands). To some extent the geographical location of the studies was based on pragmatic considerations, which is perhaps a reflection of the way in which marginalised research has to proceed. For example, Study 1 was based on four rural local authority areas in Scotland: Angus, North Ayrshire, Highland and the Western Isles. This focus was a consequence of the way in which the argument for the funding had to be made. The funding for Study 1 was obtained by establishing that it would add to the first Scotland wide study on rural poverty/disadvantage in Scotland, which had been undertaken in four rural communities (Rural Forum 1994; Shucksmith et al 1996), and is discussed in more detail below. Identifying areas not investigated in the study, for instance, it did not include minority ethnic perspectives, and drawing on the growing local research that had been undertaken in England on rural minority ethnic experiences (discussed in Chapter 2), provided an important springboard for making a stronger case for Study 1 in Scotland in a way that had not been possible earlier.

The spatial location of the subsequent studies (i.e. 2-4) was based on my own location in the Highlands, and my ability to access funding, more easily available due to legislative and policy changes. I considered that it was important to highlight the relevance of ethnicity in remote rural areas such as the Highlands and Islands, and to understand the experiences of minority ethnic households in this context for two reasons. On the one hand, such an understanding would contribute to the growing development of ethnicity /

'race' research in Scotland as a whole (Netto et al 2001). On the other hand, and based on the growing evidence in England (Jay1992; Dhalech 1999a), I believed that the 'accepted' stance of public agencies in Scotland that ethnicity / 'race' and race equality issues were irrelevant in rural areas, because there were no minority ethnic communities or because their numbers were too small to warrant specific attention, was based on a fundamental misconception of what race equality should be about.

Indeed it could be argued that it is even more important that race equality issues are addressed in this context. Given the high levels of youth out-migration which exists in many rural areas (e.g. Jamieson and Groves 2008; hallaitken 2006) one could well ask, how well are those living in rural areas being prepared for work and life in an increasingly global/cosmopolitan diverse world? Or, given the importance of tourism in many rural areas of Scotland, how well are the tourist services able to cope with clients from many different cultures and countries? In addition, if ethnicity and issues of 'race' could be shown to be relevant to remote rural areas such as the Highlands and Islands, it would also help challenge the more general assumptions prevalent in Scotland at the time about issues of 'race' being an English problem, which really did not apply in Scotland (Arshad 2002; Williams and de Lima 2006).

Thirdly, developing from Study 1, the subsequent three studies provided a mechanism for exploring issues of difference and diversity, developments over time, and across generations in relation to issues such as identity, accessing services and living in rural areas. Consequently, it was possible to move away from accounts which treat rural minority ethnic households as homogeneous, and instead, to develop a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which different aspects of individual identities impact on their experiences and lives in rural communities.

Finally, the thesis provides an opportunity to explore the strategies adopted by different minority ethnic individuals living in rural areas, moving away from the strong pressures in policy orientated research at the time to portray such individuals as passive victims in order to demonstrate 'need'. Associated with this, the thesis, by bringing together four studies, has also provided the potential for understanding the contingent and complex nature of rural minority ethnic household interactions with those from the majority 'white' communities in a way that avoids binaries – i.e. minority ethnic households as 'victims'

and majority 'white' communities as perpetrators of 'racism'. It also considers their active participation in rural life.

## **Methodological Overview**

Before discussing the methods used in each of the four studies, this section focuses on the methodological approach which shaped the research (See Table 1.2 in Chapter 1 for overview of the four studies).

### **Pragmatic Approach to Researching Minority Ethnic Population**

The commissioned research discussed in this thesis set out to provide an answer to the 'problem' of the dearth of information (as previously highlighted in Chapter 2) about the minority ethnic population in rural areas, in response to legislative requirements and policy changes (discussed in Chapter 1), using the most appropriate methods in the circumstances. While the studies were constrained by limited funding, short time scales, and the agendas of the funders, which essentially were to respond to particular policy contexts or local issues (as discussed in Chapter 1), it is important to emphasise that these are issues which are not peculiar to the research discussed in this thesis, but which research in general has to grapple with (Patton 2002).

In this context, how might I best articulate the underpinning epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions of the four studies discussed in this thesis? Creswell (2003) and Layder (1998) provide some useful insights that help to illuminate assumptions that have guided my research for this thesis by avoiding the dualistic debates between those who espouse scientific approaches on the one hand, and constructivist approaches on the other (see also Badley 2003). Creswell (2003) highlights the importance of researchers making their paradigm or underlying philosophical assumptions about what they expect to learn, and how they will gain this knowledge explicit in designing research. He suggests four 'alternative knowledge claim positions' (see Creswell, 1993, p.6-12): postpositive, socially constructed, advocacy/participatory and pragmatic. The latter, I would suggest, closely reflects my underpinning assumptions in the research discussed in this thesis. So, what are the key characteristics of 'Pragmatic Knowledge Claims'? Creswell (1993) argues:

‘There are many forms of pragmatism. For many of them, knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in post positivism). There is a concern with application - “what works” – and solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). Instead of methods being important, the problem is most important, and researchers use all approaches to understand the problem (see Rossman & Wilson, 1985). As a philosophical underpinning for mixed method studies, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Patton (1990) convey the importance for focusing attention on the research problem in social science research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem.’ (p.11-12)

The key characteristics of ‘pragmatic’ knowledge claims include: being problem focused; being flexible in the use of both quantitative and qualitative data to illuminate an issue or understand a problem, as well as in choosing methods, techniques and lines of enquiry that are considered to be suited to the purpose/needs of the research, and will lead to the best understanding of the research problem; and a recognition of the contingent nature of research, i.e. it occurs in a particular social, political and historical context (Badley 2003; Patton 2002). This pragmatism was reflected in the methods adopted in all of the four studies discussed in this thesis, and in relation to issues such as sampling and accessing research participants and the reanalysis of data (discussed below). The issue of judging methods by taking into account the context within which decisions are made is also highlighted as important by Patton (2002):

‘Being pragmatic allows one to eschew methodological orthodoxy in favour of *methodological appropriateness* [*his italics*] as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality, recognising that different methods are appropriate for different situations. Situational responsiveness means designing a study that is appropriate for a specific inquiry situation or interest.’ (p.72)

The pragmatic paradigm is underpinned by the theoretical approach of this thesis, which is best described as located somewhere between ‘middle range’ theories (e.g. Merton 1967) and its focus on limited aspects of social phenomena and grounded theory which focuses on the lived experiences and meanings of people (e.g. Glasser and Strauss 1967). Both have limitations, for example, middle range theory tends to focus mainly on

empirical observable data and grounded theory does not adequately recognise the ‘socio-cultural or systemic aspects of society’.(see Layder 1998, p.19).

This thesis uses a network of concepts such as ethnicity / ‘race’, rurality, public spaces, multiple identities and multipositionality to help illuminate the findings of the studies discussed in this thesis. The question of whether the use of a network of concepts or parts of theories can be considered a ‘proper theory’ or as a step in theorising is a subject of debate. The position taken in this thesis reflects what Layder (1998) describes as ‘adaptive’ theoretical approach, which attempts to combine a priori ideas/concepts which guide research whilst simultaneously also generating ideas concepts and theories from the ongoing analysis of data. Thus reflecting a view that theorising and the conduct of social research are not linear processes, but related in complex and multi-dimensional ways. Whilst concepts may not provide dense/rounded theoretical explanations compared to general theories (e.g. Durkheim 1997; Giddens 1999), they can nevertheless be illuminating: theoretically and descriptively.

The advantages of adaptive theory are two fold. Firstly, it emphasises the process of theory development as dynamic and as an integral part of research, by exploring the dynamic links between participants, views, experiences and activities on the one hand, and cultures, attitudes, institutions and issues of power reflected in practices and social relations, on the other. Secondly, it advocates that ‘Social research should operate on the basis of methodological pluralism’ rather than ‘a rigid adherence to a single or limited set of techniques and protocols ... in order to maximise its ability to tap into al social domains...’ (Layder 1998, p178). These features of the ‘adaptive’ approach reflect the characteristics of the pragmatic paradigm discussed in this section. As with those who advocate the pragmatic approach (e.g. Creswell 2003), Layder (1998, p178) emphasises that ‘pluralism’ does not mean the abandonment of rigour, arguing that it:

‘... should not be confused with epistemological and methodological anarchism or relativism....the point is to *accommodate* [*his italics*] the useful aspects of diverse positions and approaches, not to abandon the notion of systematic method altogether.’

Patton (2002) highlights that one potential pitfall of the pragmatic paradigm which may result in less rigour is the potential for an “anything goes” attitude. While it is important to acknowledge this potential danger, it is also important not to assume that rigour in research and selecting and using methods that are contextually relevant and that adhere to the pragmatic knowledge claims discussed above are mutually exclusive. The importance of going beyond ‘methodological orthodoxy’ (Patton 2002, p.68) to undertake research which is meaningful and rigorous using a variety of approaches and strategies in accessing and researching minority ethnic groups in rural contexts is considered essential by rural researchers, especially if the specific and contingent nature of rural minority ethnic households is to be fully understood (e.g. Reeve and Robinson 2004a; Robinson et al 2005; Robinson and Gardner).

In general, academics have been slow to address the relevance of ethnicity / ‘race’ in rural contexts, as previously highlighted in Chapters 1 and 2. Robinson and Gardner (2006, p.47-48) argue that overall research in this context took two paths: Firstly, ‘proving that racism exists in rural areas’ in the same way as it does in urban; and secondly, providing evidence to demonstrate the lack of responsiveness on the part of agencies in addressing minority ethnic needs in relation to equal opportunities policies. Underpinning both these approaches to researching ethnicity / ‘race’ in rural contexts was an emphasis on the ‘politics of recognition’ – that is undertaking research to demonstrate that ‘visible’ minority ethnic households were indeed present in most rural areas, and presenting evidence of the ‘extent, nature and impact of racism’ (Robinson and Gardner 2004, p.88; see also de Lima 2001). This approach is reflected in Study 1 to some extent.

Study 1 was commissioned by the CRE in response to the absence of any research on rural minority ethnic households in Scotland, the requirement on the part of funders and policy makers for an evidence base, and a concern to bring the issue to the policy agenda (i.e. ‘politics of recognition’). In undertaking this research, an analysis of minority ethnic groups in the 1991 Census for the four rural areas that were the focus of the Study, was undertaken to identify the presence of minority ethnic households. In addition, qualitative semi-structured interviews were undertaken to obtain an overview of rural minority ethnic experiences and perspectives, on a range of issues discussed below. Given the absence of previous research and the limited resources available, the research was exploratory in nature, and sought to provide a snap shot of the minority ethnic households in four rural areas of Scotland. Despite the effort that went into ensuring diverse ethnicities and rural

communities, the overwhelming emphasis in the study was on their common experiences, not just in relation to their ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds, but across geographies as well. The emphasis on the commonalities of their experience, was a calculated strategy to ensure that minority ethnic group issues were placed firmly on the policy agenda. Furthermore, given the public agencies' conviction of the lack of economies of scale with regards to responding to the needs of minority ethnic households, an emphasis on the diversity of the population would have potentially been counterproductive, and would have provided a further excuse for the agencies not to respond to the needs of rural minority ethnic households.

However, as a researcher I was aware that, although focusing on the 'politics of recognition' was a response to the particular context, there were also at least three inherent difficulties with regards to this approach. Firstly, categorisation, as previously argued, can bring problems of its own, as terms such as 'race' and ethnicity appear fixed and unchanging. This can result in essentialising and privileging ethnic/'racial' identities, and can lead to an under-emphasis of the complex interaction between ethnicity and other aspects of social identity. Secondly, it can lead to an inward focus on the characteristics of minority ethnic groups/individuals as the cause of poor access to services; rather than an examination of the reasons why they might find it difficult to access them. And finally, there is a tendency to portray rural minority ethnic individuals/groups as 'victims' rather than as individuals with a variety of 'assets' – i.e. the use of deficit models which portrayed minority ethnic groups as victims rather than as active agents (de Lima, 2006). Whilst it was not always possible, using this pragmatic approach, to overcome these challenges in the reports emanating from the studies submitted to the funders, reanalysing and bringing the studies together in this thesis has enabled a more balanced presentation of the differences and commonalities to be analysed and explored.

## **Overview of Methods Employed in the Studies**

In general, across all four studies, the research involved three elements: a literature review, analysis of census data (i.e. Studies 1 and 4 only) and qualitative data collection methods. The key objective was to maximise the limited opportunities for data gathering and generalising findings, by combining literature reviews, census information and primary qualitative research to respond to the particular research focus (see also Badley 2003).

This section considers some of the common methodological strategies employed, re-analysis undertaken and other relevant issues that emerged across all the studies.

### **Literature reviews**

Literature reviews were conducted mainly in relation to Studies 1, 3 and 4 when the studies were originally undertaken. However, for the purpose of this thesis a further literature review was undertaken which included all four studies. The reviews of literature were used to help shape the foci of the studies, identify gaps, and provide a means of comparing and triangulating the findings in the absence of large sample sizes and extensive research information. The literature reviewed for each of the four studies varied depending on their primary focus.

For Study 1, three broad strands of literature were reviewed: (i) literature on minority ethnic groups in the UK and Scotland, focusing on their lived experiences and access to services; (ii) literature on rurality and rural ‘others’; (iii) and grey, action orientated/policy related literature on rural minority ethnic groups; mainly in the English context, as this was the only available literature on the subject. With regard to Studies 2 and 3, the literature reviewed focused on academic and grey literature in relation to two issues: experiences of minority ethnic children and young people in rural areas; and the experiences of minority ethnic children and young people in the Scottish context. To establish the context for the Study 4, a wide ranging literature search, and review was undertaken, to identify the ways in which rurality impacted on the lives of minority ethnic groups, as well as focusing on the more urban literature, which dealt with post school education choices, access and experience of post school education among minority ethnic groups in the UK.

### **Census and other data sources**

An analysis of the 1991 Census in Study 1 and the 2001 Census in Study 4 was also undertaken (Chapter 4). Census data was obtained from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) by making contact with them directly in the case of the 1991 Census, and by accessing the data on line and purchasing relevant data CDs for the 2001 Census. Although census data in each case was obtained at ward level, given measures taken by GROS to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the data was limited, and was not necessarily an accurate reflection of the spatial distribution of the minority ethnic population (see further discussion on Chapter 4). For the purposes of Studies 1 and 4, the

main focus was on the relevant local authority areas covered by each of the studies (see Table 1.2 in chapter 1 and Chapter 4).

Study 1 involved four local authority areas across Scotland, building on the Rural Forum Study (1994) discussed below. These were Angus, Highland, North Ayrshire and the Western Isles. The two main purposes of undertaking the census analysis were to: (i) provide a demographic overview of the minority ethnic population in each area; and (ii) more importantly, to make visible their presence in rural areas, particularly, given the tendency to deny their presence as previously discussed.

Study 4 involved an analysis of the minority ethnic population in the 2001 Census in five local authority areas in the Highlands and Islands. These were: Highland, Moray, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. The focus on these local authority areas was based on the funder's – North Forum on Widening Access across Scotland – remit for these areas in relation to the Highlands and Islands. The main reason for undertaking the census analysis in Study 4 was to provide data on the demography and spatial distribution of the minority ethnic population, which could be used to develop appropriate responses for assisting post school education providers in the areas, particularly, in the light of the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000). In contrast to the 1991 Census analysis, the 2001 Census analysis paid greater attention to the diversity of the population, focusing on the potential inter-relationships between ethnicity, educational qualifications and socio-economic backgrounds. This focus reflected the overall aim of the Study, as well as the improved availability of data. The findings of the 1991 and 2001 Census analysis are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Given some of the weaknesses of the Census data (e.g. lack of currency and accuracy), attempts were made to augment the information on the minority ethnic population by making contact with service providers in the research areas for Studies 1 and 4. However, few if any of the organisations undertook ethnic monitoring, or were able to provide information. Whilst the English as Additional Language (EAL) teachers in schools and the local further education colleges were often the main sources of information, the data obtained tended to be verbal and limited (see Chapter 4).

### **Primary data collection methods**

Using quantitative research methods for primary data collection was not practical, nor were they likely to yield meaningful information, especially given the specific demographic features of the rural minority ethnic population (discussed further in Chapter 4), and the limited research highlighted in Chapter 2. A pragmatic approach, using qualitative research methods – semi-structured interviews and focus groups – was employed for all four Studies. The emphasis was on “what works” and was appropriate to the context, rather than a dogmatic adherence to dualistic notions for gathering research data (Badley 2003).

In the case of Studies 1 and 4, questionnaires adapted from the semi-structured interview schedules were posted out to plug geographical gaps, and to augment numbers. However, postal questionnaires in general are characterised by a poor response rate (Robson 1999). This is even worse for marginalised groups, including minority ethnic groups. In the context of the four studies, a number of factors may have been responsible: a reluctance to become involved in research which focused on their ethnicity; a lack of information and knowledge to respond to the research topics; language difficulties; and feelings that their views would make no difference.

Turning now to the main focus of this discussion which is on semi structured interviews and focus groups. While there were constraints on research participants shaping the research questions because of the way in which the research discussed in this thesis was funded, nevertheless, the use of semi structured interviews enabled some flexibility in the direction conversations took beyond the concerns of funders. The exploratory nature of Study 1, and the overall aim of the other three studies, was primarily about developing an understanding of how minority ethnic people/households in rural areas experienced rural community life, and their experiences of accessing services. The studies were about exploring experiences and developing an understanding of minority ethnic lives from their perspectives in a way that was flexible, meaningful and non-threatening to them. The use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups in particular, is recognised to be valuable in ascertaining the views of participants who may not be used to being asked about their views and experiences, and who may feel vulnerable because of their situation (Bowes and Dar 2000; Temple and Moran 2006a). Both these issues were relevant to the research participants in the studies discussed in this thesis.

Given the flexibility, and opportunities for probing and clarifying, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were particularly relevant in a context where there was little previous research and knowledge, and most participants had little experience of being asked about their views or being listened to. For the purposes of the studies, the research interview and focus groups were seen as a type of conversation with a 'structure and a purpose' which involved a two or in some cases, a three or more way conversation (Kvale 1996, p.6). Mason (2002, p.62) argues that the key in qualitative, and especially semi-structured interviews is the 'interactional nature of the dialogue'. She goes on to elaborate that 'qualitative interviews may involve one to one interactions, larger group interviews or focus groups'.

Kvale (1996, p.37) also emphasises the interactional nature of interviews, and argues that the semi structured interview is a 'specific professional form of *conversational technique* [*his italics*] in which knowledge is constructed through the interaction of the interviewer and interviewee.' While there are many types of interviews (see for example, Patton 2002; Robson; Silverman 1999), from the perspective of the studies discussed in this thesis, semi-structured interviews and focus groups seemed the most appropriate. This was because of their potential to be focused, yet flexible, responsive to the situation and provided an enabling environment for developing themes that may have emerged unexpectedly during the course of the interviews and focus groups (Mason 2002). This is, for example, reflected by Kvale's (1996) stating that the semi structured interview:

'... has a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as suggested questions. Yet at the same time there is openness to changes of sequences and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and stories told by the subjects.' (p.124)

The opportunity to be flexible in pursuing topics and lines of questioning was particularly important in a context where research participants may not have been asked for their views before. They may have also been reticent about expressing what they really felt in relation to sensitive issues, such as experiences of racial harassment or discrimination, as well as having difficulties in expressing themselves clearly in English. Language and culture were also important considerations. The variable ability of some participants to express themselves in English, on a small number of occasions, meant that the information from their interviews was not as insightful as it might have been. It was not always possible to interview in the language of the research participants because of their diversity, limited

funding and lack of trained interpreters in the variety of languages that were spoken. However, where feasible participants in Studies 1 and 4 were given an opportunity to be interviewed in their own language through the use of trained interpreters: In Study 4, a trained interpreter was used for a Chinese Focus group.

### **Re-analysis of Data in Studies 1-4**

The data for all four studies, which were either in the form of transcripts or interview/focus group notes, were re-analysed for the purposes of this thesis (see for example, Bland 2005). The re-analysis process focused on the data that was relevant for this thesis and was iterative: it involved a process of moving back and forth between key issues identified in the literature review, data and on going analysis. Following Kvale (1996, p.193), the process of re-analysis undertaken may be best described as ‘generating meaning through ad hoc methods’. He argues for example:

‘There is instead a free interplay of techniques during the analysis. Thus the researcher may read the interviews through and get an overall impression, then go back to specific passages, perhaps make some quantifications like counting statements indicating different attitudes to a phenomena, make deeper interpretations of specific statements, cast parts of the interview into a narrative ... and so on.’ (Kvale 1996, p.204)

The focus on making rural minority ethnic households visible in Study 1 led to treating the participants as homogenous, and there was a strong emphasis on highlighting similarities in experiences in the original analysis. For the purposes of this thesis, however, the data in Study 1 was interrogated differently. Drawing on insights derived from the literature review some ‘orienting’ concepts were used to help ask different questions, impose a sense of order and to shape the analysis (see Layder 1998, p.108-116). Layder (1998, p.108) argues that ‘Orienting concepts are most useful as a *provisional* [*his italics*] means of ordering data.’ They are particularly suitable where there has been little previous research, and Layder (1998, p.112) makes a strong case for their flexibility. He argues that as research progresses or further research is undertaken there may be a number of possibilities: a need for revision of the concept; the concept may have to be discarded and replaced by another; or the ‘explanatory power’ may be progressively confirmed and strengthened. To some extent all these possibilities applied to my re-analysis of the data.

In the context of Study 1, ‘orienting concepts’ or themes used to make sense of the data were, for example, notions of ‘rural idyll’ and the ‘other’, pressures to conform/assimilation, access issues, demography, social and cultural isolation and social constructions’ of ‘rurality’. These concepts were useful in helping to construct a range of ‘examples’ to illustrate some of the views and experiences of participants. Presentation of these examples was considered a powerful way of communicating some of the findings particularly given the lack of previous data on the subject. The re-analysis highlighted some preliminary evidence of potential differences in views and experiences between participants across the four rural areas. This led to a greater awareness of diverse views and experiences and the particular experiences of those living in remote rural areas, than had been the case in the original analysis undertaken. It also led to a confirmation of some of the themes that had emerged from the literature review – for example, influence of notions of ‘rural idyll’, weak infrastructures for addressing race equality based on demography, the issues of social and cultural isolation, sustaining ethnic identities and emerging diversity of views and experiences across rural geographies. These concepts/themes provided the starting point for interrogating the data in relation to Studies 2 and 3.

A further reading of the data in Studies 2 and 3 and the original analysis undertaken revealed that there were some recurrent themes, for example, notions of rural ‘idyll’, weak infrastructures and strong pressures to conform. But there were other emergent concepts and themes which had been weak or absent from the analysis until then, and were relevant to making sense of the data. These were: cross cutting identities/multipositionality (e.g. socio-economic position and gender), differences between ethnicities, socially constructed nature of ethnicity / ‘race’, access to public spaces and the adaptive strategies of households as ‘agents’. Thus the emphasis of the data analysis in relation to Studies 2 and 3 was about uncovering the interaction between ethnicity and other forms of social identity focusing on issues of differences, cross cutting identities and loyalties, and access to public spaces and agency to some extent. These combined with the recurrent themes – i.e. notions of rural ‘idyll’, the weak infrastructures and the strong pressures to conform – provided the basis for the re-analysis of Study 4.

The re-analysis of data in Study 4 focused on exploring issues of differences, cross cutting identities/multipositionality, and the strategies adopted to overcome some of the challenges faced in rural contexts in more depth than had been the case in the previous

studies. The larger sample size made it more possible to explore these issues in a more meaningful way and to develop broad typologies of participants to illustrate their different positionalities in the post school education context. Overall, underpinning the re-analysis of all the data which was collected over a period of six years, there was a focus on continuities and changes over time.

The changing policy and legislative context provided a useful overarching framework for the re-analysis of the studies over time. Taking into consideration the relevant policy context that was prevalent during each of the studies provided a way of making sense of the development of the research and the focus over the six year period. For example, the emphasis on making the presence and experiences of minority ethnic in rural areas 'visible' in Study 1 was relevant in a context where public agencies were beginning to become aware of the importance of data to meet legislative requirements, and there was little or no information available. The focus on the educational context as a site to explore issues of ethnicity / 'race', cross cutting identities and difference with regard to young people and adults in Studies 2-4 was the result of the increasing policy emphasis on issues of equality and inclusion and encouraging wider participation in education. The re-analysis undertaken revealed there was some continuity in concepts/themes over the course of time and across the studies, as well as some changes within a dynamic and changing demographic, policy and legislative context.

### **Role of the researcher**

The pros and cons of a shared cultural background with research participants has been the subject of much discussion (e.g. Bhavani and Phoenix 1994; Bowes and Dar 2000; Temple and Moran 2006b). Discussions on 'insider' perspectives as 'tainted' and 'outsider' perspectives as independent and objective are not particularly helpful, as most research probably falls somewhere in the middle (Lincoln and Guba 2000; Patton 2002; Layder 1998; Temple and Moran 2006a&b). In addition, as argued by Temple and Moran (2006b, p.11), researchers whatever approach they use 'are a part of the social world they research and all have views that they bring to that research', social world they research and all have views that they bring to that research'.

Bowes and Dar (2000) highlight the importance of Dar's shared cultural background in undertaking interviews with older people of Punjabi origin in relation to issues such as language, and building of rapport and trust, reflecting my own experience of undertaking

research among rural minority ethnic households (see also Rai 1995). My ethnicity and geographical location – as an Asian (Goan) woman living in a rural area – were important factors in enabling access to minority ethnic households, gaining their consent to engage with the research and their trust. Their perceptions or feelings that I would understand their situation were reflected in their willingness to talk and share information about their experiences. Interviews often started with a brief discussion, initiated by the research participants, about my background and how I came to live in a rural area. The fact that I was born abroad and was brought up in Africa and the Indian sub-continent, and had knowledge of Hindi seemed to add extra authenticity, and a sense that I would be in a better position to understand their situation. Whilst I did not share exactly the same culture or ethnicity with most of my research participants, the fact that I identified myself as being from a different ethnic background/culture seemed to be enough for participants to feel that we had some shared experiences, and that I would understand where they were coming from.

I felt privileged to be allowed access into their lives, especially in the case of a number of households who were particularly isolated, geographically as well as because of their ethnicity/culture – i.e. there were not many from the same ethnic background or they were the only one from a particular ethnic background. In these contexts, I felt my role to be more than a researcher – I felt I needed to do something about their situation, and in some ways, give something back for their time. On a number of occasions, this did result in me putting individuals in contact with relevant agencies, as well as organising social events over a number of years which brought isolated individuals and households across the Highlands together. In this context, avoiding collusion with research participants and maintaining a balance between my roles as a researcher, as someone from an Asian background and as someone who could solve some of the difficulties participants experienced, was a challenge.

While my ethnicity and geographical location enabled me to establish a good rapport and trust with participants and also helped the interviews to be insightful, it is also important as a researcher to exercise caution in overemphasising the importance of shared cultures or the ‘insider’ knows best perspective (Temple and Moran 2006). For example, Schick (2002) argues that the latter simplifies the factors that influence identity and communications. It assumes identity to be singular rather than plural and multifaceted. For instance, in relation to the interviews and focus groups conducted, anyone of the

following factors – my gender, socio-economic background, age or the fact that I lived in the Highlands – may have been perceived as more important than my ethnicity. There are potential disadvantages in sharing the same cultural/ethnic background with research participants; for example certain assumptions and views may be taken for granted, and participants may be wary of articulating particular views. Although it is not possible to say with absolute certainty that these varying roles did not affect my research, being conscious of these roles and their potential impact as well as having ethical guidelines (see below) in place, were important measures to help support my role as a researcher. Overall, in the context of the studies, the advantages in terms of access, trust, rapport and insightful information obtained, outweighed the disadvantages.

### **Sampling**

Sampling decisions have, *inter alia*, to take into consideration factors such as the feasibility of accessing participants, and ethics. The small size, diversity and dispersion of rural minority ethnic households, was compounded by the absence of current and accurate statistical data, and ethnic monitoring (discussed in Chapter 4; see also Temple and Moran 2006b). These posed considerable challenges in all four studies. While the 1991 and 2001 Censuses provided a useful starting point, the weakness of the data in terms of accuracy and currency combined with measures taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of households made these data sets problematic as sources for making sampling decisions and deriving samples (see pages 102-103 for discussion on census data). So, what is the most appropriate sampling method in this context? Maxwell (1996) argues that the tendency in quantitative research in particular has been to consider probability sampling as the hallmark of ‘high quality’ research, and anything else as ‘convenient sampling’ or opportunity sampling and something to be discouraged. However, as he goes on to argue:

‘For qualitative research, this view ignores the fact that most sampling in qualitative research is neither probability sampling nor convenience sampling but falls into a third category: *purposeful sampling* [*his italics*] (Patton 1990, p.169ff) or what LeComte and Preissle (1993, p.69) called *criterion-based selection* [*his italics*]. This is a strategy in which particular settings, persons or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that can’t be gotten as well as from other choices.’ (Maxwell 1996, p.70)

In general, census information was used in my research to identify general demographic trends with regard to ethnicity, age, socio-economic profile and settlement, in order to provide a 'light touch' guide to sampling decisions which would be best described as 'purposeful' combined with some 'opportunity sampling'. 'Purposeful sampling' involved careful consideration being given to selecting individuals and the areas they were living in, depending on the information required to answer the specific questions or issues explored in each of the four studies (See Table 1.2, Chapter 1 for sample sizes). In Study 1, the 1991 Census was used as a guide to identify individuals from different ethnicities, ages, genders and across different types of rural communities in Scotland. With regard to Studies 2 and 3, the main objective was to identify parents/carers with children and young people from diverse backgrounds (ethnic, gender socio-economic), as well as from across different types of rural areas in the Highlands. Similarly in Study 4, the emphasis was on obtaining a diverse sample, reflecting the changing ethnicity patterns in the Highlands and Islands since the 1991 Census and taking account of the different socio-economic, gender and age dimensions, and rural and island communities. From a practical point of view, the advantages of purposeful sampling were that it enabled me to capture the heterogeneity of the rural minority ethnic population, while simultaneously ensuring that the ethnicities more or less reflected the trends identified in the 1991 and 2001 Censuses.

Even with careful planning, however, it was not always feasible to obtain the sample that was required for various reasons discussed below. In these cases, opportunity/convenience sampling was used to fill the gaps. There are mixed views on the use of what is called 'convenience' or 'opportunity sampling'. On the one hand, Patton (1990, p.181) warns against its use: '... while convenience and cost are real considerations, they should be the last factors to be taken into account... Convenience sampling is neither purposeful nor strategic.' On the other hand, Weiss (1994) recognises that there may be situations in which convenience sampling is the only realistic way to access individuals/groups who may, for a variety of reasons, be difficult to obtain access to. For example, they may be few in number, and there may be no databases or information to draw from. This characterised the situation of rural minority ethnic households considered in this thesis.

In addition, 'snow-ball' sampling (i.e. research participants or agencies recommending others) was also used as an additional strategy for accessing minority ethnic participants. Clearly, there are some disadvantages of obtaining interviewees through agencies and

‘snowballing’. For example, it can lead to imbalances in samples, and to homogeneous samples exercising a countervailing influence to ‘purposeful sampling’, where the emphasis may be on obtaining a heterogeneous sample. This was at times evident in the absence of particular ethnicities or imbalances in gender or geographical coverage in the studies. It can also lead to a lack of representation of those households who may not have had much contact with agencies or are not part of networks. However, despite the disadvantages, its value in reaching small, and at times hard to reach populations is important, as Atkinson and Flint (2001) argue:

‘While some may seek to characterise the topics for which snowball strategies have been used as being trivial or obscure, the main value of snowball sampling is as a method for obtaining respondents where they are few in number or where some degree of trust is required to initiate contact. Under these circumstances, techniques of ‘chain referral’ may imbue the researcher with characteristics associated with being an insider or group member and this can aid entry to settings where conventional approaches find it difficult to succeed.’ (p.1)

They go on to argue:

‘Snowball-based methodologies are a valuable tool in studying the lifestyles of groups often located outside mainstream social research. They may also be used to complement other research methodologies in the study of less stigmatised and even elite groups.’ (Atkinson and Flint, 2001, p.4)

Generally, in my research, snowballing was used as a practical tool for establishing contact rather than ‘as a method of sampling in a more formalised and statistical sense’ (Atkinson and Flint, 2001, p.4). It was a pragmatic response to the research context I found myself in. Given the demographic context of the rural minority ethnic population, as well as the fact that the research tended to be seen as outwith the ‘mainstream’ in research (see Chapter 2), and in policy (Chapter 1), it was an essential strategy in making contact with potential research participants. It was particularly helpful in making contact with the Chinese households and those ethnicities that were in a very small minority in the Highlands and Islands, such as Japanese, Africans, Thais and Middle Eastern people.

### **Accessing rural minority ethnic households**

As highlighted, careful consideration had always to be given to strategies that maximised opportunities for accessing minority ethnic households. Given poor data, and the absence of organisations and networks involving minority ethnic households, particularly in the context of Study 1, making contact with minority ethnic households proved to be challenging and time-consuming. Furthermore, the lifestyles of some minority ethnic communities, and their tendency to work in particular types/patterns of employment (i.e. self-employed, catering), also made them reluctant to become involved in research due to irregular work patterns which also involved long hours. In my research, this was particularly noticeable in the case of the Chinese community (see also Song 1995). Where possible, this was overcome by working closely with the community and negotiating times for engaging in interviews and focus groups which would suit their work patterns.

The strategies used in recruiting research participants for the studies evolved over the six years, responding to the changing social and demographic context, and reflecting the importance of taking a pragmatic approach in this context. Although a multi-pronged strategy was adopted to maximise opportunities with regard to sampling, in general 'snowballing' yielded the most helpful results in all four studies. To some extent, minority ethnic contacts established in Study 1 provided the basis of further contacts in Studies 2-4.

In addition, Studies 1 and 4 also utilised electoral rolls, business telephone directories and contact with public agencies, mainly with English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers in schools and further education colleges, to maximise sampling opportunities, to widen the net, and to address gaps in the samples. The electoral roll, telephone and business directories for each of the four research areas were trawled and household/individuals with unusual/foreign surnames were picked out. There are problems with using this method for example: those with anglicised names or from mixed ethnic backgrounds would not be selected, and one cannot assume that everyone with an unusual/foreign surname is from a minority ethnic background. Furthermore, some individuals may choose not to have their names listed in the electoral roll. An analysis undertaken by Shetland Islands Council revealed that 15-16 percent opted out of having their names listed publicly, with no specific trends in relation to particular groups opting out identified (de Lima 2005). Nevertheless, in the absence of other data sources, the

electoral roll was another practical tool, and the strategy was to pursue every avenue in accessing minority ethnic households.

In Study 1, a combination of approaches was used. Contact was made with the following: the main public agencies across all four local authority areas (discussed in more detail below); Race Equality Councils (RECs) which covered two of the four areas, North Ayrshire and Tayside (where Angus is located); and local and national minority ethnic/faith based organisations. When initial contact was made with public agencies in the four areas, the most immediate and frequent response was ‘but we have no problem here’ or ‘we provide a service to the whole community’ (see also Henderson and Kaur 1999). These attitudes were most noticeable in the Highlands, and the Western Isles. Researching the lives of minority ethnic households seems to be intrinsically associated with ‘problems’ in the minds of many rural public service agencies. Even organisations, such as the RECs whose main remit was to work with minority ethnic groups, appeared to have no information or contact with those living in rural areas. North Ayrshire, to some extent, appeared to be an exception which made accessing the minority ethnic population in this area slightly easier. This was mainly due to the fact that the local authority in the North Ayrshire research area had employed a Development Worker to work with the Chinese community, and had managed to access European funding to deliver computer training, and English language classes for the minority ethnic population in the area (Ayrshire District Council 1993).

To a significant extent, the contacts established in Study 1 provided a basis for recruiting parents/carers for Study 2. These contacts in turn provided other contacts. In addition, the establishment of the Women’s International Group in Inverness funded by the Workers’ Education Association also provided a useful inroad to accessing minority ethnic participants. Difficulties were, however, experienced in recruiting young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in Study 3. It would seem that the problem experienced in persuading young people to engage with research was not peculiar to the research I was undertaking, but has been highlighted by other researchers (Emond 2000; Hampton 1998). This reluctance to become involved in research may be exacerbated when young people feel they are unable to identify with the issues being researched. For example they may not identify with labels such as ‘social exclusion’, or be happy about engaging with specific topics which are considered ‘sensitive’ and may be perceived as being imposed by those in authority in whom they may not have much trust (Emond 2000). With regard to

Study 3, it would appear that part of the reluctance to become involved in the research might be attributed to the fact that young people did not identify with the label ‘minority ethnic’, but perceived it as a label ascribed to them by others, thus marking them out as being different (discussed in Chapter 6). In this context, engagement with the research may have been perceived as being involved in an activity that reinforced this difference. However, previous contacts with minority ethnic households in the Highlands helped to get around the issues of access.

While difficulties in accessing minority ethnic households in rural areas persist, at the time Study 4 was undertaken in 2003-4, there were a small but growing number of networks (e.g. Chinese and Indian associations) being established which provided a point of contact with communities that had been hitherto difficult to engage with. Establishing contact with one or two Chinese individuals who were well connected with the community lead to many more contacts than had been possible up until then. In addition, the English as an Additional Language (EAL) tutors and organisers in the local colleges and communities were also vital in providing contact with what was a growing and diverse minority ethnic population in the Highlands and Islands.

### **Ethics**

A project information sheet/and or a letter, outlining the aims, objectives and ethics that would guide the research was produced for the studies (see, for example, de Lima et al 2005; also Appendix 1 for an example). In the case of Studies 1 and 4, the information/letters were translated into Urdu and Mandarin based on evidence from the Census, and advice from community based organisations on the most commonly spoken languages. In addition, participants in these projects were offered the opportunity to participate in their mother-tongue through trained interpreters. Only a very small minority took up the offer: one Chinese participant in Study 1, and the Chinese focus group participants in Study 4. Using interpreters often resulted in a longer time commitment (often double) on the part of participants. This could be problematic given their initial reluctance to become involved in research, and difficulties some experienced in making time available because of their work patterns. However, these issues were overcome by working closely with the community and in this context snowball sampling also provided a less ‘cold call’ type of approach when making contact with households and individuals.

Taking time to explain the relevant projects, the possible outcomes and outputs as well as the constraints, having clear ethical principles and demonstrating an understanding of their social context, were all vital in negotiating access to research participants. Ethical procedures adhered to were based on the British Sociological Association ethics guidelines (BSA 2004), and that of the Scottish Association of Black Researchers (SABRE 2001) and included: relevant and appropriate information about the study to make an informed decision about participation; obtaining consent; being made aware of their right to withdraw from the interview/focus group; permission to use quotes; and assurance on anonymity and confidentiality.

Despite repeated reassurances of confidentiality and anonymity, minority ethnic participants in all studies were reluctant to be involved in research. Building a good rapport and trust was a time consuming, but a crucial part of the process, especially in a context where minority ethnic individuals were often wary of becoming involved in research which they perceived as potentially making them more 'visible' than they were already. In some cases, being the only minority ethnic household and/or having a local business in a community heightened their feelings of vulnerability and affected their willingness to become involved. Although this was evident in all studies, it was most noticeable in Study 1 with regard to participants in the Western Isles: the Pakistani households in particular had been the subject of a great deal of media attention, which they hadn't particularly welcomed. As discussed above, in most cases my own ethnicity was an advantage in persuading people to participate.

Undertaking a number of research studies across the Highlands and Islands also made me aware of the danger of over-researching the same groups/households. Consequently, in each of the studies, careful consideration had to be given to extend the networks, and to use a variety of strategies to access as many different people as possible. This certainly became easier as the numbers have grown, and informal networks have been established. Careful consideration was given throughout the research with regards to how individual/household views would be reported, and steps were taken to ensure that individuals were not identifiable in the research report/publication. This often meant taking decisions about not locating the individuals in specific geographical communities, or divulging their ethnicity.

## **Methods Used in Each of the Four Studies**

This section provides a discussion of the context, aims and methods of each of the four studies (See Tables 1.2, Chapter 1 and Table 3.1 in this chapter for an overview).

### **Study 1 (Chapters 4 and 5)**

Due to the lack of previous research, highlighted in Chapters 1 and 2, the twin aims of this first study on rural minority ethnic households in Scotland, were to establish a profile of ethnic minorities living in four rural areas of Scotland, and to explore their experiences and views of living in rural communities including accessing services (Chapter 5). The focus of the study was on ‘visible’ minorities, defined as those of African, Asian, Caribbean and South American descent, as well as Black British and people of mixed ethnic origin. The choice of the geographical areas was based on a Rural Forum Study on Disadvantage in Rural Scotland (1994), because the CRE, as the commissioning body, considered it important to compare the experiences of rural minority ethnic households with the majority communities living in rural areas.

The four areas selected for the Rural Forum study were Harris, Wester Ross, Angus and North Ayrshire, on the basis that they represented different types of rurality in relation to characteristics such as remoteness, population density, the strength of the local labour market, and social and cultural variables. These areas were tightly defined, i.e. total populations in each area were no more than 5000 at the 1981 census (Shucksmith et al 1996, p.29). However, given the small size/absence of minority ethnic population in some of the areas chosen by Rural Forum, the research study areas for Study 1 were extended to include the whole local authority area in each case. These were Angus, Highlands, North Ayrshire and the Western Isles. While locating the research in the local authority areas may have had the potential effect of hiding diversity within each area, given the circumstances described, it seemed the most pragmatic decision. Each area broadly represented different types of rurality: Angus, a mainly agriculture area in the North east with access to one of the main Scottish cities, Dundee; Highlands, a remote rural area with diverse geographies; North Ayrshire, a central belt area with proximity to Glasgow, the largest city in Scotland; and the Western Isles, a remote island area. Focusing on four areas also provided an opportunity to assess the extent to which different types of ‘rurality’ and geographical location influenced the lives and experiences of minority ethnic households, and individuals living in these areas.

The research design for the study, discussed in more detail above, included: establishing the context which involved a literature review; identifying the presence of rural minority ethnic households by analysing the 1991 census for the four local authority areas; sampling; and using semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire (adapted from the interview schedule) to gain insight into the experiences of minority ethnic communities in rural areas. Contact was made with key organisations from the public/statutory, voluntary and community sectors in each of the research study areas. The aims were to: inform them about the project; obtain general contextual and specific information about the minority ethnic population in their areas; and to help establish contact with minority ethnic households, organisations and individuals, which is discussed in more detail below.

The starting point in the public sector were the local authorities in each area, as well as other public sector agencies including Health Authorities, Scottish Homes, Employment Service and the Police. A wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations operating locally and nationally were contacted. Although some organisations responded with enthusiasm and interest, generally the response to requests for information was extremely poor, and often a great deal of time was spent making contact for very little return. Attempts to obtain baseline data which would help to augment the 1991 census data proved fruitless as none of the public sector organisations contacted undertook ethnic monitoring.

With regard to the sample size, although the study was meant to involve 40 households/individuals altogether, 10 for each research study area, 38 households in total participated in the study. Of these 31 were interviewed and seven postal questionnaires based on the semi-structured interview schedules were completed.

An initial letter, in English and translated into Urdu and Mandarin provided information about the project, and was sent out to 130 households selected from the electoral roll and business directories in the four areas, requesting their assistance by being participants in the project. Households were selected to reflect the diversity of minority ethnic households living in rural areas and a wide geographical spread within each of the four areas. Approximately 30 people responded to the letter; five agreed to participate and the rest declined. Those who had responded positively were asked if they could recommend others, no recommendations were received. The response to the initial letter was poor in all areas, and the few positive responses received were mainly from the Highlands. The

Chinese community was the most difficult to access in all areas except North Ayrshire, where the Community Education Department was able to assist.

To meet the short fall in sample size, especially the gaps, both geographically, and in terms of ethnic groups, a letter was sent to the relevant local authorities and national and local minority ethnic organisations enlisting their support in identifying more potential interviewees. The Community Education service in North Ayrshire and in the Western Isles (based on previous contact with individuals in the service) proved extremely useful. They agreed to pass on the information to their contacts, and helped set up interviews in their areas with the consent of individuals. Despite the efforts of Angus Council, it proved to be more difficult here with only three referrals.

Semi-structured interviews were mainly conducted on a one to one basis, with either the head of the household, or the person nominated by the household. These were held in the homes of the participants, and focused on three areas: profile of the household; perceptions of their local area and their involvement in the community; and access to services (See de Lima 2001). Two respondents were interviewed in their mother tongue, one through an interpreter. In most cases, interviews lasted between one and half to four hours. With the exception of one respondent who agreed to the interview being taped, notes were taken for the rest of the interviews and elaborated immediately afterwards.

Postal questionnaires, with minor amendments to the semi-structured interview schedule were sent out as a last resort to plug the shortfall in the sample in Angus and the Western Isles. Sixteen questionnaires were sent to the Western Isles, of which three were returned. Of the 15 sent to Angus, four were returned. In the case of the latter, the majority of these were from the Chinese community. Generally, the quality of the information from the postal questionnaires was poor, with the majority of respondents leaving most sections uncompleted.

## **Studies 2 and 3 (Chapter 6)**

### ***Overview***

This section describes the background, methods and approaches used in the two studies (2 and 3) undertaken in the Highlands which are considered together in Chapter 6: a study of parents/carers with primary school children (5-11 years of age) carried out in late 1998-1999, and a study of young people aged 12-20 years undertaken in 2001-2. The focus of

the studies on children of primary school age (from the perspective of parents/carers) and youth, was partly a response to three factors: (i) an emerging theme arising out of Study 1 which suggested that rural minority ethnic households consistently expressed concerns about bringing up children in an environment where there were few households from the same cultural/ethnic or religious background; (ii) a growing recognition that treating minority ethnic groups as homogeneous did not aid our understanding of the complexities that frame the experiences of minority ethnic individuals; (iii) and two relevant policy initiatives previously discussed in Chapter 1: the 5-14 curriculum framework in Scottish schools and the focus of the Highland Social Inclusion Partnership (SIPS) on young people. Although the two studies explored experiences of living in rural communities generally, they also focused on the educational context as an important site for negotiating identities and addressing issues of belonging.

### ***Study 2***

Study 2 was funded by the Centre for Racial Education in Scotland (CERES), as part of a Scotland wide study (Arshad and Syed 1998). The aims of this study were to explore Scottish minority ethnic parents/carers perceptions of their children's educational experiences in primary school, and their views on what could be done to make their experiences more positive. The sample was purposive and crafted to identify around 12 households from diverse 'visible' minority ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and geographical locations in Highland Region, including remote rural (North and West Highlands) and island (e.g. Skye) areas. Fourteen participants were recruited to participate in the Study, using previous research contacts with minority ethnic households, and through snowballing. One to one semi-structured interviews lasting between one and a half to two hours were conducted in their homes focusing on: parents'/carers' views and experiences of the primary school their child/children attended; specific policies/initiatives with regard to addressing issues of diversity/ethnicity; and suggestions for improvements (see Appendix 2a).

### ***Study 3***

Study 3 involved 18 minority ethnic youth aged 12-20 years of age and was commissioned as part of a Highland Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) project by a consortium of public agencies called the Highland Wellbeing Alliance, to supplement the other research activities on young people living in what were designated as 'social exclusion areas' in the Highlands and Islands. The areas designated as eligible for SIP funding tended to

privilege poverty/economic indicators, and it was widely acknowledged that the SIP research activities did not address the experience of what might be called ‘marginal groups’, such as those from minority ethnic groups, within the socially excluded groups (see de Lima, 2002b). This absence was mainly due to their small size and dispersion, and the limitations of random sampling methods in picking up small populations.

Given this context, the rationale for undertaking a specific study focusing on the experiences of young people from ‘visible’ minority ethnic backgrounds was based on two factors. Firstly, little was known about their experiences of living in rural communities. In addition, the mainstream SIP research activities tended not to involve this group of young people compounding further, one could argue, their social and cultural isolation. Secondly, young people are not a homogeneous group and can be ‘excluded within an inclusionary society’ (de Lima 2002b, p.2). Although rural areas may be characterised by close knit communities where everyone knows each other, and may have a great deal of knowledge about one another, this cannot be taken as evidence that ‘social homogeneity’ prevails. Class, poverty, gender, being ‘looked after’, ethnicity and social stigma can all shape the experiences of young people in various ways (Emond 2000; Pavis et al 2000). Pavis et al (2000) in their study of young people in rural areas argue:

‘Respondents with a marginal status in the community, whether by virtue of a discredited personal characteristic (e.g. mental illness) or incomer status, were found to be disadvantaged in their access to valuable resources.’ (p.32)

The aim of Study 3 was to explore the experiences of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds within the context of schools, and more generally in the communities in which they lived. Identifying minority ethnic young people, and achieving the appropriate sample size was problematic in the absence of statistical data and ethnic monitoring, as previously highlighted. Letters and information were sent out to relevant networks, and personal contact was made with various individuals who were known to be in contact with minority ethnic families/households in the Highland area. However, this did not yield many positive results. After some discussion with researchers who had worked with minority ethnic youth outwith the Highlands, it was decided that a fee of £10 be paid for involvement in the project. Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which this improved the response to the project, it did seem a coincidence that many more young people were prepared to participate when the offer of payment was made.

Whilst the initial starting point was to achieve a balance in terms of geographical areas, gender, ethnicity/culture and social class, the problem of recruiting young people meant that sampling was opportunistic and young people were recruited through ‘snowballing’. Contact in most cases was made through parents, and with one exception (interview held at a local college), all interviews were conducted at their homes. The majority of participants were aged between twelve and eighteen years, with three over the age of eighteen. Given the difficulties in recruiting young people, the age range was relaxed and participants between the ages of twelve and twenty were included in the study.

The main method used was one to one and paired semi-structured interviews. Participants were given the choice of being interviewed on their own or with a friend/sibling. It was felt that interviewing in pairs might be less threatening, and help to generate more discussion of the issues raised in the course of the interview. Most preferred to take up the option of being interviewed with a friend or a sibling. Thus interviews were conducted on a one to one basis and in pairs (involving siblings and individuals who were known to each other), and in one case, with three young people involving two siblings and a friend. On all occasions, interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews lasted from one hour to an hour and a half, and were structured around six topics adapted from a SIP survey that had been undertaken with secondary school pupils in the Highlands and Islands: school/educational experience, community and family, identity, experience of racism, social and leisure activities and lifestyle issues (Appendix 2b).

#### **Study 4 (Chapter 7)**

The final Study considered in this thesis explored the experiences of minority ethnic individuals in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in relation to accessing post school education opportunities. The latter, in this context, was defined as further and higher education opportunities. The study, which was undertaken in 2003-2004, was funded by the North Forum on Widening Access, whose remit is to widen access to post school education by focusing on groups such as those from minority ethnic households (de Lima et al, 2005). The aims of the research were to identify the main demographic trends amongst the minority ethnic groups, highlight some of the barriers faced by them in gaining access to, and participating in further and higher education, and identify gaps in provision.

As with the previous studies, Study 4 used a number of strategies to maximise data collection for the research. The study involved a literature review and an analysis of the 2001 Census. In relation to the primary research, there were two elements: one involving the post school institutions (not included in this thesis), and the other involving minority ethnic participants. Initially, for the purpose of this study, the term ‘minority ethnic’ was adopted to focus mainly on the ‘visible minorities’ – e.g. those of African, Asian, Caribbean, South American, Middle-Eastern descent, Black British, people of mixed cultural heritage, and asylum seekers and refugees. However, as the project progressed, it became apparent that the demographic context of the Highlands and Islands was changing. There appeared to be a growing population of people from the former Communist countries (e.g. Bulgarians, Russians and Hungarians amongst others) working and living in the region, who also faced considerable barriers in accessing post school education and other services ( de Lima 2005). Their experiences appeared similar to those experienced by ‘visible’ minority ethnic households, and a decision was made to extend the definition of ethnicity to include ‘non-visible’ minorities. The strategy to include these new groups reflected the importance of the conceptualisation of ethnicity as socially constructed, flexible and changing.

Opportunity sampling was the main method used to access minority ethnic households/individuals. Contact was made with relevant academic institutions and agencies as well as key ‘gate-keepers’ who were known to have contact with minority ethnic people. The mechanisms for accessing minority ethnic groups varied from area to area. In some areas, the best medium was through adult literacy and voluntary sector provision (e.g. Workers’ Educational Association (WEA)). Whilst in other areas, it was through the NHS, and through English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision delivered at local colleges (e.g. Inverness, Shetland and Moray).

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to obtain information from the minority ethnic participants (see de Lima et al, 2005). Altogether 112 minority ethnic participants were involved in the study (see Table 1.2, Chapter 1). Nine semi-structured interviews involving 11 people were undertaken from across the Highlands and Islands. Seven focus groups involving 67 minority ethnic individuals were undertaken as follows: five in the Inverness-shire area which also included individuals from areas such as Ross-shire, one each in Shetland and the Western Isles. With the exception of one focus group which involved Chinese people (and where an interpreter/translator was present), the rest

of the focus groups included mixed ethnicities and backgrounds, and took place in English. The interviews and focus groups lasted between forty-five minutes to one and a half hours. Participants, in most cases, were not comfortable with interviews being recorded, and so notes were taken during the interview/focus groups.

In addition, 434 questionnaires adapted from the interview schedule were sent out to minority ethnic households across the research study area. The main method used to access minority ethnic households for the purposes of the questionnaire was the edited electoral roll for the Highlands and Islands, despite the problems associated with it, as highlighted previously in this chapter. Thirty four questionnaires were returned from respondents in the Highland area, and a further 15 were returned by Royal Mail as 'Address Unknown' or 'No longer at this address'. With the exception of one, all those in the latter category were from the Highland region. While it was anticipated that the return rate for questionnaires was likely to be poor, on balance it was decided that these would be used to supplement the information gathered through the interviews and focus groups.

### **Challenges and 'Added Value': Benefits of Considering the Studies Together in the Thesis**

Overall the approach used in data collection and analysis was continually one of maintaining balance between openness and flexibility and a sense of scepticism to some extent. In general the methodological approach was necessarily flexible, given the lack of much previous academic literature and research on the topic.

Issues of validity, reliability and generalisation are a source of much debate and contestation, particularly regarding the 'quantitative/qualitative' divide (Creswell 2003; Layder 1998; Maxwell, 1996). From the perspective of the thesis a number of strategies are utilised to address validity and reliability issues which overlap to some extent (Mason 2002; Maxwell 1996; Patton 2002). For example: (i) I tried to ensure that the methods used are in synergy with the aims of the research by using qualitative research methods and focusing on the experiences of participants; (ii) 'Thick description' is used to provide insight into the experiences of households/individuals and their settings; (iii) Diverse and at times discrepant views and perspectives are presented; (iv) Where relevant I relate my research to the findings of others and (v) I discussed my position as a researcher in this chapter. I have also made my methodological approach explicit and described the

approach used to reanalyse the data. Finally, my research was about understanding the experiences and views of participants in particular settings. The emphasis was on seeking to illuminate issues and experiences that are important to developing an understanding of the ways in which ethnicity / 'race' and place are contingent and interact with each other in complex ways in rural areas, which large scale quantitative studies are not equipped to address

The research presented in this thesis comprised four studies undertaken over a period of six years between 1998 and 2004. These were separately commissioned studies by public agencies in response to a changing policy and legislative landscape (see Table 1.2, Chapter 1). In general, the rationale for commissioning each of the studies was the need to develop a profile and understanding of minority ethnic needs in response to three factors: (i) legislative requirements (e.g. Race Relations Amendment (2000) Act); (ii) requirements arising out of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report 1999); and (iii) evolving policies such as social inclusion and widening access to education. All of these demanded the need for better information as discussed in Chapter 1.

The separate commissioning of projects by different agencies at a local level has tended to lead to a piecemeal and fragmented approach to making sense of rural minority ethnic experiences. Furthermore, as shall be argued in Chapter 4, this has led to a tendency for reports, such as the ones I have discussed in this thesis, to come up with similar findings repeatedly, with little or no evidence of change as far as rural minority ethnic households are concerned. In a bid to argue for more attention to be paid, and resources to be spent on minority ethnic groups in rural areas, there has been a strong inclination to downplay differences within and between these groups, to focus on their 'needs' and to ignore the active adaptation strategies adopted by them (Robinson and Gardner 2004). In general, this was not helped by the tendency to commission studies with short time scales and limited budgets, which has led to the impression that it was easier commissioning studies than investing in appropriate interventions drawn from the research evidence. This latter issue has been raised more widely about research on ethnicity / 'race' (Scottish Executive, 2000d).

While there are undoubtedly challenges (for example, in providing a consistent analysis) in bringing together four studies that were separately commissioned by different agencies

over a period of time, there have a number of added benefits. Firstly, it has provided an opportunity to develop a progressively more nuanced and in-depth understanding of minority ethnic experiences in rural areas over a period of six years, by highlighting themes which have consistently emerged as well as changes, thus moving away from the static accounts that emerge from the separately commissioned studies. Secondly, as discussed earlier in this chapter, it has provided an opportunity to use these insights to explore the experiences of specific groups, such as children, young people and adults within the context of education, as well as the broader rural contexts. Thirdly, it has helped facilitate an exploration of the differences/diversity and adaptive strategies employed which are contingent on changing context over time and in relation to place. Fourthly, it provides the potential for pinpointing the specific forces in the rural context, which have shaped the experiences of rural minority ethnic households over a period of time, and which are distinct from their urban counterparts as well as other rural residents. Fifthly, it addresses the urban bias in ethnicity / 'race' research and the absence of minority ethnic voices in rural research. And finally, the combination of insights provided by drawing together the studies has the potential for addressing on going policy issues in relation to both conducting research, and service planning and delivery. It provides a basis for focusing on the specificity of their experiences as children, young people and adults, taking into account their diversities and differences in different contexts.

Chapters 4-7 present the re-analysis of the data undertaken in relation to Studies 1-4 for this thesis. Chapter four presents the analysis of the demographic data undertaken for Studies 1 and 4.

## **Chapter 4 Addressing the invisibility of rural minority ethnic households and understanding their demography**

### **Introduction**

One of the aims of this thesis is to make the presence of rural minority ethnic households visible. This chapter marks the beginning of the presentation of the analysis of the empirical data. A good understanding of the spatial distribution and the demographics of the rural minority ethnic population is important for three main reasons: to address the gap in information, given the urban centric focus of ethnicity / 'race' research; to counter the tendency to deny the relevance of ethnicity / 'race'; and to provide the information required for the delivery of services in a way that treats all households/individuals equitably. A tendency to deny the relevance of ethnicity / 'race' in rural contexts, and a lack of acknowledgment of their presence, are recurring arguments that emerge from the discussions in Chapters 1 and 2. In addition, the challenges in identifying and accessing minority ethnic households in the absence of reliable data were highlighted in Chapter 3. Despite a plethora of reports identifying poor access to services, lack of economies of scale due to small numbers and their geographical spread have been used by public agencies as a justification for not providing services that are culturally sensitive (Scottish Executive 2001). Consequently, service providers have no way of knowing what the demand for their services is likely to be from minority ethnic groups, reinforcing their invisibility.

Against this background, this chapter argues that understanding the spatial and ethnic profile of rural areas is an important first step in making the presence of rural minority ethnic people visible and was an important focus of Study 1 in 1998-99, which drew on the 1991 Census in relation to four local authority areas – Angus, North Ayrshire, Highland and the Western Isles (discussed below). The particular ethnic and demographic characteristics and the spatial distribution of rural minority ethnic households were important factors in shaping their experiences of life where they lived. These characteristics were: small numbers, the lack of others from a similar ethnic background, the diversity within and between groups, and their spatial dispersion- i.e. small numbers were present across most rural areas. These factors interacted with the particular ideologies of rurality to reinforce their invisibility. However, as the presence of minority ethnic people in rural communities was more widely acknowledged, Study 4 was

undertaken in 2003-4, focusing on the Highlands and Islands, and drawing on the 2001 Census. The Study 4 emphasis was on moving away from the tendency to portray minority ethnic households as homogeneous, and develop a more nuanced understanding of the wide range of ethnicities that existed and the interaction of ethnicity with other social factors discussed in more detail below.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the following: a brief overview of minority ethnic groups in Scotland as a whole, and some of the challenges of accessing accurate data to set the context; an overview of the analysis of the 1991 and 2001 Censuses on the rural minority ethnic population undertaken for Studies 1 and 4 respectively; and ends with a conclusion.

## **Minority Ethnic Groups in Scotland**

The lack of robust statistical information on minority ethnic groups in Scotland, in general, has been a recurrent theme highlighted by research (de Lima 2000; de Lima et al 2005; Magne 2003; Netto et al 2001). The two main sources of data on rural minority ethnic groups are the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. In Scotland, minority ethnic groups made up 1.25 percent (62,634) of the Scottish population according to the 1991 Census (de Lima, 2001, p15). In 2001, they had increased to 2.01 percent (101,677) of the Scottish population, constituting a 62 percent increase since the 1991 Census (Scottish Executive, 2004, p.5). In 1991, almost 75 percent were from South and East Asia, particularly Pakistan, India and China. In contrast, Black African and Caribbean populations comprised ten percent of Scotland's minority ethnic community (de Lima, 2001, p.15; see also Bailey et al 1997; Dalton and Hampton, 1994). In 2001, those from South and East Asia, particularly Pakistan, China, India and Bangladesh were still the dominant groups – just over 70 percent (71,317). In addition, over 12 percent (12,764) described their background as 'Mixed', and around seven percent (6,896) as African and Caribbean (Scottish Executive, 2004, p.5).

Spatial distribution and data on rural minority ethnic households is more difficult to access due to changes in the definitions of 'rural' employed, and the limited availability of disaggregated data. Some isolated attempts have been made to identify the spatial distribution of the rural minority ethnic population based on the 1991 and 2001 Censuses in England. For example, Goldsmith and Makris (1998, p.8) drawing on an analysis of the

1991 Census reported that over 27 percent (795,100) of black and minority ethnic people lived outside the main English metropolitan counties. Reeve and Robinson (2004b) estimated that there were approximately two million minority ethnic people living in locations in England where little or no research had been conducted, and that 1,845,493 (28.89 percent) minority ethnic people (28.89 percent) lived in districts with a relatively small minority ethnic population.

A spatial analysis of the Scottish minority ethnic population in 1991 revealed a mainly urban population, with 60 percent (337,737) living in the four main cities – i.e. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee – and 40 percent (24,897) dispersed throughout the mainland and islands of Scotland. Outside the regions of Strathclyde, Lothian, Tayside and Grampian, there were minority ethnic households in each of the other regions, including the Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles (Netto et al 2001, p.6).

Drawing on the 2001 Census, the Scottish Executive (2004, p.24-27) for the first time provided a brief overview of minority ethnic groups in urban and rural areas. This showed similar patterns to the 1991 census, in terms of the concentration of the population in urban areas and the four main cities in particular. However, there was a presence of minority ethnic individuals/households in all local authority and health board areas in Scotland: 88 percent lived in urban areas, six percent in small towns, and six percent in rural areas (i.e. accessible rural and remote rural together). By contrast, 68 percent of all those in the 'White' category were living in urban areas, a further 14 percent in small towns, and 18 percent in rural areas (see Table 4.1). Smaller percentages of minority ethnic households were reported to be dispersed throughout the more remote and rural areas of the Scottish mainland and islands, varying from 0.1 percent in Orkney, 0.6 percent in the Scottish Borders to 1.6 percent in Highland (Scottish Executive 2004, p.25).

**Table 4.1: Spatial Distribution of Ethnic Groups – Percentages**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Large Urban Areas</b>	<b>Other Urban Areas</b>	<b>Accessible Small Towns</b>	<b>Remote Small Towns</b>	<b>Accessible Rural</b>	<b>Remote Rural</b>	<b>Base</b>
<b>All 'White'</b>	38	30	11	3	13	5	4964813
<b>All minority ethnic</b>	71	17	5	1	5	1	98450

(Adapted from Scottish Executive 2004, p.24)

It is important to acknowledge the limitations concerning census data, such as issues related to accuracy, the information being out of date, under estimation of ethnic groups, and in particular the problems concerning the categories used to classify 'ethnic groups' previously discussed in Chapter 1. The availability and accuracy of census data on minority ethnic groups in rural areas are affected by measures taken by the Census authorities, such as the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), to protect individual confidentiality in data taken from small areas. These are: (i) increasing the minimum population represented in each table or giving only summary statistics; (ii) swapping a small number of records between areas with small populations; and (iii) adjusting some very small counts so that individual information cannot be identified (see GROS 2003).

Consequently, where numbers are low, as happens to be the case with rural minority ethnic groups, these disclosure control measures are most likely to be used. This is, for example, evident in the adjustments made to the 2001 ethnicity categorisation in reporting data for rural areas. Whilst GROS in the 2001 Census used a 15 category 'standard' classification to give the basic numbers in each local authority and ward area, for more detailed tabulations (for example, on economic activity, education and so on), a more restricted 'simple' 5 category ethnic classification was used (GROS, 2003). This resulted in the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Other South Asian (PBSA) communities being categorised together, and the 'Other' category was 'simplified' to encompass 'other', 'mixed', African, Afro-Caribbean, Black Scottish and other 'Black' categories. The other three categories were 'White' Indian and Chinese (GROS 2003). While these measures are necessary to protect individual confidentiality, they have the effect of masking the diversity and differences between and within groups, making it difficult to assess the implications for planning and delivering services.

The next two sections discuss the profile of the minority ethnic population drawing on analysis of the 1991 Census in relation to Study 1, and the 2001 Census in relation to Study 4, as well as other local information where relevant, as highlighted in Chapter 3.

### **Study 1: Developing a Profile of the Minority Ethnic Population in Four Rural Areas in Scotland**

As the analysis of the 1991 Census with regard to ethnicity focused predominantly on the urban context where the majority of the minority ethnic population lived, the main emphasis of Study 1 was to fill this gap by developing a basic profile of the numbers and ethnicity of minority ethnic households in the four rural local authority areas previously highlighted (findings further discussed in Chapter 5). With regard to size, the minority ethnic population in Study 1 areas hovered around 0.4 to 0.5 percent of the population (see Table 4.2), although there were some variations between areas with regard to which ethnic groups were dominant. For example, the Pakistani community were predominant in the Western Isles, the Chinese in Angus, and the Indians and Chinese in Ayrshire: Those categorised as ‘other’ were prominent in all four areas and were the largest group in the Highlands. An important issue in relation to the predominance of the ‘other’ category is the extent to which it masks the ethnic diversity of the population. In the Highlands, the ‘other’, Black and Chinese groups made up 79 percent of the Highland minority ethnic population, with the Indian and the Pakistani communities having a significant presence (de Lima, 2001, p.16-18).

**Table 4.2: Minority Ethnic Groups in Scotland and the Four Research Areas (Study 1) – 1991 Census**

	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Angus</b>		<b>Highland</b>		<b>North Ayrshire</b>		<b>Western Isles</b>	
<b>Total Persons</b>	4,998,567 Percent	107,429	Percent	204,004	Percent	136,875	Percent	29,600	Percent
<b>White</b>	98.75	106,871	99.48	202,897	99.46	136,209	99.51	29,481	99.60
<b>Total Minority Ethnic</b>	1.25	558	0.52	1107	0.54	666	0.49	119	0.40
<b>Black</b>	0.14	110	20	241	22	75	11	19	16
<b>Indian</b>	0.20	57	10	83	8	256	38	4	3
<b>Pakistani</b>	0.42	71	13	101	9	68	10	55	46
<b>Bangladeshi</b>	0.02	4	1	49	4	9	1	2	2
<b>Chinese</b>	0.21	172	31	211	19	147	22	8	7
<b>Other</b>	0.26	144	26	422	38	111	17	31	26

(Adapted from Census 1991, de Lima 2001, p.17)

Given some of the weaknesses of the census data, and the relatively large numbers defining themselves as 'other', an attempt was made to develop more insight into the ethnicity of the population, by making contact with public service providers in the four areas. As there was no monitoring data available, EAL teachers in the Highlands in particular, appeared to be the best source of information at the informal level because of their involvement in teaching English to children and adults whose first language was not English. One of the Further Education College providers in the Highlands reported that of the approximately 40 adults who accessed EAL classes in any one week in 1998-1999, there were individuals from 14-17 different countries living and working in the Highlands, and travelling relatively long distances to access the provision. Another potential source of information was the number of young people who were bilingual in their mother tongue. For example, in June 2001 a bilingual survey undertaken by Highland Council revealed that there were 107 pupils (excluding those from the European Union) in Highland schools that identified themselves as bilingual. Of these approximately 41 were in secondary schools. The languages spoken included: French, Spanish, Urdu, Bengali, Thai, Cantonese and Hakka. However, some underreporting due to concerns about being identified was acknowledged as being a problem (The Highland Council 2001).

Overall, the 1991 Census and informal information provided by EAL providers in the Highlands confirmed that there was a presence of minority ethnic households scattered across rural areas. Apart from the small number, the two other features that best described the population in all four areas were that they were ethnically diverse and dispersed (de Lima 2001, p.16-18). The findings of Study 1 confirmed that the presence and ethnic characteristics of minority ethnic people in the four rural areas was similar to that found in other areas in England (Dhalech 1999a; Magne 2003), and provided some initial insights on the impact of being small in number, diverse and dispersed on their lived experiences (discussed in Chapter 5).

#### **Study 4: Developing a Profile of the Minority Ethnic Population in the Highlands and Islands**

Study 4 aimed to develop a more detailed understanding of the profile of the minority ethnic population in the Highlands and Islands in the context of access to post school provision. The research focus and its geographical coverage determined the nature of the analysis, which was carried out using the 2001 Census data (findings discussed in more

detail in Chapter 7). The aim was to explore how ethnicity interacted with other factors, such as age, gender, qualifications, economic activity and employment background to influence post school decision making and experiences. This more detailed analysis was facilitated by the availability of the 2001 Census data through GROS, and an increased general awareness among public agencies in particular of the importance of data to meet the requirements of legislation, such as the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000).

The geographical focus of Study 4, as previously highlighted in Chapter 3, included the following local authority areas: The Highland Council, Moray Council, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles Island Councils. Although the choice of geographical areas was mainly influenced by the funder's remit, the location of some of the areas, often described as remote, and the diversity of geography encompassed, provided a unique opportunity for developing an in-depth insight of minority ethnic experiences.

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland encompass a range of spatial types from urban areas to remote rural areas and towns (Scottish Executive 2004, p.24). Drawing on the 2001 Census, an analysis at ward level revealed that with the exception of one ward in the Highlands, the minority ethnic population formed a small proportion of all wards in the Highlands and Islands. In general, the patterns of settlement were similar to the minority ethnic population in Scotland as a whole; that is, they tended to be concentrated in and around the small towns and urban accessible areas. Given the small size of the population, the more detailed 2001 Census tabulations used the 'simple' 5 category classification described previously (see Table 4.3). For example, using the 'simple' classification, approximately 50 percent of the minority ethnic population in the Highlands and Islands was classed as 'Other', effectively masking the diverse ethnicities that might exist within this category, and emphasising the need to exercise caution when reading off specific characteristics about the minority ethnic population from the data (GROS, 2003).

**Table 4.3: Minority Ethnic Groups in the Highlands and Islands, using the “Simple” Classification – 2001 Census**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Indian	289	9.9
Chinese	480	16.4
*PBSA	687	23.5
**Other	1470	50.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2926</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Scotland’s Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table KS06<sup>4</sup>

\*PBSA: Pakistani, Bangladeshi and South Asian

\*\* Other: ‘Other’, ‘mixed’, African, Afro-Caribbean, Black Scottish and other Black

Note: Highlands & Islands, includes Moray, Highland, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles

Minority ethnic groups comprised 0.8 percent (2,926) of the overall population of the Highlands and Islands (see Table 4.4). Their numbers varied between the different local authority areas, from 1,671 in the Highlands (0.8 percent of the Highland population) to 86 in the Orkney Islands (0.46 percent of the Orkney Islands population). Like the rest of Scotland, the Highlands and Islands minority ethnic share of the population had increased since the 1991 Census: for example, from 0.5 to 0.8 percent in the Highlands, 0.3 to 0.46 percent in Orkney, 0.6 to 1.06 percent in Shetland and 0.4 to 0.64 percent in the Western Isles.

**Table 4.4: Population – Scotland and the Highlands and Islands – 2001 Census**

	<b>All Population</b>		<b>Minority Ethnic Population</b>	
	<b>Nos</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Nos</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	5062011	100	101677	2.01
<b>All Local Authorities in Study 4</b>	363589	7.18	2926	0.8
<b>Highland Council</b>	208914	4.13	1671	0.8
<b>Moray Council</b>	86940	1.72	765	0.88
<b>Western Isles</b>	26205	0.52	172	0.64
<b>Shetland Island Council</b>	21988	0.43	232	1.06
<b>Orkney Island Council</b>	19245	0.38	86	0.46

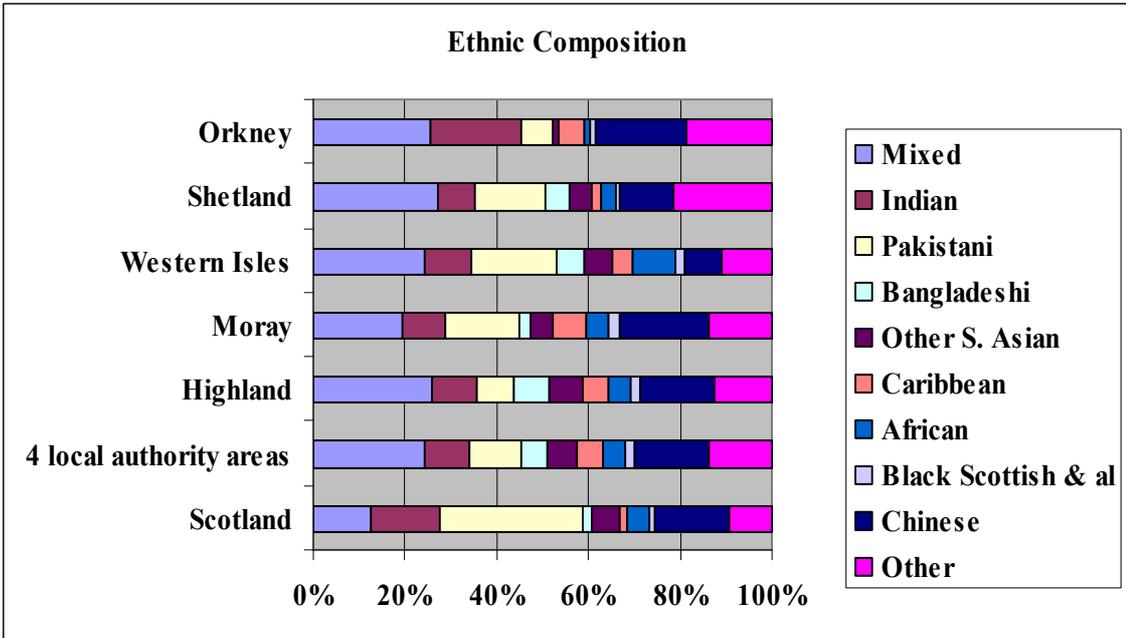
Source: Scotland’s Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table KS06

<sup>4</sup> Scotland’s Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk>. “National Statistics Website: at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>. Crown copyright material is produced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.”

On the issue of ethnic background, people of ‘mixed’ minority ethnic background constituted the largest category (between 24 and 27 percent) across all areas except Moray. In Moray, the ‘mixed category’ was the joint largest with the Chinese community, and differed from the patterns of ethnicities of the Scottish minority ethnic population, where the Pakistani community was the largest community, followed by the Chinese and the ‘Other’ category (Figure 4.1, see also Appendix 3, Table 1). Those of African and Caribbean origin were in a very small minority across the Highlands and Islands, ranging from one to ninety in number. Contact with EAL teachers across the areas reinforced the potentially diverse range of ethnicities likely to be represented in the ‘Other’ category and included people from the European Union, Middle-East, and the former Communist countries, South America, Vietnam, Thailand and Philippines (de Lima et al. 2005).

Just over a third (34 percent) of the Highland and Islands minority ethnic population was born in Scotland. This was particularly the case for the PBSA group (38 percent), and the ‘Other’ category (36 percent). However, more than half of the minority ethnic population (51 percent) were born abroad. For example, in relation to the Indian and Chinese communities, the percentages were 60 and 65 percent respectively.

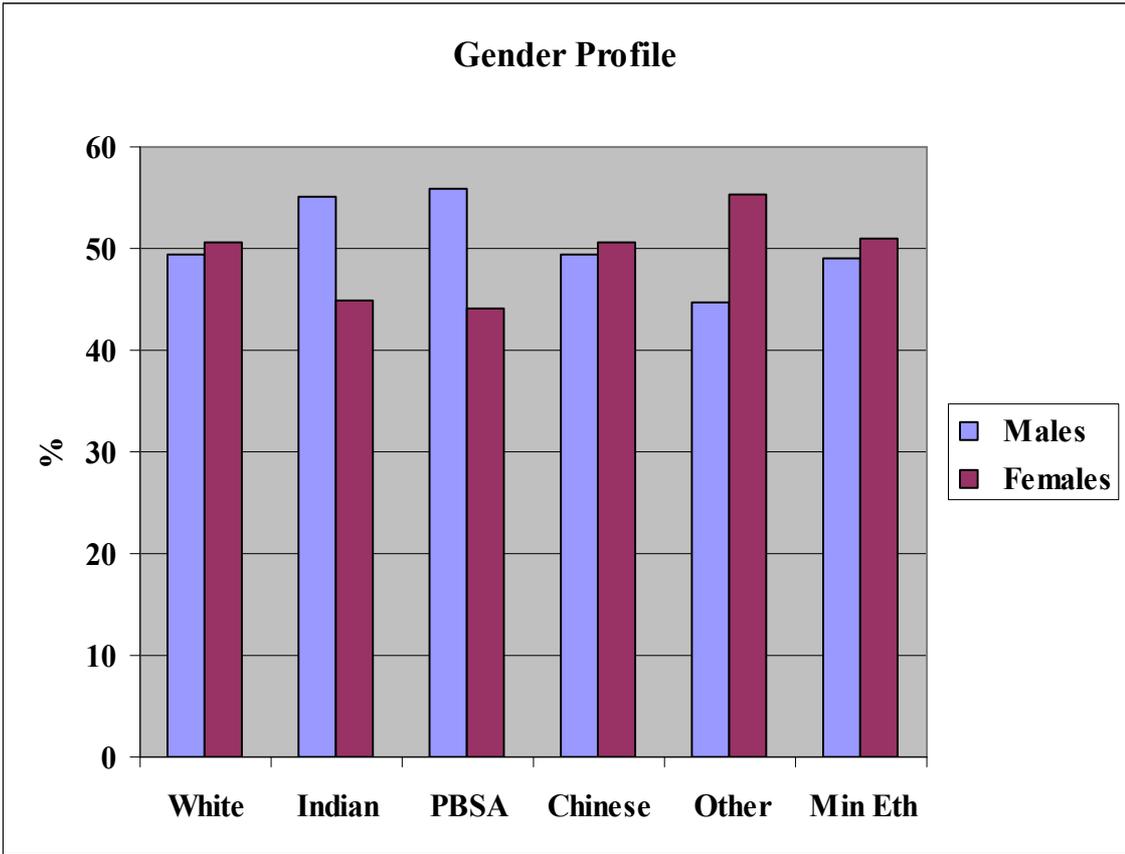
**Figure 4.1: Size of Minority Ethnic Groups in the Highlands and Islands and Scotland**



Source: Scotland’s Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table KS06

Overall, there were strong similarities between the minority ethnic population in the Highlands and Islands, and Scotland as a whole with regard to issues such as gender, educational qualifications, economic activity and employment trends (See Scottish Executive 2004). Although the proportion of females to males was slightly higher amongst the minority ethnic groups in the Highlands and Islands (Figure 4.2; Appendix 3, Table 2), it was similar to that of the ‘white’ community. However, the Indian and the PBSA communities consisted of more males (approximately 55 percent) than females (approximately 45 percent); and the ‘Other’ category, by contrast, had more females (55 percent) than males (45 percent). The reasons for the latter are not immediately evident, although some evidence (based on my research) suggested that women from South Asia, and more recently, Russia were marrying local men in rural areas, including remote island communities.

**Figure 4.2: Gender Profile by Ethnic Groups, Highlands and Islands (Percentages)**



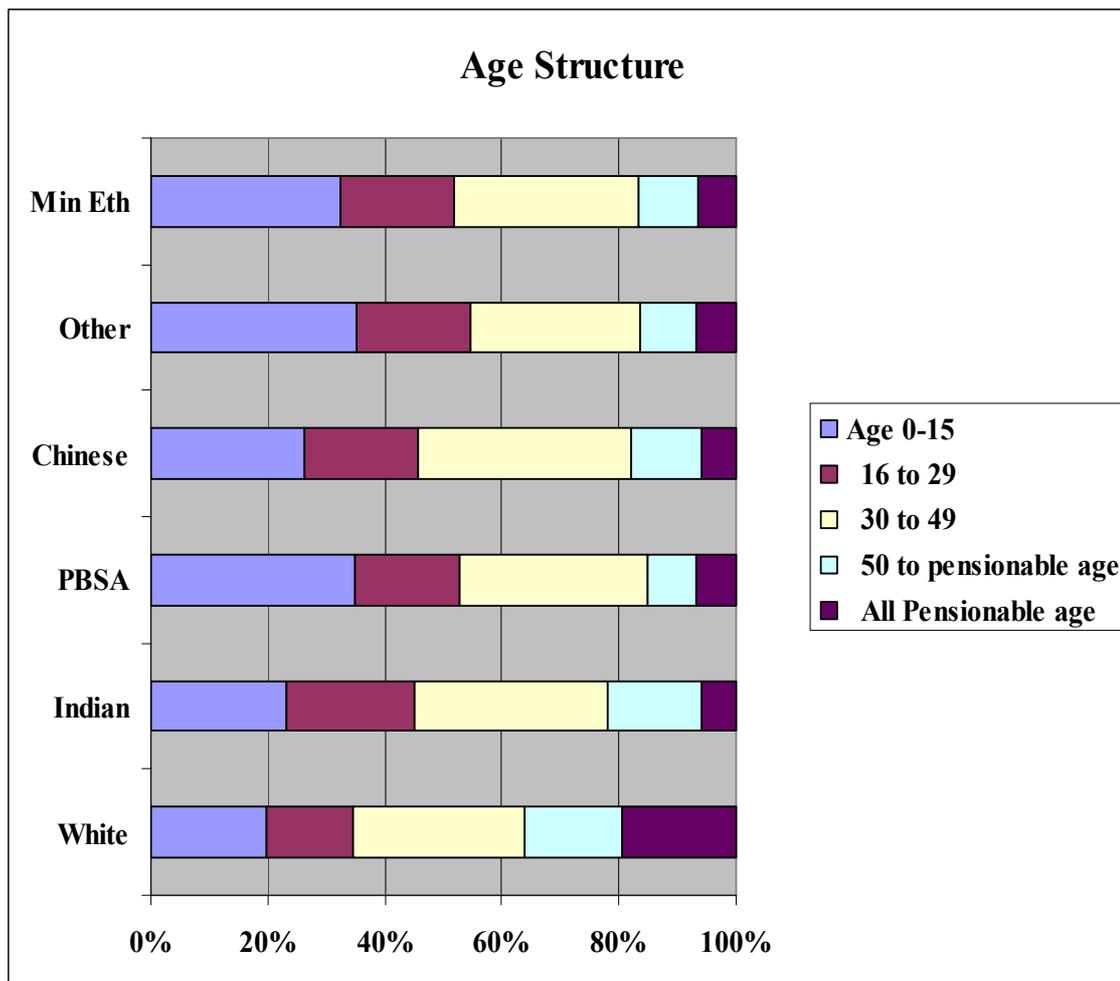
Source: Scotland’s Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table CAST07

The minority ethnic population tended to be younger than the population of the Highlands and Islands as a whole (see Figure 4.3; Appendix 3, Table 3). The minority ethnic

population had a lower proportion of people over 50 years of age; for example, more than 80 percent of the minority ethnic population in the Highlands and Islands were less than 50 years old, compared to 64 percent of the population of the area as a whole. The PBSA and 'Other' communities particularly had a younger age structure, with 35 percent of their populations falling in the 0-15 age band compared to 20 percent for the 'White' population. The Chinese and Indian communities had 26 and 23 percent respectively in the 0-15 age band, but had a higher proportion (36 percent: Chinese; Indian: 33 percent) in the 30-49 age bands.

The presence of higher numbers of children, young people and people/families of working age has particular significance when considering issues such as service delivery and the ability to maintain cultural identity in a context where the communities may not be perceived as being culturally diverse. While the number of older people, particularly of pensionable age was low amongst minority ethnic groups according to the 2001 Census, it is important to bear in mind that this is likely to change as the demographics of minority ethnic households evolve, and as people decide to stay longer in rural areas (Robinson et al 2005). In addition, the presence of small numbers of older minority ethnic people representing different minority ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds presents challenges to the delivery of culturally sensitive services.

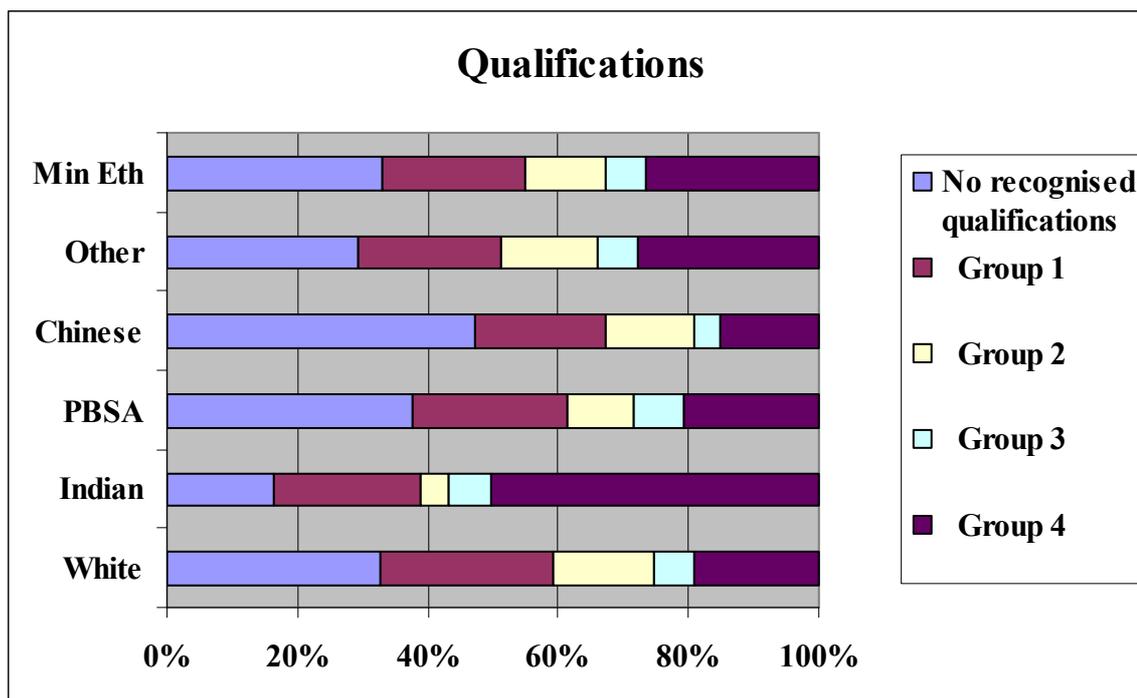
**Figure 4.3: Age: Ethnic Groups in the Highlands and Islands (Percentages)**



Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland Table CAST07

There were differences between minority ethnic groups with regard to issues such as educational qualifications and employment patterns (see Figure 4.4; and Appendix 3, Table 4), reflecting diversity between groups with regard to socio-economic trends. For example, people of Indian and African origin were more likely to have higher educational qualifications: by contrast, those without qualifications were significantly over-represented in the Chinese (47 percent) and PBSA (38 percent) groups, compared with 33 percent amongst the 'White' population.

**Figure 4.4: Qualifications in the Highlands and Islands by Ethnic Group (Percentages)**



Source: Scotland’s Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table CAST07

Figure Category Definitions:

Group 1: ‘O’ grade, Standard grade, Intermediate 1&2, C&G Craft, SVQ 1&2

Group 2: Higher grade, CSYS, ONC, C&G Advanced Craft, and RSA Advanced Diploma, SVQ 3

Group 3: HND, HNC, RSA Higher Diploma, SVQ 4&5

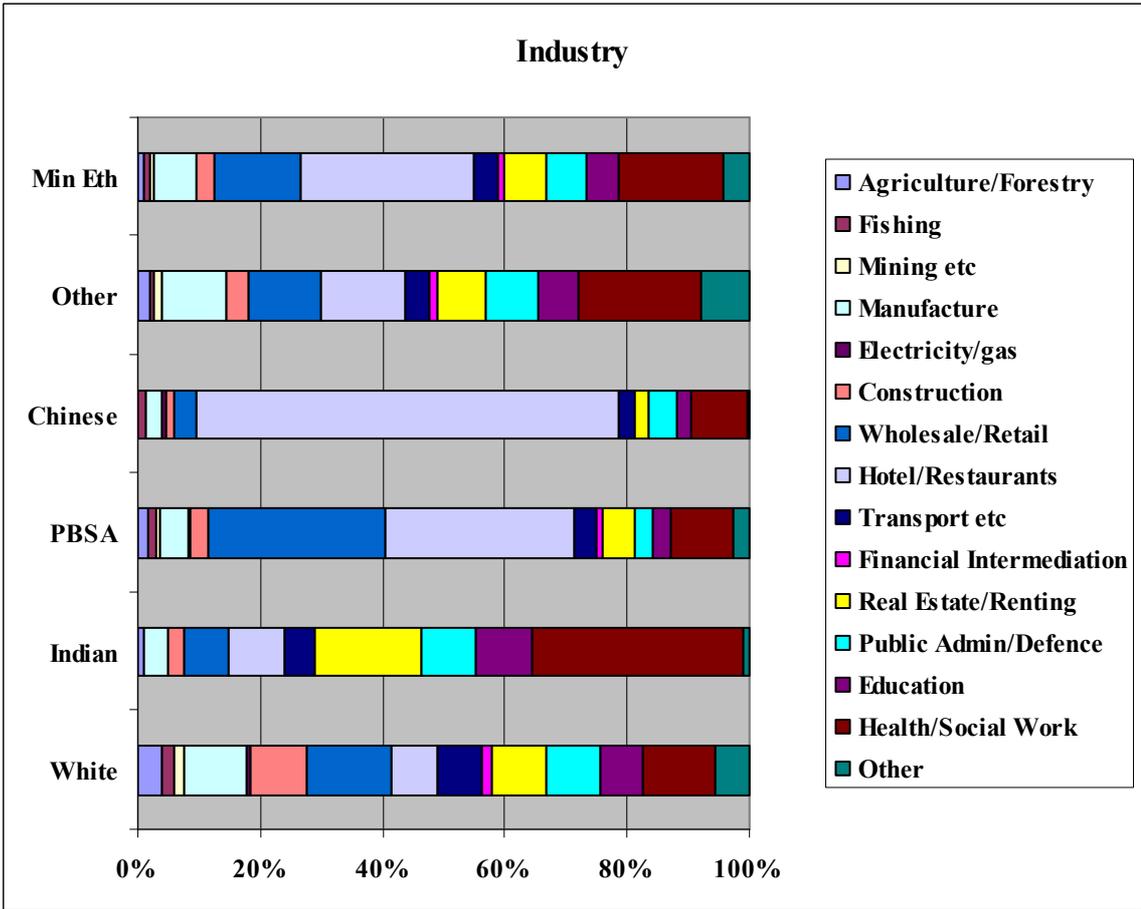
Group 4: 1st Degree, Higher Degree, Professional qualification

With regard to employment, the Highlands and Islands have more ‘Farming, Hunting and Fishing employment (three percent) compared to the Scottish ‘Industry’ profile (1.3 percent). In addition, the Construction, Hotel/Restaurants industries, as well as employment in Public Administration and Defence (approximately six percent, compared to between 3.5 to 4.4 percent in Scotland) were the main employers in the Highlands and Islands, with ‘Financial Administration’ the only category of employment significantly under-represented (one percent, compared to three percent in Scotland) (de Lima et al. 2005, p.59).

Minority ethnic people in the Highlands and Islands tended to be employed in a narrower range of sectors than their ‘White’ counterparts (Figure 4.5; Appendix 3, Table 5), with considerably larger proportions being employed in the hotels, restaurants, and the retail/wholesale sectors. By contrast, they were underrepresented in sectors such as public

administration and construction. Whilst the Indian and ‘Other’ communities had employment profiles most approximating that of the ‘White’ majority, the profile of the Chinese community was most divergent, being substantially concentrated in the hotel/restaurant sector.

**Figure 4.5: Industry by Ethnic Group, Highlands and Islands (Percentages)**

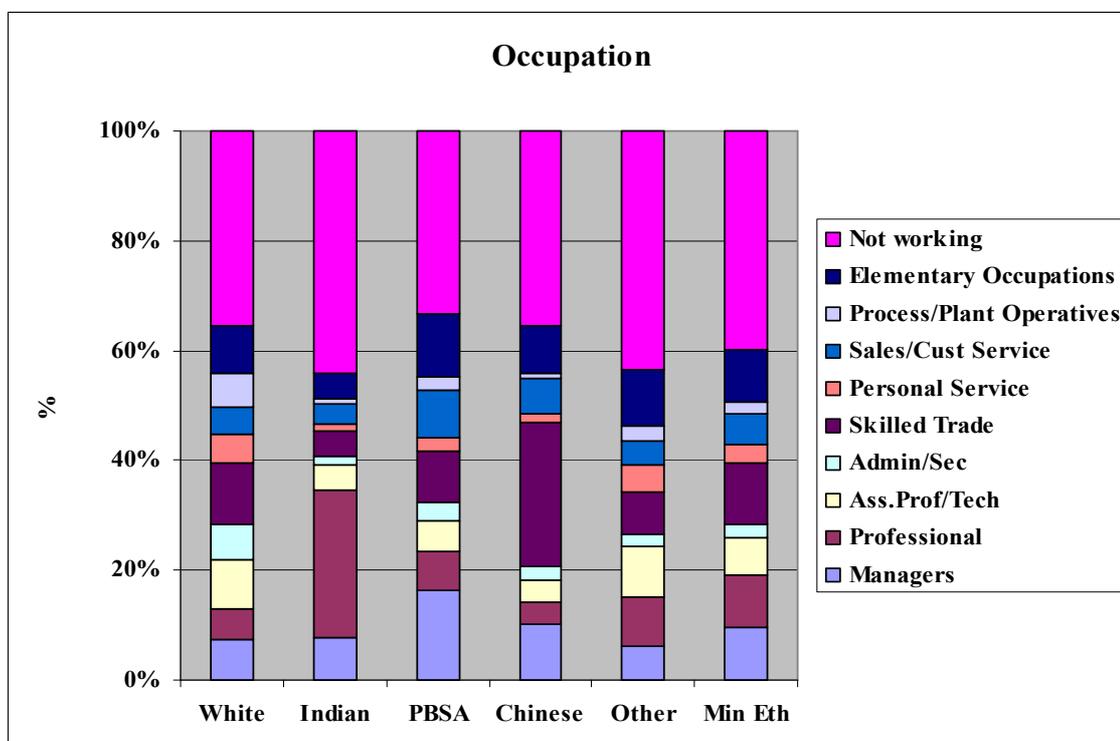


Source: Scotland’s Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland Table CAST07

Ten percent of minority ethnic workers were professionals, compared to six percent for the ‘White’ population (Figure 4.6; Appendix 3, Table 6). The Indian community particularly, had a high rate of professionals (27 percent), in contrast those categorised as ‘Other’ had nine percent. Both the Indian community, and ‘Other’ category had higher than average individuals with degree/professional qualifications (see Figure 4.4 above). They were also more likely to be involved in professions in the health and social work sectors, and those in the Indian category in the real estate, property renting and leasing business sector (see also Figure 4.5). By contrast, the Chinese community had a lower than average proportion of professional workers (four percent), and with the PBSA group,

were more likely to be self-employed and working in the hotel/catering and wholesale/retail sectors.

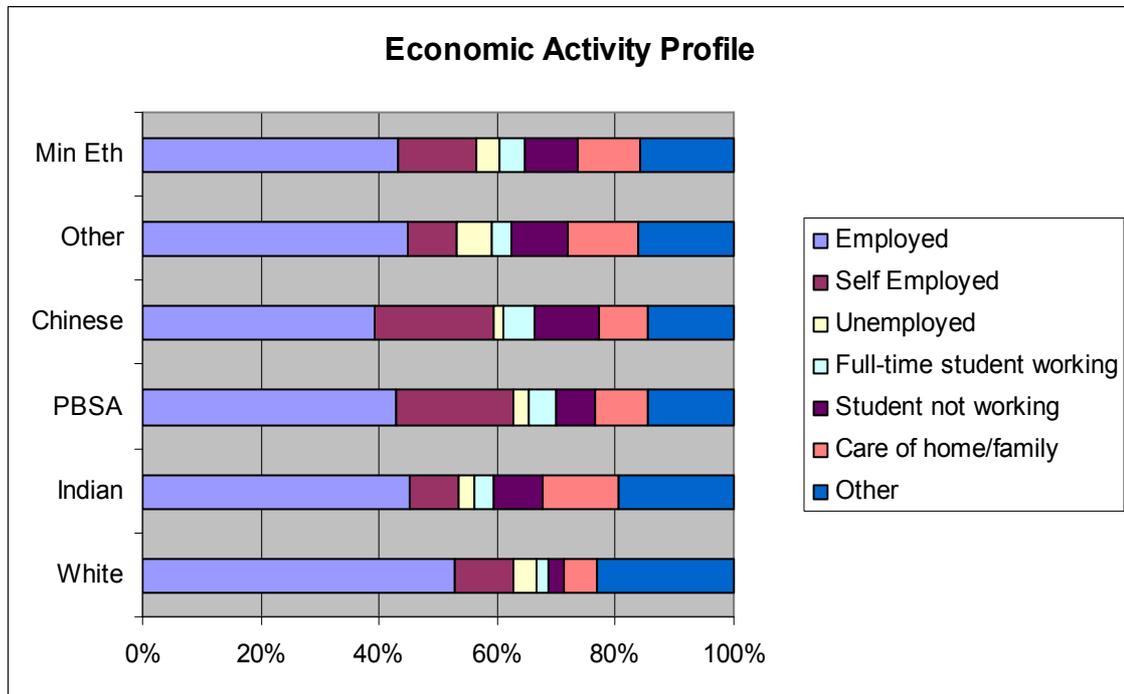
**Figure 4.6: Occupation Minority Ethnic Groups, Highlands and Islands (Percentages)**



Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland Table CAST07

The economic activity rate (includes those unemployed) is defined as ‘...the ratio of the economically active population to the working population,’ and is 16-60 years for women and 16-65 years for men (Scottish Executive, 2004, p.36). The economic activity rate of the minority ethnic groups was lower (65 percent) than that of the ‘White’ group (69 percent). The ‘Other’ category and the Indian community had even lower economic activity rates (e.g. ‘Other’ 63 percent and Indian, 59 percent). The level of unemployment for the ‘White’ and minority ethnic population was the same (four percent); however, the ‘Other’ category experienced an unemployment rate of six percent, whilst the Chinese community showed a lower rate (two percent). On average, the proportion of economically active individuals in the minority ethnic population was greater than in the majority ‘White’ population (35 percent, minority ethnic; 31 percent, ‘White’). The highest levels of economic inactivity were found in the Indian community (41 percent) and ‘Other’ category (37 percent).

**Figure 4.7: Economic Activity Profile of Minority Ethnic Groups, Highlands and Islands (Percentages)**



Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table S208

There were distinctly different economic activity profiles between the different groups. Where as more than half (53 percent) of the 'White' population were employees, under half (43 percent) of the minority ethnic group were in this category (Figure 4.7; Appendix 3, Table 7). This was accentuated in the Chinese community, where only 39 percent were employees. In contrast, the minority ethnic population had a higher rate of self-employment (13 percent) compared to the 'White' population (ten percent). This was particularly the case in the PBSA and Chinese communities, where 20 percent were self-employed.

Twenty eight percent of 16 to 24 year olds in the minority ethnic population were employed, compared to 54 percent for the 'White' population. Less minority ethnic individuals aged 25 years and over were employed (47 percent), when compared to the 'White' population (53 percent). It is highly probable that the difference in economic activity rates between minority ethnic groups and the 'White' population is due to their younger age profile, and the likelihood of minority ethnic young people being in education

(see for example Netto et al 2001). Considerably more of the minority ethnic population were students (13 percent), compared to five percent of the 'White' population.

Fewer members of the minority ethnic population (16 percent) categorised themselves as being either 'Retired, Permanently Sick or Disabled', or some 'other category', compared to 23 percent for the majority 'White' population. Members of the minority ethnic population were nearly twice as likely to be 'looking after the home/family' (11 percent), compared to the 'White' category (six percent), and this was particularly evident in the Indian community (13 percent), and 'Other' group (12 percent). Again these differences could be attributed to the younger age profile and the prevalence of households with young children amongst minority ethnic households: This was supported by the findings discussed in chapter 7 (de Lima et al 2005, p.57).

### **Conclusion: Invisibility of rural minority ethnic households**

This chapter has presented the analysis of the 1991 and 2001 Censuses undertaken in relation to Studies 1 and 4 with the twin aims of making their presence visible in rural Scotland, whilst at the same time highlighting the diversity that exists between and within groups. Broadly the main demographic picture that emerges from the data is of minority ethnic households, though small in number, having a presence in most rural areas including the very remote mainland, and island communities of the Highlands and Islands. While there were small clusters of some groups, such as those of Chinese and Pakistani origin, the main trends suggest the presence of households from a range of different ethnic backgrounds with a tendency for different ethnic groups to show specific patterns in terms of educational qualifications and employment. However, the aggregation of data in the 2001 Census for some groups, such as the PBSA, and the 'Other' masks potential differences that may exist between ethnic groups.

Finding ways to obtain accurate local data on the rural minority ethnic population is a challenging issue. It may be far more useful for local agencies to establish monitoring systems which go beyond the Census categories to capture the diverse and often changing ethnicities in their localities (Magne 2003; Robinson et al 2005). However, many agencies in rural areas seem uncomfortable about implementing monitoring systems given the small numbers. It is also important to bear in mind that minority ethnic families may not wish to identify themselves due to a fear of making themselves even more visible. One potential

way around the sensitivities associated with ethnicity is to avoid its conflation with ‘visible’ minority ethnic groups, and instead explore the potential for deconstructing ‘whiteness’. Thus acknowledging that everyone has an ethnicity and put into context the racialised identities of all people including those described as ‘white’.

Identifying robust demographic statistics and trends in relation to minority ethnic households in rural areas is further complicated by the fact that an ‘objective’ definition may not always reflect how individuals subjectively experience their physical/spatial location (see for example Goldsmith and Makris 1994). Rural minority ethnic households – even in towns and cities such as Inverness – do not live in clusters or in specific areas, and so can feel isolated, as they are not always aware of other minority ethnic households in the area. In a sense, they are not only invisible in relation to public services but also to each other. As argued in the literature review in Chapter 2, living in rural areas, there are fewer opportunities for minority ethnic households to meet each other and other rural residents incidentally in public spaces, in contrast to urban areas where there may be more accessible public transport and public spaces available which are easily accessed in terms of distance (Dines et al 2006; Ray, 2003). The key factor that underpins perceptions of place is the lack of the possibility, or the difficulty of minority ethnic households being able to identify with others like themselves nearby, heightening their feelings of isolation (Magne 2003).

Although the most common motivation for identifying data on rural minority ethnic households has been to counter the scepticism that exists among local agencies that ‘there isn’t a problem here’, the presentation of statistics has not always led to a positive response from service providers. Instead it has often been used to justify their lack of prioritisation as the numbers are considered to be too small to justify expenditure, given limited resources (Scottish Executive 2001). In the context of my thesis, their small numbers, diversity and dispersion not only impacts on the ability of rural minority ethnic households to exercise their rights as citizens (for example in terms of access to services), but also raises other important issues and questions, in relation to negotiating their identities and developing a sense of belonging/identity in the absence of similar ethnic communities in predominantly mono-cultural contexts.

Having established the presence of minority ethnic households in the four rural local authority areas in relation to Study 1, the next chapter aims to explore their lived experiences in these areas with a view to making their experiences visible.

# **Chapter 5 The Lived Experiences of Minority Ethnic Households in Four Rural Communities**

## **Introduction**

Chapter 5 presents the re-analysis of the semi-structured interviews undertaken in Study 1 in 1998-1999. This exploratory study focused on developing some broad insights into the lived experiences of rural minority ethnic households in four rural areas of Scotland – Angus, North Ayrshire, Highland and the Western Isles (See Table 1.2, Chapter 1). The chapter's overall contribution to the focus of this thesis is reflected in two ways: (i) exploring the relationship between ethnicity / 'race' and place, in particular rural places, with a view to making the presence of rural minority ethnic households and their experiences visible; and (ii) understanding the ways in which the demography and spatial distribution of the rural minority ethnic population, discussed in Chapter 3, and the hegemonic tendency to maintain an image of the 'rural idyll' as different from the urban, discussed in Chapter 2, has impacted on their lived experiences of rural life.

As previously argued Study 1 sought to address the dearth of literature and research on rural minority ethnic households in Scotland. Though small in number, scattered and diverse, the analysis of the 1991 Census in Chapter 4 revealed a presence of rural minority ethnic people across all four rural areas involved in the study. This contrasted with the tendency amongst policy makers to deny their presence, and their absence in academic literature, reviewed in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 explores further the ways in which these factors shape their experiences, and argues that rural minority ethnic households were invisible in rural areas, but felt highly 'visible'. Their small numbers, ethnic diversity and dispersed settlement patterns, together with the influence of specific ideologies present in the rural context – for example, about who does and does not belong – and the emphasis on economies of scale in service delivery, made their experiences distinct from their urban counterparts and rural residents in general.

Following a brief overview of each of the four local authority areas, and a profile of the participants involved in Study 1, the remainder of this chapter presents the re-analysis undertaken of the semi-structured interviews and (see Chapter 3). This re-analysis concentrates on presenting their views on life in the areas in which they lived, and their experiences and perspectives on access and use of services. The material from these

interviews and questionnaires is presented thematically using quotes and illustrative examples. As previously argued in Chapter 3, the latter are presented in this way, because it is considered a powerful way of connecting with, and communicating the experiences and perceptions of the participants, whose voices had been absent in previous research and literature on rurality. The chapter concludes by providing an overview of some the key findings, highlighting the reasons and the ways in which the experiences of rural minority ethnic households might be seen as distinct from their urban counterparts, and rural residents in general, as well as identifying some consistent themes that have emerged, which are explored further in Chapters 6 and 7.

### **Rural Context: Profile of the Four Local Authority Areas in Study 1**

The basis for choosing the four local authority areas in Study 1 – Angus, Highlands, North Ayrshire and the Western Isles – was determined by the fact that they represented different types of rurality, as well as for the pragmatic reasons previously explained in Chapter 3. This section presents a more general overview of each of the four areas, including some population data from the 1991 Census, and a brief overview of the infrastructure in place to respond to the requirements of rural minority ethnic households to set the context in which Study 1 took place.

#### **Angus**

At the time of Study 1, Angus represented a typical agricultural area with a potential for experiencing decline in population due to the diminishing importance of the agricultural sector. It is located just over 25 miles north of Dundee and 50 miles south of Aberdeen, between the Rivers Tay and North Esk, the North Sea and the Grampians. Angus had a population of 110,780 (1996), representing 2.2 percent of the Scottish population, with a population density of 50 persons per square kilometre. Most of the population lived within seven towns, with the remoter areas being sparsely populated, (Angus Council 1997).

Angus had relatively high employment in the primary industries, especially agriculture and manufacturing, which accounted for 20.5 percent of jobs compared to 15.9 percent for Scotland as a whole, however it had a lower percentage of employment in the service sector. Employment trends were broadly similar to those in Scotland, with employment in the primary sector decreasing (albeit it would seem at a slower rate), whilst the service sector seemed to be growing at a faster rate. The proximity of Angus to Dundee and

Aberdeen had also encouraged commuting. According to the 1991 census, Angus had more self-employed than in Scotland as a whole; with 18.5 percent of males being self-employed, which was twice the Scottish rate (Shucksmith et al 1996, p.43). It had the fourth highest rate of unemployment of all Council areas in July 1997 (Angus Council 1997, p.9).

### **Highlands**

The Scottish Highlands and Islands covers almost half (40 percent) of the land area of Scotland. In 1997, the Highland Council area population was 208,700, and had been reported as growing rapidly since 1991, mainly due to net in-migration. A high proportion of the population lived in very small rural communities, e.g. a quarter of the population in 1991 lived in settlements of less than 1,000. As large areas were almost completely unpopulated, it had the lowest population density in Scotland with 8 persons per square kilometre, in comparison to the Scottish average of 66 per square kilometre. Population density varied between two persons per square kilometre in Sutherland, Northwest of Inverness and 26 persons per square kilometre in Nairn, east of Inverness (Highland Council 1997).

Employment in the Highland Council area was characterised by a high proportion of jobs in the service sector, with those working in tourism-related employment (e.g. distribution, hotels, etc.), and the public sector accounting for the largest proportion of service sector jobs. Service sector jobs in Business Services (e.g. banking, finance, insurance and IT related services) had almost doubled since 1989, becoming significant in the economy. Manufacturing at 10 percent of employment was lower than in Scotland as a whole, and construction was experiencing a decline. Given the high proportion of jobs in the tourism, agricultural, fishing and forestry sectors, employment in the Highland Council areas tended to be subject to seasonal variations. According to the 1991 Census, 14 percent of the economically active Highland population were self-employed, in contrast to the Scottish figure of nine percent. Highland Council estimated that the number of self-employed was likely to have increased since the 1991 Census (Highland Council 1997, Scottish Homes 1998a)

### **North Ayrshire**

North Ayrshire lies within commuting distance of the large conurbation of Glasgow, and includes mining areas, agricultural land, moors, coastal areas, and areas of industrial

decline. It had a population of 139,854 (1995), an increase of 0.5 percent between 1994-1995, and represented approximately 2.7 percent of the Scottish population. Much of this increase in population was attributed to net inward migration. Nearly 70 percent of the population lived in the towns of Irvine, Kilwinning, Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenson, and Largs. Whilst the population of towns and villages in the North of the area, and along the coast was reported to be increasing, that of the more rural, inland villages was decreasing, particularly due to out-migration by the younger working age group (North Ayrshire Council 1993).

Although the Service sector was the dominant in North Ayrshire, the actual level was below the Scottish average. Manufacturing, however, had nearly twice the percentage of employees as the Scottish average, with many successful international companies (such as Volvo trucks, Beech and Rote products) locating in the area. Whilst it had almost twice the proportion of employment in manufacturing as the Scottish average, this sector was forecast to decline in the medium term. Levels of self-employment in North Ayrshire were similar to those of Scotland as a whole (approximately five percent). Over the period 1991-1995, employment dropped by 7.9 percent compared to a drop of only 0.3 percent in Scotland as a whole. Unemployment in North Ayrshire remained consistently above the Scottish average, particularly in the more rural areas, such as Beith, Kilbirnie and Dalry, where unemployment was approximately double the Scottish average (North Ayrshire Council 1997; Scottish Homes 1998b).

### **Western Isles**

The Western Isles form a chain of 12 inhabited islands, between 30-60 miles from the north-west coast of Scotland, whose main links with the mainland, and between the islands are by air and ferry. The Western Isles had a widely dispersed population of 29,600 (1991 Census), and only one town, Stornoway with a population of 5000. Between 1991-97, its population declined by five percent (to 28,240), due to deaths amongst its relatively high proportion of elderly people, net out migration, and low birth rate. In the 1991 Census, 21 percent of the Western Isles population were over pensionable age, compared to the 18 percent Scottish average. There were also, a lower proportion of people of working age (Western Isles Council 1994).

With regard to employment, the largest sectors were services (including tourism), distribution and catering, followed by public administration and defence (on the Island of

Benbecula), fishing and fish farming. Despite the primary industries, such as agriculture and fishing being the source of much of the heritage and cultural traditions of the islands, these contributed 4 percent of the employment in the Islands. However, this doesn't take into account the fact that many people who work in other sectors were also engaged in crofting activity. The distribution of economic activity varied across the islands. The highest levels of economic activity were on the Island of Benbecula (due to presence of the Military base there, which was under threat when the study was being conducted), and in Stornoway, which was the main centre for retail activity, transport links and major employers such as the local Council and Health Board. Away from these two locations, economic activity levels were in decline and unemployment was on the rise (Scottish Homes 1997; Western Isles Council 1999).

### **Infrastructure for addressing the requirements of minority ethnic households**

In each of the four Local Authority areas, none of the public agencies were in a position to provide data on minority ethnic groups in their area, and there was no evidence of ethnic monitoring. While public agencies in three of the four areas (e.g. Angus, North Ayrshire and Highlands) had started to explore and/or develop structures for involving minority ethnic individuals, and/or specific communities (e.g. Chinese in Angus and North Ayrshire), their main challenge was identifying and accessing minority ethnic households in the absence of data. North Ayrshire Council had, however, gone further than most. It had appointed a Development Worker to work with the Chinese community, established a Language Support Unit to provide EAL classes to children in schools and adults, and the Community Education Department had succeeded in accessing European Social Funding (ESF) for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and basic computing classes targeted at minority ethnic adults. The investment in the Development Worker in particular, had led to a range of activities targeted at the Chinese households as they were considered to be the largest group. These included lunch clubs for the elderly, social activities and outings for families, and support with regard to accessing services. Apart from the EAL classes which were targeted at all minority ethnic groups, there was an absence of targeted services for other minority ethnic groups in areas such as health and social care, for example.

## **Profile of Minority Ethnic Participants and Households in Study 1**

This section provides a profile of the 38 participants and households who participated in Study 1. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 31 heads of households or their nominees; a further seven households completed a postal questionnaire which was an adapted version of the semi-structured interview schedule (discussed in Chapter 3). Participants were aged between 21 and 69 years, with the majority aged between 31 and 59 years, representing a range of ethnicities (see Table 5.1).

### **Age distribution**

The majority of households in the study included members who fell into three main age categories, 0-15, 16-29 and 30 to 59 years of age, with a small minority of pensionable age and over, mirroring the Scottish minority ethnic trend. This contrasted with the Scottish 'White' population, where the trend was towards an ageing population. Dalton and Hampton (1994, p.7), in their analysis of the 1991 Census, suggested that for Scotland as a whole the large numbers of younger people and fewer elderly people reflected the relatively recent (last four decades) history of in-migration into Scotland. Given the age profile of the sample, the majority of participants (35) in the study had children involved in some sort of formal education, from primary school to university level study.

**Table 5.1: Geographical Location, Ethnicity, Household Size and Housing Tenure of Participants in Study 1**

<b>Geographical Location of Participants- Numbers</b>					
Angus	Highland	North Ayrshire		Western Isles	
8	12	9		9	
<b>Ethnicity- Numbers</b>					
Africans	Chinese	Pakistani	Indian	Mixed Ethnic Background	Other
4	12	9	4	5	1 each: Mauritian, Filipina and Sri Lankan Kenyan Asian
<b>Household Size-Numbers</b>					
2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons		5 Persons and above	
9	4	10		15	
<b>Housing Tenure- Numbers</b>					
Owner Occupiers	Rented :Council		Rented : Private/other		
28	6		4		

### **Household size**

The average household size of the participants (4.2 persons) was slightly higher than the Scottish minority ethnic group average (3.6 persons, Census 1991; Dalton and Hampton 1994, p.15). This reflected the findings of Shucksmith et al's (1996, p.108-109) study of poverty in rural areas, where it was reported that larger household sizes were much more common in rural areas. There were, however, differences within the sample in Study 1: those from mixed ethnic households had the lowest average size of three, with other households averaging nearly four amongst the Chinese, nearly five amongst the Pakistani households and over five amongst the African households (See Table 5.1).

### **Accommodation and Housing**

Shucksmith et al (1996) highlighted specific problems associated with housing provision in rural areas. Certain groups such as low-income households and first time buyers experienced difficulties in accessing suitable accommodation, due to the shortage of

housing generally and the predominance of owner-occupation. The alternatives to owner-occupation were limited due to the shortage of public housing and the poor standard of privately rented accommodation. In general, owner-occupation was the more common form of tenure in rural areas, a fact reflected in this study. In Study 1, the majority of participants were owner-occupiers, ten of whom were outright owners (See Table 5.1). The latter may have been a reflection of the length of time households had been resident in the area. Three of the six households who lived in Council rented accommodation were of Pakistani origin, two were from mixed ethnic backgrounds and one was Chinese.

The trend in house tenure among the households who participated in the study was supported by similar evidence for Scotland as a whole, notably that owner occupation predominates amongst minority ethnic groups. Dalton and Hampton (1994, p.11-12) provided evidence which supported the view that two out of three minority ethnic households (66 percent in contrast to 53 percent of 'white' majority) were identified as owner occupiers. In contrast to the findings in Shucksmith et al's study (1996, p.88-89), access to housing did not appear to be a major problem for the research participants, and six participants cited access to better housing as a reason for moving to their current location.

The majority lived in houses with three to five rooms, generally confirming the view that those in rural areas tend to live in larger properties and were less likely to be single person households (Shucksmith et al 1996, p.108-110). There was some evidence of households living in poorer quality council houses, an issue which has received much attention in the context of urban studies. Some households did discuss problems of accessing housing, both council and private, because in the words of one participant 'locals were not keen to sell or rent properties to coloureds.' (see example 1 below)

***Example 1 – Difficulties in Accessing Appropriate Accommodation***

*Mr X met his partner when he used to drive a delivery van from the city to local minority ethnic businesses in one of the local authority areas. When he married her, he applied for a council flat in a rural community just outside the main town. The Council offered him a flat, in what he described as a well-known rough area of the town. Mr X rationalised this by saying that the local councillor didn't want 'coloureds' in his area. Mr X didn't accept the flat, and threatened to take the Council to court. His case was publicised in the local press and the Council reluctantly relented.*

It is important to point out that the incident described by this participant had occurred at least 16 or more years before this study and it was difficult to assess whether this attitude was still prevalent. Despite the time lag it was apparent in discussions that the incident had a lasting impact on the individual, and had made him and his household wary of trusting local service providers.

### **Language**

When asked about the most commonly spoken language in the house, 16 households identified English as the most commonly spoken language in the house. With the exception of those from mixed ethnic background and African households, the majority of the other groups tended to use their mother tongue as their main spoken language in the home. The most commonly spoken languages were Cantonese, Punjabi and Urdu. There were single households who identified Luo, Bengali, Hakka, Creole, Hindi and Tamil as the main language spoken in the household. The majority (32) of respondents claimed they could read in their own language, even if it was not the main language used in the home. Of the six who could not read in their first language, four were from the Pakistani community and had lived in the area for most of their lives.

### **Socio-Economic Profile of Participants and Households in the Study**

This section focuses on educational qualifications, employment and income of the participants (Table 5.2).

#### ***Educational Qualifications***

When asked to indicate what their highest level of educational qualifications were, the majority of participants said that they had diploma level, degree and/or post graduate qualifications (Table 5.2). Of these, three had overseas qualifications which were not recognised, and consequently they were unable to practice in the profession they had been trained in. This resulted in the individuals either setting up businesses or working in unskilled jobs (see example 2). Those least likely to have qualifications or whose qualification levels were at primary/secondary level tended to be from the Pakistani, Chinese and mixed origin households. By contrast, all the Africans and the majority of Indians had diplomas or degree and above level qualifications.

**Table 5.2: Socio-Economic Profile of Participants in the Study**

<b>Educational Qualifications - Numbers</b>								
Primary and Secondary School Qualifications		Diploma, Degree & above		No Qualifications		No Response		
15		18		4		1		
<b>Employment - Numbers</b>								
Full time Employment			Part -Time Employment		Unemployed		Other	
28 12 self-employed: 7 Pakistanis; 3 Chinese; 2 Mixed ethnic background			2		5		1 Pensioner; 2 No response	
<b>Household Income - Numbers</b>								
No. in receipt of Salary /Income earned : 32					No. in receipt of Benefits :6			
<b>Income per week of those who received a Salary- Numbers</b>								
£200 and less	£ 201- 500	£501- 1000	over £1000	Did not disclose				
12	8	4	4	2				

***Example 2 – Underemployment***

*Mr A had a PhD in Agriculture obtained overseas. In addition to English, and his mother-tongue, he was also fluent in French and Portuguese. He had worked on various agricultural projects, before coming to the UK to join his Scottish wife. He had applied for over 200 jobs in the hope of acquiring work which would use his skills. The response to his applications was always that his qualifications were not recognised. He did not have the resources to pursue further study so he took whatever work he could get. He had been working as a waiter for four years. When a vacancy for a supervisor’s post came up, he applied for it but did not get the job. He spoke to the manager of the establishment on a number of occasions about the possibility of moving to a different job, such as reception, where he could use his language skills, but nothing had changed. He had a strong sense of being discriminated against because of his colour.*

### ***Employment and Income***

Shucksmith et al (1996) found diverse occupations amongst the households they studied. In the three mainland study areas, although 47 percent of the households were in full time employment, 12 percent were self-employed and the rate of unemployment was relatively low (2.5 percent). The participants in their study acknowledged the limited employment options available in rural areas; those who remained or stayed in rural areas faced poorly paid, insecure employment, while those who migrated into rural areas had strategies to survive by tele-working or engaging in artisan work in remote rural areas and commuting in lowland areas (Rural Forum 1994, p.11). The study found that there was an important distinction between patterns of employment in the lowland areas (Angus and North Ayrshire), and the scattered communities in the Highlands (Wester Ross) and the Western Isles (Harris) which was the focus of their study. Whilst opportunities were constrained in the scattered communities, access to urban centres meant that the population in the lowland areas had more favourable employment options. This distinction did not appear particularly relevant to the situation of minority ethnic households in this study.

A majority of the households (32) in Study 1 identified a main earner as the head of the household (mainly male), and most (28) of these were in full time employment. Of the latter, 12 were self-employed and more than half were from Pakistani households (See Table 5.2). The main sectors represented in the self-employed category were small retail and catering businesses. Amongst those who were employed there were a small number of professionals working in the health sector primarily who were of Indian (3) and African origin (3). The rest of the participants (10) were spread across a range of sectors from restaurants/catering, hairdressing and beauty, bus driving to engineering.

In general, the trends in economic activity and the employment sectors in which participants were involved, reflected similar trends identified amongst the Scottish minority ethnic groups as a whole. There was a tendency to be involved in a narrow range of occupations and industries: for example, distribution, hotels and catering (Netto et al 2001, p.122). There were more participants in the skilled/non-manual category in Study 1 than found in either the Scottish minority ethnic, or Scottish population, based on the 1991 census. These tended to be mainly in the self-employed category. There were fewer in the managerial, skilled manual and partly skilled categories than in the Scottish minority ethnic and Scottish population as a whole (Netto et al 2001, p.121).

There were a number of individuals in the participant households who were either under-employed or unemployed despite possessing education qualifications (e.g. Example 2 above). Evidence on whether self-employment is a positive choice or an alternative route to employment is ambiguous (Netto et al 2001, p.123). A small number of participants in Study 1 identified self-employment as a way of tapping into market opportunity. However, more than half of the participants revealed that being self-employed had not necessarily been a positive choice, and reported that they had become self employed due to perceptions of discrimination in the labour market and lack of other options. There were strong feelings and perceptions among most of the participants, that if one was from a minority ethnic background, one was less likely to get work. These perceptions appeared to have an important impact on influencing their employment choices.

Pakistani households, in particular, were beginning to express concerns about changes affecting their businesses. The type of retail sector (i.e. small shops specialising in food, sometimes clothes and hardware) they were involved in, was no longer seen as viable. The lack of viability was associated with global changes in the retail sector, the development of larger retailers/multinationals, changes in shopping patterns and tastes locally and the better road links with main towns. Consequently, they were actively encouraging their children into education to increase their job prospects and as a way out of staying in the business. Furthermore, in response to these changing circumstances, there was a small trend among Pakistani women seeking work outside the family business. Two women participants interviewed had attended local colleges in an attempt to gain qualifications. Despite applying for a wide range of relevant jobs for which they felt they had the qualifications and the skills, they were unable to obtain paid employment, and expressed strong feelings of being discriminated against at the application stage.

Most of the respondents (32) relied on a salary, or earnings from self-employment, with a small minority (six) reporting that they were in receipt of benefits, such as income support, disability benefits or state pension (Table 5.2).

### **Exploring the Views and Experiences of Rural Minority Ethnic Households**

This section explores the lived experiences of the research participants in relation to the rural areas in which they lived. Having initially described their length of stay, location and

motivation for living in rural areas, the section goes on to explore their diverse perspectives on living in rural areas, and the specific challenges they identified with regards to rural life.

### **Length of stay, location and motivation for living in rural areas**

The majority of households had lived in the area for eight years or more (See Table 5.3). The Pakistani households had lived at their current address or in the area longest, whilst the other groups were relatively evenly spread across the range in terms of length of stay. Most (16) had moved to their current address from within the local area/town, eight each had moved from other parts of Scotland and the UK and six had moved from outside the UK.

**Table 5.3: Location, length of stay and motivation for living in rural areas**

<b>Length of Stay- Numbers</b>		
1-3 years	8-15 years	Over 15 years
5	21	12
<b>Location of Household- Numbers</b>		
Lived within walking distance of other houses shops/town	Did not live in close proximity to other houses/town	
24	14	

Although the majority of participants were dispersed throughout each of the four local authority areas, 11 households lived in rural locations in close proximity to a town, and the majority lived within walking distances of other houses and shops (see Table 5.3). Those from a mixed ethnic background, the ‘other’ category, and a small number of Pakistani households were more likely to be living out of town. The majority of those describing themselves as being of ‘mixed ethnic’ background and/or belonging to the ‘other’ category were women married to Scottish men, some of whom were living in remote and isolated areas. The small number of Pakistani households who were living in remote rural and island communities had family businesses which had been established in two cases for about 50 years. Their reason for being there was mainly in order to take advantage of market opportunities. Just under half said they lived within walking distance of family and friends; approximately half of the Chinese and mixed origin households fell into this category, with the African, Indian and ‘other’ category reporting having no friends or family living within walking distance.

The main reasons given for moving to their current address were employment or family, with six mentioning better housing and four the environment. The majority (28) were not planning to move in the foreseeable future from the area, eight were planning to move and two households thought it was a possibility. The main reasons for moving were wishing to be near members of their family, poor employment opportunities locally, and racism was mentioned by one participant.

### **The ‘Rural Idyll’? Diverse Perspectives on Life in Rural Communities**

When asked about levels of satisfaction with their local area, most participants (26) expressed satisfaction with the area they were living in, with 11 saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and one expressing dissatisfaction. The Chinese, African and Indian households were more likely to express neutral levels of satisfaction. While mixed ethnic households fell into the very satisfied or satisfied categories.

Overall levels of satisfactions, even among those who expressed neutral levels, were associated with factors such as ‘security’, ‘people’, ‘quiet area’, ‘peace’, ‘healthy’ and ‘the fresh air’, reflecting the views expressed in other studies reviewed in Chapter 2 (e.g. Findlay et al 1999; Shucksmith et al 1996). Literature on rurality has consistently highlighted the socially constructed nature of the ‘rural idyll’ and its enduring influence in motivating people to move to the countryside and in framing people’s expectations and experiences of rural life (Cloke et al 1994; Halfacree 1993). The idealisation of rural life was reflected in the Shucksmith et al (1996) study in Scotland, where participants identified multiple advantages to living in their area, including factors such as ‘peace and quiet’, ‘pleasant surroundings’ and ‘people’ and ‘security’.

Although the research participants expressed a diversity of views on living in rural areas, there was a consistent thread running through many of the interviews which was based on an acceptance of fairly stereotypical, binary and often racialised notions of rural and urban previously discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. The most frequently mentioned advantage by the majority (31) of the households in Study 1 was related to quality of life issues such as peace and quiet, pleasant surroundings and friendliness of local people. The rural area they lived in was almost invariably perceived to be peaceful, trouble-free and free of crime:

‘No I feel safe and fine’, by comparison the same participant said: ‘I couldn’t live on the mainland, London and Glasgow. It’s too busy. Here there is peace and quiet, no burglaries, no swearing. In London no one talks to you.’ (African (1), Western Isles)<sup>5</sup>

This view was also expressed by other participants: ‘Not as much trouble here, not as much as in Dundee or big towns.’ (Chinese (22), Angus) These views appeared to reflect an acceptance of the binary stereotypes of rural/urban and notions of the ‘rural idyll’, despite evidence and some times their own experiences discussed later in this chapter, which challenged these notions of rurality. One participant felt he preferred not to live in a community with others from a similar background:

‘I prefer this kind of community. When there are too many Asians there are always problems. With an Asian community, day in and day out, there is gossip and problems.’ (Pakistani 14, Western Isles)

While this was not a commonly expressed view, it reflects the diverse ways in which rural minority ethnic households experience rurality and their varying perceptions of the advantages/disadvantages of living with others from a similar background. In contrast to the common perception of urban areas being anonymous, and rural areas as being close knit where ‘everyone knows your business’ (Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group 2001), rural areas were also seen by some participants as a place one could choose to ‘hide’: ‘You can just hide in the countryside. You don’t have to relate to anyone if you don’t want to.’ (African, 24, North Ayrshire) This reflected to some extent the dispersed nature of the rural community the participant lived in and the lack of public spaces such as public transport or community centres or shops, where one might incidentally meet people (See discussion in Chapter 2).

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<sup>5</sup> Quotes throughout this thesis use the ethnic identification employed by the research participant, the interview/focus group (FG)/questionnaire (Q) number allocated to the participant and where appropriate the gender or location is identified. However, if it was deemed that the location may result in identifying the participant this was excluded. In addition, in a small number of cases the specific ethnic identification used by the participant was changed to a broader ethnic group, if it was felt this was likely to make them identifiable – for example, someone who identified themselves as Syrian would have been changed to Middle-Eastern – to ensure anonymity.

The majority (33) of households said they felt safe in the area where they lived, and most associated safety in rural areas with being free of crime, friendliness of the local people, and small communities where most people know each other: ‘There are no problems associated with a large town: It’s a small town, everyone knows each other and so there is no problem’ (Chinese, 21, Ayrshire). The possibility of being identified in a small place was perceived as a deterrent to overt racism, which was associated with urban areas: ‘Well the only thing is that we don’t have many problems here. People know who you are here, so they daren’t do anything that will identify them’: (African, 24, North Ayrshire) The impact of a close knit community could potentially be a double edged sword. On the one hand, it may deter individuals from openly engaging in racist/discriminatory behaviour because they might be easily identifiable. On the other hand, it can also deter minority ethnic individuals who experience problems in a community, from challenging racist behaviour for fear of reprisals (discussed below). For some, friendliness was associated with the local culture: ‘I don’t know, maybe because the place is small, people are religious and maybe this brings out the good in people’. The same participant went on to say of her local area: ‘It is a good place to bring up children. In England we didn’t let the children out. It is safe for children here.’ (African, 5, Highland)

Overall, the views and perceptions of rural life amongst the participants were complex, varied and at times contradictory, suggesting that ethnicity interacted in complex ways with individual biographies and geographical location. The overall tendency was for participants to compare rural with urban. For example, the African participant (24) cited above was a professional whose main reason for being in a rural area was that he had a job. However, he had mixed – often negative – experiences in relation to two issues which affected his perceptions of the rural community: in relation to his own employment where he felt he was being discriminated against; and issues of racism experienced by his child which he felt were not addressed by the school. Whilst the perspective of the Pakistani participant( 14)in the Western Isles, cited above, was quite different. The head of the household had little formal education, and had come across to the Western Isles a long time ago, due to family connections. He preferred to set up a business in a rural area than live in an urban area. The household saw themselves as well established members of the community.

In general, the diverse views and perspectives expressed by the participants were similar to those found in other studies of rural communities (e.g. Cloke et al 1994; Halfacree

1993; Shucksmith et al 1996). Quality of life, defined by terms such as ‘peace and quiet’ and ‘safety; were highly valued by many of the participants in Study 1, even if it meant that they had less contact with others from the same ethnic background, and less access to opportunities and/or facilities to engage in specific cultural practices:

‘I prefer to live in a rural area because it is peaceful, quiet and not congested. I think this part of the Highlands is like heaven to me. It is excellent to live here: Nobody bothers me. You do miss a lot of things. It doesn’t matter where you live, there will always be something you feel you want and can’t easily get.’(Pakistani, 9, Highland)

### **Challenges of Living in Rural Communities**

The Shucksmith et al (1996) study found that the most frequently mentioned disadvantage of life in rural areas was lack of transport; the other disadvantages mentioned were, for example, lack of shopping facilities, remoteness, lack of services, job opportunities and entertainment facilities. There were some similarities in the disadvantages identified by minority ethnic participants in this study with the participants in the Shucksmith et al (1996) study. One participant mentioned that: ‘There are no shopping facilities, services, social and leisure activities, movies for the children and there is also a lack of job opportunities here.’ (African, 2, Highland) Participants in Study 1, however, mentioned other factors that made their experiences distinct from rural residents in general, as well as from their urban counterparts. These issues, discussed below, centred on issues of culture and belonging, racism, employment, social interaction and civic involvement.

### **Maintaining cultures and issues of belonging**

Apart from the lack of employment opportunities and recreational facilities, the most frequently cited disadvantage by the majority of households, even among those who felt that there were advantages in living in rural areas, was cultural and social isolation. Lack of contact with others from a similar cultural/faith background, including distance from family and friends, especially for those households living in the Highlands and the Western Isles, was a recurring theme:

‘There is a lack of contact with people from the same culture. A lack of people who understand our own culture, sometimes you miss your own culture, your civilisation, your friends.’ (Pakistani, 9, Highland)

All participants, but especially those living in more remote areas, identified two main issues as exacerbating their social/cultural isolation: lack of opportunities generally for socialising with people from the same cultural background due to distances and small numbers; and difficulties in accessing and maintaining cultural/faith practices. Although remoteness is potentially an issue (in terms of access to services, etc) for all who live in areas like the Western Isles, and parts of the Highlands, for the Study 1 minority ethnic participants, there were additional disadvantages. Remoteness meant that it was difficult for households to easily access special foods, such as 'halal meat', and participate in traditional customs and rites at marriages and funerals, especially if they were non-Christians, for example. For Pakistani households with children of marriageable age in places like the Western Isles, a major preoccupation was finding partners, and one household claimed that they had to spend a considerable time off the Island trying to find partners for their children. Higher costs were associated with organising marriages, and the trend was towards organising marriage celebrations on the mainland because of the relatively easier access to culturally appropriate foods and religious rites. The Pakistani households in Highland and the Western Isles in particular, mentioned the difficulty of accessing an Imam (a religious leader) to perform religious rites when required, mainly due to the cost associated with bringing someone up from South.

Proximity to cities like Dundee and Glasgow made it easier for households living in Angus and North Ayrshire to access relevant faith/cultural activities and support. However, lack of opportunities for women to socialise, especially for those from the Indian Subcontinent, was highlighted. Men had more places where they could meet and socialise; for example, at the mosque or at prayer meetings. Women were often excluded from some of these meetings, and opportunities to socialise were identified as being very limited for them.

The cultural isolation experienced by some households was also reinforced by what was perceived by many participants as the 'negative' attitudes of some rural residents. The unfriendliness of some members of local communities, for example, manifested itself through racist behaviour (discussed below), and their lack of acceptance of people who were different: 'People tend to be unfriendly towards incomers. They are critical of people who move into the village, quick to judge people. I don't like that aspect.' (African, 2, Highland) Their 'lack of openness' was also an issue highlighted: 'People are not forthcoming, even if you want to get to know people, it is very difficult'. (Sri Lankan

(26) North Ayrshire) Negative reactions towards ‘incomers’ from other parts of the UK, and the tendency to use ethnic labels in describing them was highlighted by the Shucksmith et al (1996) study, particularly in Wester Ross (Highlands) and Harris (Western Isles):

‘Respondents were generally reluctant to discuss issues of counterstream migration in terms of class or economics, and preferred to codify incoming rural residents by the use of ethnic, geographical or cultural labels.’ (p.472)

On the one hand, these negative reactions towards people perceived as ‘incomers’ runs counter to some of the assumptions that are embedded in the notion of the ‘rural idyll’. For example, the portrayal of rural communities as ‘caring’, and the popular notion of people in the Highlands and Islands, in particular, as being welcoming, is often counterpoised against the perceived ‘unfriendliness’ of the ‘English’. On the other hand, these reactions can also be seen as reinforcing the ideology of rural communities as ‘organic’, closely knit, where everyone knows each other, and there is a strong sense of personal belonging (Jedrej 1996; Shucksmith et al 1996). Those who are perceived as not ‘fitting in’ are treated with suspicion, creating strong assimilationist pressures, as articulated by this participant who had lived in the same area for over 15 years:

‘I find it difficult to socialise much because everywhere you go everyone drinks. In our street we are very friendly, but we keep our distance. If we need help, people are there. If you drink you are accepted more quickly, if you don’t it isn’t so easy. I can take them as they are. Why can’t they take me as I am? Once our neighbours called us “aliens” because we did not participate in the New Year celebrations which focused mainly on getting drunk.’ (Pakistani, 4, Highland)

The same participant went on to say that she did not mind going to pubs, and indeed did go to pubs on occasion, and bought others alcoholic drinks. The issue for her was the lack of acceptance on the part of local people of her desire not to drink, and the labelling of such behaviour as ‘abnormal’, exerting strong pressures to conform. As far as this participant was concerned the only way to maintain her position on the issue of alcohol was to opt out of socialising. She felt that there were limits to the choice she could exercise in a context where alcohol consumption was dominant and seen as the norm in

most public spaces in small towns, especially where the public space may consist of one main street.

The notion of a tight knit community can also be a positive force, as it can act as a deterrent to people behaving negatively as highlighted above by the African (24) participant. However, the same participant also highlighted the problematic aspects of being in a closely knit community where one is perceived as an ‘outsider’:

‘People here are not very forthcoming. Even if you want to know to get to know people here it is very difficult. They are forced to come into contact with me because I provide a public service. If it wasn’t for my job there would be little contact. The community here is very tight close knit community. It is very difficult to break into it. They are all interconnected or related to each other in some way.’ (African, 24, North Ayrshire)

Issues of ‘belonging’ and ‘rights to belong’ in rural areas are often strongly associated with local connections through family, thus enabling individuals who can draw on this connection, special access to the local community (see Jedrej 1996; Shucksmith et al 1996). This was illustrated by two participants (Scottish mother married to an African man, and her daughter who identified herself as ‘Black African’) who came from a mixed ethnic household, and where the mother’s father was a well known figure in the community:

‘The fact that my father [*the mother speaking - my italics*] was a local policeman in the village, I felt my children were accepted in the community. The local connection was a big plus.’ (Scottish, 13a, Highland)

Both, mother and daughter felt that, had they been living elsewhere in the Highlands, their experiences would most likely not have been as positive.

Despite the difficulties identified by participants, households especially in the Highlands and the Western Isles adopted a number of strategies to overcome some of the challenges of rural living. For example, they used delivery vans which came from places such as Glasgow to deliver to shops and restaurants run by minority ethnic people to order specialist foods; they organised trips to the Central belt to stock up on specialist foods;

and, they met in each other homes to worship. In addition, members of the Muslim community in Inverness succeeded in negotiating the purchase of a burial ground from Highland Council, and in purchasing a building for worship, both located in Inverness. While these were major achievements, these initiatives did not necessarily address the needs of those who lived outwith Inverness; for example, for those living in the very North Highlands it could mean a round trip of about 200 miles. A small number of participants felt that their chances of being accepted into the local community were helped by converting to Christianity and joining a local church:

‘Contact with the local church makes it easier. I was originally Hindu, but decided to join the Church of Scotland, which I feel has got me into one section of the community as I am now also a Church Elder.’ (Indian, 29, Angus)

### **Experiences of Racism**

The main reasons given for not feeling safe by some participants related to racist incidents, damage to property and burglary. The information on experiences of racism has to be interpreted with caution for a number of reasons. As previously indicated in Chapter 4, it was not always possible to spend the same amount of time on the interviews in all the four Local Authority areas. In the Highlands, where more time was spent, trust could be built up so that respondents were willing to speak about sensitive issues, such as racism. Throughout the study, most participants felt extremely wary about participating in the research. This was most strongly felt in the Western Isles where fears that their responses might leak back to the very small community were real, despite reassurances.

Overall most participants were careful to avoid generalising, and tended to qualify their experiences recognising that not all ‘Scottish’ people were racist, as one participant put it: ‘You have ordinary bulbs, and there is one that is red, one, that is how life is. So not everyone is bad, but there is always the odd one.’ (Kenyan Asian, 12, Highland) In the course of discussions, it was apparent that although households may not have explicitly identified experiencing racism or discrimination, there was always an under-current lurking in discussions around many unsuccessful attempts at applying for work, name calling or the targeting of shops by vandals. Many felt that these events were occurring to them because they were different. At the same time, there appeared to be strong feelings, especially amongst those who owned businesses, that they should not be seen to be complaining, because this might be interpreted as being ‘ungrateful’, as they felt grateful

that they were ‘being allowed’ to operate a business in the community. These feelings were compounded because participants felt isolated and were often unaware of other minority ethnic households in the area from whom they might seek support.

Even though there wasn’t the overt violence associated with cities, in general participants felt that racism was prevalent in rural areas. A wide range of incidents affecting them and their families were highlighted: receiving disturbing phone calls using abusive language to them and their families; verbal abuse from customers refusing to pay for goods they had bought; children being taunted about their colour; racist name-calling and bullying at school; stone throwing and damage to property; being treated with suspicion when in shops; and being falsely accused of stealing. Some of these are elaborated below (Example 3).

Sixteen households said they had experienced some form of violence, threats or harassment in their local area. Twenty said they hadn’t, and two did not respond. There were variations in the four areas: ten out of twelve respondents in the Highlands said they had experienced some form of violence or harassment, whilst seven participants in the Western Isles claimed they had experienced no harassment, and two didn’t respond. There were also some variations by ethnic groups: mixed ethnic households seemed more likely to experience harassment or violence (six out of eight households), followed by four Pakistani households and three Chinese households. The locations most commonly associated with racism and harassment were in the street, and on business premises – i.e. mainly in public spaces, and where participants came across members of the public. A small number also identified schools and housing. Participants working in the retail and catering sectors, where they were dealing with the public tended to encounter more overt racism, and verbal abuse was seen as a fact of life. Having experienced vandalism on her business premise, one participant reflected:

‘Racism is underlying, not evident. For example there were some windows broken at the shop. There were boys standing in front of the shop next door which sells sports clothes. My husband and I debated as to whether the boys would also smash the windows next door, as they had done ours. But my husband pointed out that we are more likely to be targeted because of who we are.’(Pakistani, 15, Western Isles)

### ***Example 3 – Experiences of Discrimination and Racism***

#### ***3a Harassment at work***

*Mr Y worked as a bus driver, and often experienced verbal racist abuse. He felt that he could not do anything about it, as his employer/managers, on a previous occasion, would not take it seriously, and no action was taken. He did not feel confident that if he challenged the abuse, his employers would support him. He thought that they would rather sweep it under the carpet and pretend it didn't happen.*

#### ***3b Stereotyping in a shop***

*Ms A was looking for something to buy in a well-known shop in her local town, when she heard the shop assistant saying "keep an eye on her". So she walked over to the shop assistant and asked her whether she would like to help her buy a gift. She saw the embarrassment on the shop assistant's face.*

#### ***3c Harassment - Running a Business***

*Mr B worked in a takeaway service. He talked at great length about the problems they had with young people under 16 year's of age. He described the young people as being 'cheeky' and being generally involved in racist name-calling. He said that many of the minority ethnic businesses in the area experienced this problem, but did not find the police particularly helpful. They often arrived two hours or more after they had been called, too late, he felt, to do anything about the incidents. If they did arrive in time, they often seemed unable to do much as the young people were under 16. They also felt that it wasn't possible to make a big issue about name calling as the perpetrators of the abuse and their families were also their customers. Instead, they tried to deal with the problem by employing a 'white' person at the counter.*

Young people were more likely to face racism in the school and in the streets; a young person from a mixed ethnic household described what was to her a 'terrifying' encounter when she was thirteen years of age, and had been waiting outside a cinema with her friends for a lift. A young man crossed the street and stood in front of her, in her words 'He invaded my personal space' and started shouting at her: 'Hey You! Where are you from? The likes of you, should go back to where you come from.' (Black African, 13b, Highland)

Of those who experienced some form of racism, half said they sought advice and assistance, usually by contacting the police, or approaching the relevant agency – e.g. school or Local Authority. In most cases, participants felt that contact with the Police, for example, had not led to action being taken against the perpetrators. This led to a lack of

faith in the system, as most believed that there was no point in seeking assistance as nothing would be gained by complaining (discussed further below). For many participants, verbal abuse/name calling was seen as a 'fact of life' which they were resigned to putting up with.

### **Employment Experiences**

Discrimination was experienced most by those either seeking work, or those in work, and manifested itself in a number of ways: underemployment despite having relevant qualifications and experience; lack of acceptance of overseas qualifications or relevant experience gained overseas; and being bypassed when it came to promotion prospects, even when the individuals thought they had the relevant qualifications and skills. Participants cited many examples of having put their names forward for work, but getting nowhere because of their 'foreign' surnames (see Example 4 below), and of requests for passport identification, even when households had lived in this country and run businesses for 16 years and more. Those who tried to find work outside the family business, found it very difficult:

'I do not want to work in the family business, and so I have applied several times for jobs with the local council and have had no success as yet. I have lived in this community all of my life but there is still a lot of prejudice.' (Pakistani, 14 Western Isles)

#### ***Example 4 – Discrimination in Employment***

##### ***4a Applying for work***

*Ms A applied for a summer job in a clothes shop in the local town. She phoned up the shop, and was told her that they would be delighted to give her a job if any vacancies arose. They suggested she fill in an application form. As soon as she walked into the shop to collect the application form, she noticed that the woman's attitude to her had changed. She appeared discouraging and reluctant to give her any information or the application form. Two weeks later, the respondent received a letter claiming that she hadn't been successful in her application for a job, which she hadn't even applied for. The respondent gave several other examples of being discriminated against because of her name and her 'colour'.*

##### ***4b Discrimination at work***

*Mr Y recounted the experience of working with a major local employer for 18 years. He was one of three from a minority ethnic background working there. Despite the length of service, he had received no promotion, which he attributed to his colour: 'Promoted posts always seem to go to white' men.' He described a 'culture of men looking after their own ethnic group, with the same interests, drinking partners, jobs for the boys' and felt that not being part of these networks disadvantaged people like him.*

##### ***4c 'Unequal' opportunities at work***

*Prior to working as a nurse in a local hospital, Mrs X had worked as a nurse for 13 years in her country of origin, and had reached a Staff Nurse grade. When she came to this country she was put at the bottom of the nursing scale because she was told that she had no nursing experience in this country. She worked part-time, but had applied for increased hours. These, however, were given to a newly qualified applicant instead. She had found it difficult to get support for her case, or to find out what her employment rights were, and only discovered that she could have asked for Union support when it was too late.*

There was a perception that one was more likely to get work if one was 'white'; in the words of one of the participants: 'If you are white and Scottish, you are more likely to be handed a job.' (Kenyan-Asian, 12, Highland) A number felt that they couldn't rely on the system for a job, as few jobs were advertised and most local people obtained work through networks: 'Cronyism prevails. Who you know matters a lot, not your ability.' (African, 24, North Ayrshire) There were a number of specific examples given by individuals who felt that they, or others from minority ethnic backgrounds were by-passed when it came to promotion prospects by those who they perceived to be less well qualified than they were. Furthermore, at least four participants, all involved in the health sector, described situations where they felt disciplinary procedures were taken against them unfairly, which in all cases had to be dropped.

There was a low utilisation of employment services in general. The experiences of those who did use their local employment services tended to be overwhelmingly negative, with only two participants saying that they had received some useful advice about job options and benefits. In the main, service personnel were thought to have stereotyped preconceptions: they assumed that minority ethnic people were in the UK for what they could get out of the system. For example, a participant who was unemployed, described his experience of going into one of the local Job Centre offices with his wife, who was Scottish:

‘The woman behind the counter turned to me and said “Do You think you people can come to this country and get money?” implying that I am an economic immigrant. They [*Job Centre-my italics*] do not seem to be there to help people with problems, they seem discouraging.’ (African, 2, Highland)

### **Social interaction and civic engagement**

Just over half of the participants said that they had relatives living locally, and just under half said they had friends who lived locally. There were some differences between ethnic groups; for example, Africans had no relatives (this may be due to their more recent arrival in rural areas); whereas those from mixed ethnic backgrounds, the Chinese and Pakistani households were more likely to have relatives living in the same area. Apart from the mixed ethnic households, most said they did not have friends living in the local areas.

The majority (28) of participants reported that they knew local people and mixed with them, whilst five responded negatively to both issues. The figure for those who said they knew and mixed with local people has to be interpreted with caution. What most participants meant, was that, in the course of their work, they knew, relied on, and mixed with local people as their customers. For many, socialising was quite difficult because of the nature of their work: ‘I know lots of people and contribute to local events, but have too little time to socialise, because of the business.’ (Pakistani, 14, Western Isles) Language, communication and different cultural practices were also cited as difficulties when it came to interacting with members in the local community: ‘I find it difficult, maybe because of the way I am. I find it more comfortable to talk to Asian women about cultural things’ (Pakistani, 4, Highland)

Even those who said they knew and mixed with local people tended to qualify their responses, referring to the lack of time due to work. In addition, for a number of participants, mainly from the Highlands, the emphasis on alcohol in social contexts was at times problematic, as reflected by a participant:

‘My type of social life is different. I do not drink and I do not go to the pub. But here, most of the activities are centred around drink. For example, if my colleagues at work are going for a night out, all they talk about is how they are looking forward to getting drunk. They are not looking forward to enjoying themselves, but getting drunk.’ (African, 5, Highland)

The same participant was not averse to socialising as she went on to elaborate: ‘If it is a Christian gathering I go there, and we have a group of women who meet every week, or I go to school activities.’ The main anxiety expressed by participants about alcohol in social situations was the change and unpredictability of people’s behaviour when they were drunk:

‘Alcohol affects people’s identity and it is difficult to socialise because they call you names when they are drunk ... I want to avoid problems so I don’t tend to socialise. People start saying things about your race or colour when they are drunk. I also had the experience of going out with a friend [*from a minority ethnic background - my italics*] to the pub, and as we were coming out of the pub to go to our car, my friend was hit by some young drunk men.’ (African, 2, Highland)

These fears based, in most cases, on real experiences meant that many of the participants removed themselves from the limited public spaces small towns have, as highlighted previously. This in turn can serve to reinforce the perception that may exist among rural residents in general, about minority ethnic groups being unwilling to ‘integrate’ because of their culture. Portraying minority ethnic behaviour as something that is internal to their culture and as ‘transgressive’ (Cloke 2003, p.3), – i.e. their behaviour is perceived as being outwith what is perceived as ‘normative’ social behaviour - enables individuals to keep their notion of the Highlands as ‘welcoming’ and ‘friendly’ intact by blaming or externalising the lack of interaction on the internal norms of those who are seen as being different. However, not everyone succumbed to opting out of social life. There were a small minority of participants who had the confidence to cope:

‘Sometimes in social situations like pubs when people have had a drink or two, they might refer to me as a ‘black bastard’ and other derogatory names, but I have found that I can give them back as good as I get.’ (Kenyan Asian, 12, Highland)

Overall, there was a very low level of involvement in community life and civic organisations. With the exception of a small minority, especially those from mixed ethnic, Indian and African households, who were involved with churches and organisations such as the Women’s Rural Institute (WRI) and the Red Cross, most participants (22) said they had no involvement with community groups or activities locally. The Chinese and the Pakistani communities had the lowest level of involvement, which was most likely due to their work patterns (e.g. long and irregular hours of work).

There were some participants who made financial donations to local community events, for example, galas and other summer activities. A number of the African households in the study tended to be involved in the local church and its activities. Involvement in a local church, especially in the remoter areas of the Highlands, and the Western Isles provided an important route into a local community for some households, even if the church was not quite the same as the one they belonged to:

‘They [*referring to the Church - my italics*] invited me to join them. They encouraged me to attend. The women’s Christian group is a good meeting place where we talk about the Bible and things like that. I am from the Pentecostal Church, but there isn’t the possibility of getting involved in it here. So the family attend the Church of Scotland instead.’ (African, 5, Highland)

Just over half of the households felt that local groups were welcoming, nine didn’t respond, four said they did not know and three felt that the local groups hadn’t been welcoming. Of the 13 who either didn’t respond or didn’t know, seven of these were from the Chinese households. For a small number who did make an attempt to become involved in community issues, it wasn’t always an easy experience as illustrated by Example 5 below.

### ***Example 5 - Community Involvement***

*Mr C lived in a council house in a small village in the Highlands. The local Tenant's Association had organised a meeting to discuss the issue of erecting a bus shelter, which happened to be in front of Mr C's house. He tried to find out about the meeting from his local Councillor so that he could attend, but the councillor seemed evasive. He did eventually find out about the meeting and attended it. When Mr C started to make a point at the meeting, the Councillor who had been evasive turned around and said "You people, what are you doing here anyway?" implying that he did not have the right to be there. However, there were others in the audience who did support him on that occasion.*

When asked to elaborate about what made the local groups welcoming/un-welcoming, responses were similar to those given when asked about socialising with local people. Participants who felt groups had been welcoming, emphasised the friendliness of the local people and were mainly involved in Christian organised activities (e.g. Church, prayer meetings and coffee mornings). For participants who lived in some of the remoter parts and were Christian, the Church provided them with an opportunity to engage with at least some sections of the community. A participant who had previously been a Hindu but had converted to Christianity and was a Church Elder felt that this had been the main route into being accepted by the local community. In the case of Chinese households, socialising tended to take place within the community, usually in each other's home. For a number of respondents not being able to speak English was a major barrier, as were issues such as not drinking alcohol.

### **Services**

One of the main recurring issues that emerged from the policy/action orientated research reviewed in Chapter 2 was the invisibility of rural minority ethnic households in relation to service provision. In this section issues of access to services, the barriers and experiences of services in general as well as specific services, such as education, health and so on, are explored.

#### **Access to services**

In general, the response to the questions on access and experience of services was extremely poor. Twenty three participants gave no reasons for lack of contact with services; seven said they had no need to contact the services and four reported being unaware of the services that might be relevant. Three mentioned lack of transport, fear of racial discrimination and language as being the major barriers with regard to accessing services. The poor response was largely an indication not only of lack of access to

services, but also more importantly, a very poor understanding of what the services actually provided. For a number of households in the study not having a reasonable command of English and the lack of interpretation and translation facilities were major barriers to accessing services across the board. The Western Isles, and to some extent, Angus, tended to have a higher negative (i.e. they had not used services) and non-response rate, compared to the other areas: North Ayrshire showed a higher rate of utilisation of services, most likely due to the infrastructure of support discussed earlier and in Chapter 3.

Although it is important to exercise caution when interpreting the information in this section, given the small size of the overall sample, the findings that emerged were consistent with much of the research on similar issues in the English context (see Chapter 2). Of those who responded, the highest uptake of services was in health and education, in all areas and across all ethnic groups. Services such as social work, Job Centres, police, library, public transport, sport and support and advice, were used by less than half to three quarters of the participants. The services with the lowest utilisation rate (under a third) were housing services, careers, business advice, social clubs and local information services. Only one participant reported using business services, despite the relatively high number of self-employed amongst the participants. This reflected similar trends identified by a Scotland wide study (Deakins et al 2005).

With regard to levels of satisfaction among those who had responded affirmatively, the majority did not record any response with regards to levels of satisfaction. Of those who responded, over half said they were satisfied with the service received in health and education, and just over a third recorded being satisfied with the services received from the library and the police. A small number said they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with a number of services notably health, social work, employment, the police and public transport. The following discussion provides a brief elaboration on the views and perceptions of specific services from the participants' perspectives.

### **Education**

Most participants in all four areas were satisfied with the level of education their children were receiving. The positive aspects highlighted were: the small size of schools and classes; being taught well; children doing well at school; good language support (mainly in North Ayrshire); and supportive head teachers, in a small number of cases, when it came to tackling racism and bullying, especially at the primary school stage.

Dissatisfaction was linked to mainly four factors: poor provision with regard to supporting the development of EAL for children and adults; not addressing issues of racial harassment effectively; lack of recognition of other cultures; and lack of appropriate information on the schooling system. With regard to the latter, participants were not always aware of pre-school provision for children. The situation was exacerbated for those who did not have a functional grasp of English, and lacked confidence to find out what was available. Issues of racism in relation to children were also an issue:

'When my child was at Primary School, he had a lot of problems with bullying and name calling. I went to the school several times to ask them to deal with it. But finally, I had to speak to my son and tell him that he had to stand up for himself. Once he did this, he had no problems. The school contacted us about his behaviour, but we had to tell the school that he was being bullied and being attacked and therefore his reaction was in response to this. His friends reinforced this and the problem seems to have been solved.' (African, 24, North Ayrshire)

With regard to other educational services, such as Community Education, the only area in which participants had any contact with such services was in North Ayrshire where there was EAL provision and computer classes targeted at minority ethnic households. North Ayrshire participants who were accessing this provision commented positively on their experience, especially with regard to making contact with others, improving their English, and learning computing skills, which they felt had widened their options for work (See Example 6).

#### ***Example 6 – Overcoming barriers***

*When Mr D arrived in the UK from Hong Kong at the age of 13, he did not speak any English. He started school but no one made him or his parents aware that there was a language service to support those whose first language was not English. Although he had always been interested in electrical or mechanical engineering, his poor mastery of English prevented him from taking up further educational opportunities, so he left school at the earliest opportunity to work in the catering business. However, as he did not want to spend the rest of his life working in the catering business, he attended English Language and Information Technology classes organised by the Community Education Service in North Ayrshire. Having had support with English, he managed to enrol at the local college for electrical classes. He also felt that the support he had received from the Development Worker employed by the Local Authority was an important factor in helping him to overcome barriers in terms of improving his future prospects.*

Only a very small minority had any involvement in further education and their experiences were mixed. Although the Local Authorities in the study claimed that they aimed to cater for everyone, positive experiences were mainly dependent on having a 'champion' in the service who was committed to equal opportunities, and was sympathetic. Often these individuals worked in isolation in the institutions, and received little, if any, strategic or institutional support.

### **Health Services**

Most participants felt that they received a good service from their local health practice and General Practitioner (GP) when asked about their access to and experience of health services. Participants reported that their GP was helpful and sympathetic, and that the waiting time for appointments was not too long, except in Angus where it seems that all residents faced difficulties in obtaining appointments, and waiting times were reported as being too long. At least half of the participants identified language barriers, especially making themselves understood during consultations, and the lack of translation and interpreting facilities as major problems when accessing health services.

While not many expressed a preference for their GP to be of the same gender or ethnic background, there were a number of participants who preferred a GP that could speak their own language. For a significant number, communicating with GPs was difficult, especially among the Chinese households, who because of lack of translation and interpretation facilities relied on their children to accompany them to the doctor. A fear of not being able to fully and accurately express their symptoms in English, and the possibility of a misdiagnosis even amongst those who had a reasonable functional grasp of English, was very real (Example 7).

### ***Example 7 – Experience of Accessing Health Service***

*When Mrs J was pregnant she went to see the GP because she was suffering from pain in her abdomen. She said that she couldn't express exactly how she was feeling, and she couldn't be sure she was describing her symptoms accurately. She was referred to the hospital but nothing seemed to happen. This went on for some time. Finally the doctor suggested the problem was that she was homesick and that she should go to India to see her family, which she did. She received medical care in India, and said that she felt better within a matter of days. She attributed this experience to the fact that neither she nor her spouse could express themselves in English. There were no interpretation/translation facilities available and she felt that her problem had not been diagnosed accurately, resulting in unnecessary expenditure which they could ill afford.*

### **Social Services**

Thirteen participants said they had had some contact with social services. These tended to be concentrated in North Ayrshire, and were mainly from the Chinese community, with a very small minority in the Highlands and the Western Isles.

Most of the households in North Ayrshire expressed satisfaction with regard to their contact with the Social Services which was mainly through the Development Worker who happened to be Chinese (discussed above and Chapter 3). It was generally felt that having a Chinese worker was very important in terms of accessing information about services, providing support for organising social groups for women, the elderly and youth, provision of language classes and making available interpretation and translation facilities when required. There was a strong feeling among the Chinese participants, that having a Chinese individual in the Local Authority was an important factor in ensuring that their needs were identified and met appropriately, as well opening up choice:

‘The Chinese Community is changing. From a community which was very work oriented and the only social activity was casino or gambling, the parents worked all the time and there was little room to communicate and relate to the children. Now through the youth club, the woman's group, the club for elderly as well as family outings and trips, there are more family orientated activities so that families can get together.’ (Chinese, 25, North Ayrshire)

It was evident that the needs of other minority ethnic groups in North Ayrshire were not being addressed in the same way. In the other three areas, the few minority ethnic households who reported using Social Services found their contact satisfactory. But they

did report having difficulties with accessing information on what was available. In a small number of cases, lack of interpretation and translation facilities and the reliance on volunteers/family members to help posed a problem with regard to maintaining confidentiality.

### **Police**

A small minority of participants in the Highlands and North Ayrshire said that they had had some contact with the police. A number of participants in the Highlands, and one in North Ayrshire described their contact with the police as helpful, and expressed satisfaction with the outcomes; for example, in responding to vandalism to property. Responses and levels of satisfaction varied between different areas within the Highlands, and also tended to be dependent, as in education, on the individual police officer's relationship with the individuals/household, and the community generally.

In the Highlands and in North Ayrshire, there was also a perception generally that the police tended to be biased, discriminating in favour of the majority 'white' community. It was felt that complaints about racial harassment were not always taken seriously. Generally, in the course of discussions with participants, it was evident that going to the police was perceived as the last resort, and that there was a lack of confidence in the system, as highlighted above. Furthermore, in many small communities and towns, there was a real fear that going to the police with complaints might attract reprisals from the perpetrators of harassment. This was especially the case for those who were self-employed, and relied on the local communities for their business.

### **Other services**

Very few respondents used or commented on services such as the library, transport, careers, sports and leisure. This section gives a brief overview of some of the issues highlighted by a small minority of those involved in Study 1. For participants who had used the library, the major issue was lack of access to books in their first language. Few households used public transport, but for those who did (mainly in the Highlands), the experience was similar to the rest of the population: services and their frequency were described as poor. For participants living in the Western Isles, the main issue was the cost of leaving the Island which is also an issue that affects all islanders. However, for minority ethnic households with families and close kin elsewhere or abroad, maintaining

relationships with kin and cultural practices (described above) meant incurring extra costs as well as being potentially stressful.

Three participants in the Highlands and one in the Western Isles had used the Citizens' Advice Bureau, and had found the advice given helpful. Three types of advice were sought: employment, benefits and consumer rights advice respectively. Whilst those with children at school were vaguely aware of the Careers Service, very few adults understood what the service provided and appeared to have little contact with it. Apart from one participant who felt that the career advice given to her when she was a pupil was helpful with regard to vocational options, there were three others who felt that the advice given was inappropriate, and that there was a tendency on the part of careers officers not to listen. The service provided was generally described as not effective, and there was a lack of confidence as to whether the advice being given was appropriate. Very few households accessed sports and leisure facilities. Amongst the few that did use or comment on the facilities, one participant's children was involved in the local Shinty club, while others had children who used the local swimming and sports facilities. Households living in the remoter areas commented on the lack of availability of such facilities for young people in their area.

### **Main barriers to accessing services**

Three recurrent issues were consistently raised by participants across all four areas as affecting their quality of life and their rights as citizens. These were: (i) a general lack of commitment to equal opportunities; (ii) communication and language barriers; and (iii) a lack of recognition of cultural diversity. Communication barriers and what was perceived by participants as a lack of effort on the part of agencies and communities to understand their cultures in a rural context where households were dispersed, combined to amplify feelings of social and cultural isolation.

### ***Equal opportunities***

The majority of participants had little awareness or knowledge about the equal opportunity policies of the agencies in their area, and were unable to respond effectively to this issue. Of those who were aware (about a quarter of the participants), their main comments were confined to two areas: employment where they felt that agencies did not take equal opportunities as far as minority ethnic groups were concerned seriously; and the lack of cultural sensitivity in service provision. Specific issues mentioned were the lack of

individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds in the public sector, and in services such as education; lack of consultation with minority ethnic groups; and lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and work experience gained abroad. In general, equal opportunity policies were perceived as meaningless if there were no translation and interpretation facilities for those who couldn't speak English.

As previously discussed in this chapter, many of those who were in work felt that there was a 'glass ceiling' operating in workplaces which prevented those from being selected for promoted posts, despite having the relevant qualifications and experience. Cronyism and the 'old boy's network' were also seen as working against those from a minority ethnic background, both in terms of obtaining work, and also when in work (see Examples 5b & 5c). However, the Chinese community in North Ayrshire, in particular, felt that the appointment of a Development Worker had not only made them more aware of their rights to services, but also enabled them to have a voice in service delivery. They felt that they were in a better position with regard to accessing services and exercising choices in a way that was not possible previously.

### ***Communication and language***

Half of the participants in the study highlighted communication and language needs as the most important issue which required to be addressed by organisations. Three types of needs were identified within this context; (i) the opportunity for individuals, adults as well as children to access appropriate EAL support, especially in Angus, the Highlands and the Western Isles; (ii) provision for interpretation and translation facilities; and (iii) bilingual support. With regard to the latter, it was felt that there was little encouragement or support for maintaining their mother-tongue. This was contrasted with the encouragement given to speakers of European languages which were seen as an asset. Maintaining their mother-tongue was often seen as delaying or prolonging their acquisition of English by some schools. These differences in attitude were of especial concern to parents with children of school age, and were perceived as symptomatic of the general lack of interest in minority ethnic cultures.

Even those who could speak English fluently were aware of many others that required English language support. Lack of functional English was identified as the most common barrier in accessing services, and as one of the main factors which led to the isolation of households and individuals:

‘Language is the most important. If you can speak the language [*in this case English*] your life is a lot better, otherwise you are isolated. You don’t know what your rights are.’ (Chinese, 23, North Ayrshire)

The lack of access to language support and learning provision can create barriers, for example, sitting driving tests, accessing employment and so on (Example 8).

***Example 8 – Language Barriers***

*Mrs Y lived in a remote community where the nearest town was approximately 6 miles away. There were no shopping or other facilities within walking distance. She could not drive, and her husband worked away for six months at a time, during which time she lived alone in the house. She relied on her neighbours who she described as being very kind to her, or on a bus service which was very irregular. She wanted to be more independent, so she started taking driving lessons and subsequently applied to sit her driving test. She kept failing the written test because her English was not good enough. So she approached a number of individuals and agencies to seek help with learning English which she was prepared to pay for but without success, as there was no provision for EAL teaching or support in the area. Consequently she was unable to sit her driving test.*

To some extent, all rural residents experienced difficulties in accessing services. However, the inability of the participant to communicate in written English, and the lack of provision to assist with learning the language, compounded her feelings of social isolation, and put her at a disadvantage were she to seek employment. Overall, with the exception of North Ayrshire, EAL classes and provision for interpretation and translation were very unevenly developed across the four areas, with the Western Isles having no provision for adults.

Everyday activities became a major problem for those who could not communicate in English. One participant described how those who couldn’t speak English couldn’t easily shop or buy the goods they wanted when they wanted to. They tended to put things off until they could find someone, usually a family member to go with them. This meant they were totally dependent on other family members. In households where adults could not speak English there was a very high dependency on their children to shop and access services, including accompanying them to the GP. Apart from raising ethical issues, and the strain that this put on children and young people, it was also highlighted as an extra burden when the children were married and had their own families to look after. There

was feeling that as a married adult, one didn't just have one family but two to look after: they're own and their parents. This, it was felt, added extra pressure and stress to daily life which the service providers were unaware of:

‘There is a need on the part of public bodies and services to recognise the specific needs of minority ethnic groups, as there is a tendency to make assumptions which often turn out to be erroneous.’ (African, 24, North Ayrshire)

Participants often felt that having people from minority ethnic backgrounds employed in public services was really important, because it was felt that their needs were more likely to be understood and assessed appropriately. The idea of always having to go through an interpreter, or a third party in accessing services was seen as both unsatisfactory and stressful.

### ***Cultural Issues***

Half of the respondents felt that their cultural/social and religious needs should be taken into account when providing a service. In general, the participants felt that minority ethnic households were stereotyped as all being the same, and were ‘lumped together’. In the words of one of the participants ‘People should know the difference between India and Pakistan’ (Kenyan Asian, 12, Highland) Most felt that whilst they were making an effort to make sense of and fit into Scottish culture, it was very much a one way process, with very little reciprocity on the part of ‘white’ Scots. Participants felt that their cultural and religious needs were rarely taken into account in service provision. The specific issues identified include the following:

(i) The need for public bodies, and service providers generally, to recognise and take into account the specific needs of minority ethnic groups, e.g. dietary, cultural, religious and language needs, in the provision of services.

(ii) The importance of having access to a meeting place for minority ethnic families, where they can help maintain and share their culture, socialise, organise mother tongue classes for their children and worship. This was highlighted by participants in the Highlands and Western Isles in particular. Not having access to facilities, or not being aware that they could access community facilities, which could assist in maintaining their cultural heritage for their children, was of major concern to all parents in these two areas. Although, even

in these areas some households found ways around the difficulties by getting together in each others' homes to socialise, worship and to teach their children their mother-tongue.

(iii) Access to a place for worship was specifically emphasised by those who came from a Muslim background, and was felt most strongly by those who lived away from the Central Belt, e.g. the Highlands and the Western Isles. For households, who lived in North Ayrshire and Angus, this was not an issue, as Glasgow and Dundee were seen as accessible.

(iv) Awareness of cultural diversity issues was felt to be generally lacking in rural communities, and participants emphasised the need for awareness of other cultures to be promoted generally. Education was perceived to have a vital role in promoting such awareness: 'In the school they should teach about other religious festivals, as we know about Easter, Halloween, etc. They should know about ours as well.' (Pakistani, 6, Highland)

## **Conclusion**

Study 1 was an important first step in exploring the lived experiences of rural minority ethnic households in Scotland. It provides important initial insights about the ways in which their small numbers, diversity and dispersion interacted with a lack of recognition of ethnicity / 'race' in rural areas to shape their experiences of rurality.

The lack of many others from a similar ethnic background and their dispersion made the experiences of rural minority ethnic households distinct from their urban counterparts: it led to feelings of social and cultural isolation and of strong pressures to assimilate. For example, as illustrated in this chapter, for some, the only way to gain access into community life appeared to be through conversion to Christianity, and those who were Christian were more likely to have access to social networks centred on a local church. The lack of access to relevant cultural/faith facilities for non-Christians and limited public spaces, in contrast to urban areas as argued in Chapter 2, restricted their choices in socialising, having a voice and maintaining aspects of their cultural/faith identities. This was exacerbated for participants in the Highlands, and the Western Isles, suggesting the importance of understanding the impact of geographical location and remoteness in particular.

From the perspective of the participants in Study 1, rural agencies and residents did not recognise their presence in rural areas, reflecting the tendency to rid rural spaces of what Cloke (2003, p.3, see Chapter 2) calls ‘transgressive presences and practices’ associated with ethnicity / ‘race’. The emphasis on achieving economies of scale in service delivery, and the prevailing ideology of certain notions of ‘rurality’ - i.e. homogenous, friendliness, close knit, and strength of social networks – rendered them invisible in rural areas. The denial of the relevance of ethnicity / ‘race’ in rural areas was manifested in a number of ways in Study 1. For example, with the exception of the Chinese households in North Ayrshire, few if any of the participants felt that the public agencies acknowledged their presence. In general, there appeared to be little effort made to understand or address the barriers they faced in accessing services, and there was a lack of acknowledgement of their culture. This resulted in a heavy reliance on the family/household for support: for example, children interpreting for parents, parents having to address issues of racism towards themselves or their families without any support (see Dhalech 1999a). In addition, their greater visibility combined with the lack of mechanisms to provide support and tackle discrimination made them feel more vulnerable to racism, reluctant to challenge it or make formal complaints (e.g. see also Lemos 2000; Rayner 2005).

Although the small sample meant that it was not possible to generalise, using qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews had a number of advantages. They provided a means of exploring issues in more depth, being flexible in a context where little was known about their experiences, and being sensitive to the research participants’ wishes in relation to engaging with the research. Study 1 provided some initial data which made the presence and experiences of minority ethnic groups visible in rural areas. The small sample size also made it difficult to explore differences (ethnicity, religion, social class, age, etc.) between and amongst minority ethnic households to any great extent. Given the increasing emphasis on the complex and changing nature of identities (discussed in Chapter 2), the research was not in a position to comment on the issue of differences, with regard to, for example, age, ethnicities, socio-economic background and gender. Chapter 6 goes on to explore these issues further from the perspective of young people and parents/carers with children of primary school age in the context of the Scottish Highlands as a remote rural areas.

## **Chapter 6 Growing Up In the Highlands: The Experiences of Minority Ethnic Parents/Carers and Young People**

### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the complex and contingent nature of the relationship between ethnicity / 'race' and place, concentrating in particular on the multipositionality of minority ethnic parents/carers and young people as they negotiate their lives in the Scottish Highlands. It aims to develop an insight into the factors that shape the experiences of parents/carers with children of primary school age and young people in the Highlands, by emphasising their diverse views, experiences and adaptive strategies taking into consideration the constraints as well as opportunities for exercising choices.

In Chapter 5, participants expressed anxieties about maintaining their cultures and ethnic identities in an environment where there were not many households from similar ethnic or religious backgrounds. This was exacerbated by weak or non-existent infrastructures for addressing diverse ethnicities, lack of easy access to faith/cultural facilities in areas such as the Highlands and the Western Isles, and strong pressures to assimilate. Within this context, education was perceived as playing an important role in relation to addressing issues related to ethnicity / 'race' and identity.

Moving from a broad Scottish rural context which included four rural areas (Study 1), this chapter focuses on the Scottish Highlands. It is a geographical region which is remote from the larger urban conurbations where there is a greater concentration of cosmopolitan and diverse populations, and access to facilities for different ethnic groups exist. Even though Inverness has had city status since 2000, it is surrounded by a large rural hinterland, and minority ethnic households continue to regard Inverness as having a "small town mentality" which lacks ethnic diversity, and the facilities that go with having a cosmopolitan population (see Chapter 7 and also de Lima et al 2005).

Chapter 6 explores issues of ethnicity, identity and experiences of rural life, drawing on the re-analysis of semi-structured interviews from two studies (see also Table 1.2 in Chapter 1; and Chapter 3): (i) Study 2 from the perspectives of parents/carers with children in primary school undertaken in late 1998-1999; and (ii) Study 3 involving young people aged between 12 and 21 years of age in 2001-2002. The findings from these two

studies are presented together in this chapter, drawing on each as appropriate to the topic under discussion.

The next section provides a brief overview of the profiles of participants in the two studies. This is followed by a discussion of the role played by agencies, such as schools, and individuals/peers in relating to individuals who are perceived as not belonging because of their ethnicity/culture from the perspective of the participants, and is structured around two broad areas: addressing ethnic diversity in the Highlands: policy – practice gap; and maintaining a balance between fitting into the Highlands, and sustaining cultures. The chapter concludes by highlighting the complex interaction between rurality and ethnicity, and the ways in which this shapes the experiences of parents/carers and young people in the Highlands. It argues that in order to understand the racialised context of identity formation in relation to minority ethnic children and young people in predominantly ‘white’ settings, it is important to make visible the racialised identities of the ‘white’ majority. This means exploring and encouraging the deconstruction of ‘white ethnicities’ and facilitating a more inclusive approach to the issue of identities in rural communities, and Scotland generally (Nayak 1999; Tyler 2006).

## **Profile of Participants in Studies 2 and 3**

### **Study 2**

Study 2 involved 14 minority ethnic parents/carers all of whom had a child or children in primary school, and were based across the Highlands (see Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1: Profile of Parents/Carers – Study 2**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Employment</b>
3 Pakistanis 2 African-Asians 1 Indian 1 Caribbean 2 African 2 Filipinas 1 Middle-Eastern 2 Japanese	4 Diploma, Degree and above qualifications: 1 Indian, 1 African, 1 Caribbean and 1 Filipina 9 Secondary School qualifications	Six employed as: 1 Health service professional 1 Catering assistant (part-time) 1 Waiter 1 Care assistant (part-time) 1 Self-employed 1 Provided assistance to family business (part-time)

The participants were from diverse ethnic backgrounds, the majority of whom were born outside the UK, but had lived in the UK for at least five years or more. With the exception of one male, the rest were women. This was possibly a reflection of the way in which the sample was recruited – i.e. through word of mouth, – and the fact that the most of the women, who had primary responsibility for the children, were not in employment. A majority of the participants had no formal qualifications beyond school level. With the exception of two individuals (i.e. health professional and self employed) who had jobs commensurate with their qualifications, the rest were employed in semi-skilled jobs. Of the latter, two were in jobs for which they were over qualified. Three worked work part-time to fit in child care responsibilities.

### Study 3

Study 3 involved 18 young people from a minority ethnic background, the majority of whom were aged between twelve and eighteen years, and were female (see Table 6.2).

**Table 6.2: Profile of Young People – Study 3**

Ethnicity	Demographic Characteristics	Household features
10 from: African-Asian Indian Bangladeshi Chinese Pakistan/Muslim African 8 from: Mixed ethnic backgrounds involving a Scottish parent. The other parent included: Japanese, South American, North African, Filipina/Filipino, and African Asian.	Female: 14 Male: 4  Age: 12-18 years: 15 19-20 years: 3	12 lived with both their parents 3 lived in single parent homes 3 lived on their own  15 lived in owner occupied homes 3 lived in Council owned accommodation  16 households with at least one person employed; 3 self-employed. 2 households with both parents unemployed due to ill health. Sectors employed in: Environment, health, information technology and personal and social care. Self-employed: leisure business, retail and catering.

With the exception of four young people who were studying vocational courses at the local further education colleges, the rest attended secondary school. The young people came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and with the exception of four who were born overseas and two who were born in Northern Ireland, the rest were born in Scotland and

the Highlands in particular. Apart from one participant, a majority of the rest had lived in the Highlands for most of their lives. The average household size was four, with a small minority living in single parent households, in council accommodation, and in households where both parents were unemployed. About half of the young people came from households where at least one parent was working in a professional job (e.g. as doctors/consultants and Information Technology specialists).

### **Addressing Ethnic Diversity in the Highlands: Varying Experiences**

This section explores the perspectives and experiences of participants, in Studies 2 and 3, with regard to how they felt ethnicity / 'race' issues were addressed within the school and community context. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, despite the existence of policies designed to address race equality within the 5-14 curriculum, and the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) 2000 Act, from the perspectives of participants in the two studies, there was a policy – practice gap, and a strong reliance on the commitment of individuals to address issues of ethnicity / 'race'. This reliance on individual commitment rather than policies being embedded in institutional policy meant that progress on race equality tended to be ephemeral, precarious and rarely sustained beyond the individual's presence in an organisation. For example, from the experiences of participants in both studies, there was, apparently, a prevalence of different views and approaches amongst professionals on the most appropriate ways of addressing race equality, and issues of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. This, in turn, resulted in minority ethnic parents/carers (Study 2), and young people (Study 3), having variable experiences across the sector, within the same local authority, if not school:

'My children went to two different schools, and encountered two different experiences. In one school, they had to deal with a fair amount of racial abuse which wasn't dealt with properly by the school. However when they went to a [...] primary school, they had a more positive experience, and the school atmosphere was more relaxed and friendlier.' (Parent/Carer (PC), Pakistani, 1)

This difference in experience was attributed to the more positive attitude of the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher in question was described by the parent as having demonstrated a positive interest in the culture of her children by actively encouraging the children to talk about their culture to their peers, and regularly inviting the parent to share

aspects (e.g. food and dress) of the culture with the children in the school. Minority ethnic parents/carers commented favourably on schools where a proactive effort was made to welcome their children, and to acknowledge their culture. They welcomed being provided with relevant information about the Scottish education system, especially if they were not familiar with it:

‘The head teacher was really nice. She took the children and introduced them to the class, and made them feel at home. They did make us feel welcome, and gave us a paper on the Scottish education system in Japanese.’ (PC, Japanese, 13)

This contrasted with the experience of other parents and children:

‘Compared to other schools my children have been in, this school could have been more welcoming to my son. I do not know how they do things here. They didn’t give any information on the reading scheme so that I could help my child. I would have found an early meeting with the school helpful.’ (PC, Pakistani, 3)

Interestingly, while translated information on the Scottish education system was available in Japanese, this was not the case for other languages. This meant that those who were not familiar with the system of education in Scotland were not always provided with appropriate information in order to assist them with understanding their child’s/children’s schooling. This situation was a reflection of the then Scottish Office’s (see Footnote 1, Chapter 1) willingness to invest in providing relevant information in response to potential Japanese investment in businesses in Scotland. In the Highlands, Japanese business interests had bought into some of the whisky distilleries which were managed by Japanese managers who migrated to the area with their families. Even though there were a small number of other Japanese individuals living in the Highlands who had not come through this route, the association of the Japanese presence with business investment/‘success’ also shaped the response of schools in other ways discussed below. With one or two exceptions (discussed below), few participants in both studies cited examples of teachers or schools acknowledging their cultural background, or utilising their background as a positive resource within the curriculum.

Parents/carers with primary school children in Study 2 appeared to receive conflicting advice on how they should address issues of bilingualism, and learning English. There

appeared to be hierarchical attitudes towards different languages, consistent with previous findings on the tendency of schools to view ‘community languages’ (e.g. usually a reference to non European languages) as a ‘deficit’ and a potential hurdle to learning English (CERES, 1999). The Japanese participants in Study 2, for example, reported that the teachers actively encouraged them to keep up the bilingualism of their children by speaking to them in Japanese in the home. By contrast, participants from the Indian subcontinent, the Middle-East and Africa reported that they were actively discouraged from maintaining the bilingualism of their children. These participants cited many instances across the region of the bilingualism of their children being ignored. Teachers appeared to actively discourage them from speaking to their children in their mother tongue, as it was felt that learning and speaking in two languages would put too much pressure on their child, and could be a hindrance to learning English.

The emphasis on putting aside the child’s first language reflected the prevalence of three factors which shaped the experiences of children and young people who had been through the system of education in the Highlands: (i) an inconsistent approach to children’s language learning abilities; being bilingual in Japanese and European languages such as French or German was considered to be an asset, whilst being bilingual in Swahili or Urdu wasn’t; (ii) an overwhelming emphasis on assimilation, and an undervaluing of the child’s culture including language; and (iii) a hierarchical attitude towards cultures which privileged some, and not others. This often put minority ethnic parents/carers and children in a particularly difficult position as they struggled not to stand out. Children and young people realised at an early age what aspects of themselves they could display in public, and what was to be kept within the private/family domain. They internalised at an early age that their culture was not valued:

‘My son was bilingual. He spoke both Swahili and English, but the children laughed at him at school. I speak in Swahili to my children, but the children don’t reply in Swahili anymore. They reply in English. My son got to the point of asking me not to speak to him in Swahili because he was embarrassed.’ (PC, African, 8)

The extent to which parents accepted the teacher’s or school’s position on speaking to their children in their mother tongue depended on their own level of education and proficiency in English. Those with a reasonable level of education, and from professional

households were more likely to have the confidence to ignore the advice of the school, and bring up their children bilingually anyway:

‘When we first arrived here, my children did not speak in English and I was told not to speak in Arabic with them. But I ignored this advice from the school, because I knew my children would have no problem picking up English.’ (PC, Middle Eastern, 12)

While issues of language were raised mainly in the primary school context, they were also an issue for some of the young people in Study 3. They often refused to speak to their parents in their mother tongue in front of their peers or in public places due to feelings of embarrassment. By contrast, Japanese parents in particular were actively encouraged to speak to their children in their mother tongue at home by the very same schools that discouraged the children of other ethnicities from speaking in their mother tongue: ‘The school kept saying “keep speaking in Japanese to the children. Japanese is very good. English is easy to pick up”.’ (PC, Japanese, 13)

In general, the unease that organisations in rural areas, such as schools, have with explicitly addressing ethnicity issues was (and still is) reflected in their reluctance to collect data on ethnicity, when the numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds were small. While fears of making them even more visible and making them feel different is understandable, this dilemma highlights the urgency of addressing the previously discussed issue of ethnic categorisation (Chapters 1 and 2). The de-coupling of ethnicity from those who are ‘non-white’, and the deconstruction of the category ‘white’ is an important pre-requisite to recognising that all individuals have some form of ethnic identity; some may belong to a majority community, whilst others are minorities (see (Bhavani 1994), all with differing access to power and resources which are at the core of experiences of discrimination.

### **Maintaining a Balance: Fitting into the Highlands and Sustaining Ethnic Identities**

The challenge of maintaining their children’s culture in the absence of others from a similar background was an ongoing concern among participants in Study 1 (Chapter 5). Participants in Studies 2 and 3, emphasised the challenges of maintaining their cultural

traditions, especially in a context where there appeared to be little or no awareness, or understanding of other ethnicities, cultures and norms concerning, for instance, the consumption of certain foods and faith traditions. This section explores the following: culture/faith – diverse perspectives and experiences; challenges of maintaining identity; experiences of racism and bullying; and challenging stereotypes – taking action.

### **Culture/Faith – Diverse Perspectives and Experiences**

In the Highlands, in a small minority of cases, parents/carers of primary school children reported that their children had been encouraged to do a project on their culture, and parents had been invited to talk to pupils about their culture, including displaying cultural artefacts (e.g. traditional dress and food). This focus on culture was viewed differently by parents. On the one hand, some parents perceived this type of involvement as schools trying to be inclusive, and argued that engaging in activities that demonstrated aspects of one's culture had benefits. For example, it made a positive contribution to identity development: 'A good teacher can do so much. Our children feel so proud of their identity, if they see their culture recognised.' (Parent/Carer, African-Asian, 4) Explicit recognition of culture in this way was seen as important in giving children confidence:

'My child was asked to do something on Islam. The teacher encouraged the children to talk about the culture. The teachers also asked me to come in and show them our food and dress. If the children see their culture recognised they definitely gain in confidence.' (PC, Pakistani, 3)

On the other hand, there were parents who were ambivalent about being involved in activities that focused on demonstrating their culture, on the grounds that such engagement tender to foster a static, stereotyped and rather outdated image of their culture which was also gendered:

'They always ask me to demonstrate origami, as though that is the only thing that Japanese women do. Not all Japanese women want to do these things. They are not all traditional. Japanese culture is changing. Japanese women are very modern as well you know.' (PC, Japanese, 14)

This exclusive focus on the cultures of the minorities within schools, it can be argued, not only reproduces the notion of 'whiteness' as the norm – i.e. as not requiring explanation or

discussion – but also reinforces the ‘otherness’ of those who are seen to be different (see Nayak 1999; Saeed et al 1999). This was reflected in a number of contexts in Study 2. For example, some parents/carers reinforced the views of the Japanese participant cited above, by expressing concerns about engaging in activities that ‘exoticised’ their culture. There were concerns expressed by a number of participants about being involved in events (Women’s International Day, for example) where the predominant emphasis was on minority ethnic people displaying aspects of their culture, whilst there were no similar displays of Scottish culture.

With a few exceptions, the lack of sensitivity to the cultural needs of children and young people was consistently raised by all participants in both studies. It was felt that this led to creating strong pressures to conform, and resulted in children and young devaluing their culture. Whilst the standard curriculum was viewed positively by all the participants, the majority of young people felt that the curriculum was predominantly Euro-Centric with little if any recognition of their cultures. All of the young participants in Study 3 felt that education should include teaching about other cultures. It was felt that the schools did not generally make an attempt to develop an ethos which recognised and valued diversity, and there was a perception that their cultures were sidelined. Parents/carers often expressed disappointment that the schools did not acknowledge non-Christian festivals within the schools. Such recognition, it was felt, was important to make their children feel that their cultural/faith traditions were equally valued. Within the context of religious education, young people and parents remarked on the predominant emphasis on Christianity to the exclusion of other faiths:

‘No very closed minded except for religious education, but we only seem to do Christianity. There’s all these other things like Sikhism, Hinduism and everything, all on the walls and everything, but we don’t actually seem to do any of them.’  
(Young Person (YP), Indian 12)

‘I feel that the children’s religion should be reflected in the curriculum so that the children can identify with the school, and feel they are a part of the system. Should the parents have to go to the school to make teachers aware, or should the school accommodate a child with different religious needs? I feel the school should be able to accommodate the child.’ (PC, Pakistani, 2)

For those who were not Christians, the ability to practice their faith was considered to be problematic, because of a lack of access to places where they could worship. The diversity of the minority ethnic population in rural areas was thought to make it difficult to bring together significant numbers of any one faith group to establish specific places for worship. In this context, families had adapted and taken a pragmatic approach, adhering to those aspects which seemed practical to maintain:

‘Well, we are not strict Hindus you know, but we do have certain rules. For example, we don’t eat beef, but apart from that there’s nothing else you know, that’s all.’ (YP, Indian, 12)

Households celebrated not only their own religious festivals, but also the Christian festivals, so that their children would not feel left out. For example, as illustrated in this dialogue between two siblings (whose names have been changed), who were from an Indian household:

Kranti: Yeah, we celebrate all religious festivals, you know.

Rajiv: Yes, you know, like Christmas, and we have nothing against that at all.

Researcher: So you celebrate other festivals?

Rajiv: Everything

Kranti: Yeah, and when my friends ask me “So do you celebrate Easter or something cos I was wondering if I should give you Easter eggs?” I mean I am like “Yeah why not?”

From the participants’ perspectives, in both studies, they found it frustrating that while they were prepared to make an effort to understand, and participate, where practical, in the cultural traditions of the host community, this was rarely reciprocated. This disinterest was perceived as yet another issue which reinforced a lack of interest in the culture of ‘others’, and the strong pressures to conform which were prevalent in the Highlands.

Acknowledgement by the schools of non-Christian religious festivals was perceived by all participants to be important, as it enabled children and young people to sustain aspects of their cultural values and traditions. It was also felt that it would help to demonstrate that the schools and communities respected and valued diversity in beliefs:

‘There is so much made of Christmas. It would make such a big difference to our children if their holy days were also recognised. I gave the school information about our holy days, but they did not do anything about it. They showed no interest.’ (PC, Middle-Eastern, 12)

This disinterest was perceived by participants as creating a context where children and young people internalised perceptions that their culture was less valued, and something to be embarrassed about, an issue highlighted above in the context of language issues, for example. Parents and young people emphasised the importance of adaptation to life in the Highlands being viewed as a two way process: where they, as minority ethnic individuals, adapted to the communities in which they lived, but also where members of rural communities adapted to their presence in rural areas. Minority ethnic parents and young people, felt that they were making efforts to adapt to the culture of the communities they were living in, by taking a pragmatic approach to cultural/faith issues, for example. However, the lack of interest or effort, in general, on the part of the majority communities and agencies, in trying to understand, and accommodate aspects of minority ethnic culture meant that they felt under considerable pressure to conform or to find alternatives strategies to sustain their cultural identities (discussed below).

Although the experiences described above, reflected those of the majority of participants, there were a few exceptions, particularly in the primary school context. The latter revealed the prevalence of variable practice between, and within schools and the ‘multipositionality’ – i.e. different ethnic/social/faith/age backgrounds - of parents/carers, and young people. A small number of parents indicated that religious affiliations had been discussed with them, relevant religious festivals had been acknowledged in the school, and their children were allowed to opt out of religious education or situations (Assembly) where religion was practiced. However, with regard to the latter, a parent expressed some anxiety about her children opting out of Assembly: ‘They [*the children - my italics*] would miss out on information given out in the Assembly, so I just tell them “just go, you do not have to sing”.’ (PC, Indian, 6) This contrasted with the view expressed by a Filipina parent, who argued that that children should learn to mix from an early age, and the teaching of other cultures should depend on the percentage of children coming from other cultures in a particular school. She felt that the issue of cultural recognition was more of an issue in London and Glasgow, than in the Highlands. Another parent attributed her

children's positive experience in school to her standing in the community as a professional, but at the same recognised that there were other groups who were not so fortunate:

‘The children are happy at school. There is racism among the Scots, for example the ... [*Scottish Travellers - my italics*] are the butt of racism here. The fact that I work, perhaps gives me and my children some standing in the community.’ (PC, Caribbean, 7)

Instances, where schools had incorporated into their curricula, information about other cultures, or drew on the experiences of young people from different backgrounds in the course of teaching were exceptional, but welcomed when they occurred:

‘Well, with geography, I was actually quite well known in my class. You know we're from India, and each time my geography teacher used to ask “oh so tell us how it really was in so and so”, if they were talking about how the weather is or how erosion is in different countries, where the climate is different. So I guess, you know, they did appreciate where you are from but they don't make a big deal out of it.’ (YP, Indian, 11)

Drawing on children/young people's cultural repertoire, whilst not ‘making a big deal’, emerged as the ideal, from the perspectives of all the participants, but also can be as potentially challenging for those involved in education with little experience of dealing with diversity. In general, however, the following reflected the norm within the school curricula for young people:

‘We don't really have any cultural stuff, we only learn about different religions in RE [*Religious Education - my italics*]. Apart from assembly where our teacher, I mean our head teacher, just talks about various issues in the school, apart from that there's not really any.’ (YP, Indian origin, 12)

However, young people were not short of ideas in terms of what schools could do in relation to drawing on different cultures:

‘In art and design they should have us making traditional things from different countries, instead of painting boring pictures. It would be good to explore different cultures by making different things from those cultures. Instead of just focusing on one culture, one religion, cos I mean as I’ve said they pretend that they do all these other religions when they only do Christianity. All the work sheets we get are just about Christianity.’ (YP, African, 3)

Apart from the curriculum, and religious education, another context in which lack of sensitivity to culture/ethnicity was highlighted by participants, was with regard to specific dietary needs. A parent recounted how despite raising the issue about diet a number of times with the school, it still was not taken seriously:

‘The onus seems to be on us [*parents - my italics*] to raise the issue of food with the school. In our religion, we don’t eat meat. I wrote two letters informing the school, and yet the teacher still gave my son a ham and jam sandwich.’ (PC, Indian, 6)

Young people confirmed similar experiences. They felt that schools in general did not take into consideration their specific dietary needs. For example, there was no access to meals cooked with Halal meat<sup>6</sup>, and in Home Economics classes, teachers showed no awareness that some pupils may have difficulties working with certain types of ingredients/foods – i.e. non-Halal meat, beef, pork, etc. – considered taboo in their culture.

### **Challenges of maintaining identity**

The issue of maintaining self-esteem and a sense of identity in the absence of others from a similar background, was felt acutely by young people living in the Highlands, and was a source of anxiety for parents/carers. This is brought into sharp focus in relation to the pressures on children and young people growing up in predominantly ‘white’ mono-cultural rural environments to conform (see for example Scourfield et al 2005; Chapter 2):

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<sup>6</sup> Muslim dietary laws, that, inter alia, forbids the eating of pork and requires special methods, and a blessing, for other meat.

‘It is difficult to keep your own language when there are not many people to speak to in your own language in the community. I have been to Bangladesh several times, but here there are not many Bangladeshi families about and no young people from the same community, this makes it difficult.’ (YP Bangladeshi, 18)

Generally, the absence of local opportunities to maintain their culture, and the lack of an ethos that promoted and valued diversity of cultures in institutions, placed an intense pressure on families and young people to be seen to ‘integrate’ in the public domain. For example, as discussed earlier, this was reflected in young people feeling embarrassed about speaking in their mother tongue in front of other peers or in public. In addition, some young people and parents were reluctant to report experiences of racism, and they used a number of strategies to avoid drawing attention to themselves:

‘My children were teased at first because of English accents ... but they were also called names such as: ‘chocolate’ ‘Chinese’ ‘Chinky’. So my children quickly picked up the local accent to fit in more quickly.’ (PC, Caribbean, 7)

The issue of conforming did not stop at language: Elsewhere, there is evidence of families adopting European names for their children, and extreme cases of children bleaching their faces so that they appear white (NCVO, 1994). However, in one case a parent saw being in the Highlands as an opportunity:

‘Through experiences at school, the children are aware of Scottish attitudes towards foreigners, and that has made them stronger. It also makes them aware of the need to be tolerant. Being in the Highlands, there are not many ethnic minorities: For my children and myself, this is a culture shock.’ (PC, Caribbean, 7)

Although most young people felt that being brought up in the Highlands was relatively safe compared to urban areas, there was an awareness that some aspects of their lives took place within a racialised frame of reference. For instance, their ethnicity, culture and/or religion seemed to play an important role in defining notions of ‘belonging’ and ‘identity’. When young people were asked if they would consider living/studying in the Highlands, the majority expressed a strong desire to leave the Highlands, either to pursue higher education or to live and work. With the exception of lack of opportunities, and things for young people to do which they shared with most young people in general in rural areas,

the other main reason given for wishing to leave the area was the lack of people from different cultures. With regard to the latter, the following encapsulates the feelings of the majority of participants in both studies:

‘Well, I find the majority of the people’s attitudes very insular. I find them a bit restricted, it’s not a place I’d settle in myself, once I finish school.’ (YP, Indian, 11)

‘I would definitely not choose to stay here. I have been here all my life and would choose to go away as far as possible. It is very hard to keep your identity and your culture. It is nearly impossible, if you want to be accepted, you feel forced to be like the others in the main culture. You feel so alone. That is one reason why I feel I would like to go somewhere where there are more Asians. Here, in some senses, I feel like a foreigner. I do not feel I fit in. People’s society here is so different. I am a Muslim and they do not understand what it is to be a Muslim.’ (YP, Bangladeshi, 18)

The same participant went on to elaborate further:

‘If schools and colleges don’t know about other cultures, they don’t value them. The schools and Scotland as a whole are “culturally illiterate”. If they [*referring to adults and teachers - my italics*] are culturally illiterate themselves, they are not going to be able to talk and value the culture of others, are they? They cannot value something they are not aware of.’

Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in the Highlands consistently found the issue of identity problematic, and remarked on the confusing nature of ethnic categorisation used in the census. Questions on ethnicity were described as being constraining and unhelpful, and they consistently emphasised the lack of choice as well as the contingent nature of identity: ‘They should have many boxes. You know, not just a couple, but many boxes. You’re forced to choose between such closed minded boxes.’ (YP, African, 2)

The majority of young people did not identify themselves as being from a ‘minority ethnic’ group. They perceived themselves as being no different from other young Scottish

people, as most were brought up in the Highlands and/or the UK. However, as discussed in this chapter, their difference was reinforced by their ‘visibility’ which was frequently the basis of racist name calling and bullying. Difference – particularly their ‘visibility’ – was frequently foregrounded in their interactions with their peers:

‘I get a lot of people that ask at school “where are you from?” And, I say from Inverness and they say, “well how come you are a different colour?” And I say, “well my mum and dad are from India. But I am from Scotland and I have lived here all my life and my parents happened to have come from India.” People should step back and think about what they are saying rather than stereotype people all the time.’ (YP, Indian, 12)

The interactional nature of identity is reflected in this dialogue between two siblings whose parents were African-Asians, but the young people (whose names have been changed) had been born and brought up in Scotland:

Anita: When asked I usually don’t know what to say. It’s not like we’re from Pakistan or anything because we’ve only been there like twice and don’t really speak Urdu fluently, and we’re not completely Scottish either.

Shazia: Kind of half Muslim, half Scottish. Kind of cos it’s like we don’t really, you know, do everything that we’re kind of meant to as Muslims.

Anita: But we’re not completely Scottish either, and we do kind of religious things you could say, so I don’t usually know what to say. Cos people expect that you come from another country and like you’ve just come here for like, just been here like for three years or something and that you can speak the language and stuff like that.

When asked how they would describe themselves, the majority of young people in Study 3 chose to identify themselves in ‘hyphenated’ terms – for example, ‘Scottish- Indian’ or ‘Scottish-Chinese’. Most expressed their hyphenated identities in a number of ways – for example in terms of nation, geographical location, where they were born or lived most of their lives or in relation to their parent’s origins:

‘I would say I feel sort of Indian but I live here. I don’t know, I have got a British passport seeing as I’ve lived here all my life, but I suppose dad’s Indian so I always say my parents are Indians.’ (YP Indian 12)

‘Half and half probably, as I have Pakistani parents and that, and they were born in Pakistan. My mum was a child when she moved here. Then I was born here, but I am still half Pakistani and then part Scottish as I’ve lived in Scotland all my life.’ (YP, Pakistani, 13)

Some thought being different was something they were happy to admit to and often siblings articulated their identities in different ways:

Akira: I would start with English as I was born there and then may be Japanese. I don’t know I don’t feel any of the categories are relevant. I prefer to call myself half English and half Japanese: I like being different.

Ami: I don’t see myself as English, I have lived in Scotland for a long time, and feel more Scottish than English.

A small number identified part of their identities in religious terms, e.g. Muslim-Scottish. Young people of Pakistani origin were more likely to define themselves in this way. In general, this discussion of how young people from minority ethnic backgrounds perceived, and experienced their identity confirmed the interactional nature of their identities. Despite their preference to define themselves more broadly by using ‘bi-cultural’ (i.e. Scottish-Indian, etc.) identities, the tendency amongst their peers was to define them using racialised frames of reference, an issue also highlighted by others (Saeed et al 1999; and discussion in Chapter 2).

### **Experiences of racism and bullying**

The extent to which schools tackled racism varied, and was seen to be largely dependent on the commitment of individuals within the institution. Racism was perceived by all participants as being associated with issues such as culture and religion, but especially physical appearance – mainly skin colour:

‘When I was young I thought “why do I always get branded as the odd one out?” It was because our family was the only coloured family in the school you know. They didn’t see through the colour, and I mean I wouldn’t say I am dark or anything ... I used to think “God I just want to wake up in the morning and be accepted just like everyone”.’ (YP, Mixed Ethnic Background, 1)

The experiences of racism reported by the participants - particularly racist name calling, e.g. ‘half-caste’, ‘Paki’, ‘Chinki’ – seemed to be most prevalent in primary school. A small number of young participants reported experiencing racism, including physical assaults, at secondary school. Name calling, however, was the most common form of harassment cited:

‘At the beginning there was a language problem and one student teased my son and kept calling him “Indian chief”.’ (PC, Indian, 6)

‘They are happy at times, and at times they are not because of their colour. When my daughter touches something then the children tell the other children not to touch it because she is black. They say to my child “we are not speaking to you because you are black”.’ (PC African, 9)

Young people who experienced racist name calling frequently felt that their experiences were not taken seriously by teachers:

‘There was a lot of name calling, but the teachers didn’t believe bullying went on. So, I got into trouble quite a lot.’ (YP, Mixed Ethnic Background, 1)

‘Yes I experienced bullying when I was at school. I used to get beaten up. The more times, I went to the head teacher, the more I had to stand up for myself. In the end, the head teacher did not do much, so I did not go to her.’ (YP, Mixed Ethnic Background, 14)

Only two young people reported that their school addressed racism explicitly, alongside bullying as part of the personal development curriculum. Racist behaviour was attributed by young people and parents/carers to three factors: being the ‘only coloured children at school’; ignorance; an ‘insular attitude’ which resulted in a lack of understanding of

differences; and the lack of willingness of some schools to take the issue seriously. There was a tendency on the part of some parents to play down issues of racism and racist name calling, in the belief that it was best not to make an issue of it. On other occasions, especially where the head teacher had taken a proactive interest in the culture of their child/ children, parents felt at ease about approaching the school to discuss experiences of racism if they occurred. Some parents/carers acknowledged that their children didn't always tell them if they had experienced racism at school. This was confirmed by young people in Study 3, and reflected their concern about not wishing to be singled out or become the subject of attention.

Racist name calling appeared to be more prevalent in primary school than in secondary school. This was attributed to three factors by the young participants: being bigger, being able to defend themselves and having a set of supportive friends. Although a small number of young people claimed that they had not experienced racism themselves within the school, they were aware of others who had. For those who reported bullying and racism at secondary school, the experiences were harrowing, and involved both physical and verbal abuse:

‘There was one guy who told me to go back to Africa. He said “you don't belong here. Go back to Africa!” that kind of thing. And saying horrible things about Africa, you know, just trying to annoy me. Say, they were doing a topic on Kenya, a real ramshackle house would come past and they'd say “Look there's ... house” and remarks like that.’ (YP, African, 3)

The young people who experienced bullying consistently over a period of time, reported that this often resulted in them not wanting to go to school, and in two cases led to truanting:

‘They would just be calling me names and things. These are people I have known from the time I was young. I usually went home and cried. My dad went to the school four or five times. I got to the point where I did not want to go to school. I just made myself sick so I didn't have to go.’ (YP, Mixed Ethnic Background, 14)

The lack of sensitivity of some teachers to bullying placed some young people under considerable stress, impacting on their school performance:

‘I feel really uncomfortable. I was sitting a test, and I really got a bad science mark because me and him [*the person who was bullying – my italics*] were the only people in the room, because I’d been absent on the same day as him. So it was just him there and me, and there was such an atmosphere. I really was having problems concentrating, cos there was that much hatred. I could feel the hatred coming from him, cos he was just so horrible to me.’ (YP African, 3)

This discussion on experiences of racism, and how it was addressed in the Highlands, reflect the findings of studies undertaken in predominantly all ‘white’ schools, concerning issues such as name calling/verbal abuse and lack of reporting due to lack of faith in the system, and the varying stances that may be taken by the staff in schools (Broadhurst and Wright 2004; Troyna and Hatcher, 1994). In the context of the two studies discussed in this chapter, for those who had been the victims of racist behaviour in secondary schools, guidance teachers provided the main reporting mechanism. However, in general it was felt that such reporting did not yield any positive results, and there was a lack of confidence in the ability and willingness of the schools in general to address issues of racism. There was a feeling that the schools did not believe them, and young people preferred speaking to their parents, or in some cases not discussing it with anyone, as they did not want to make an issue of it at school. In the small number of cases where such incidents were reported to the school, it was felt that they were not taken seriously, and in one case, a parent had to resort to involving an external authority to resolve the situation. On the issue of what should be done about racist behaviour in the schools, it was felt that schools should take on a more proactive role of developing an ethos that values diversity and the cultures of others, counteracting what young people saw as the prevailing culture of ignorance that led to racist bullying.

### **Challenging Stereotypes – Taking Action**

Minority ethnic young people in common with most young people living in rural areas lacked opportunities for engaging in a wide range of social and leisure opportunities, due to poor transport, distance and costs, for example. However, young participants in Study 3 felt that the lack of opportunities was exacerbated by the dominance of a ‘drink’ culture in the Highlands, which was perceived as the main leisure activity for many young people. Participants felt that there were strong pressures on them to conform to the ‘drink’ culture. This resulted in restricting access to the limited public spaces available in areas such as the Highlands (highlighted in Chapters 2 and 5) for young people who did not drink:

‘Everyone here seems to be obsessed with drink. It’s the main focus for the weekends. And most conversations revolve around “I got drunk last night and then wandered down the road”.’ (YP, African, 4)

‘My friends do not understand me. They do not understand why I don’t drink. Their whole life is based on drink. Even if they have a job, they spend the rest of their weekend drinking. They are dependent on alcohol to enjoy themselves. I have a few friends who do not drink and we spend our time on sports.’ (YP, Bangladeshi, 18)

In the face of strong pressures to conform and limited activities to engage in, young people struggled to maintain the fine balance between their cultural norms and practices, and those of the communities they lived in. As previously demonstrated in Chapter 5, and highlighted by participants in the two studies, their lack of involvement in activities such as drinking alcohol, and their apparent invisibility in public/social spaces has often be used to reinforce the stereotypes of minority ethnic households, especially of Asian origin as ‘insular’, ‘keeping to themselves’ and unwilling to ‘integrate’ into the local communities. The use of such narratives helps to maintain the myth of the Highland communities as being ‘welcoming’, whilst at the same time locating the barriers to adaptation in the minority communities.

Despite the issues around alcohol, the majority of the young people in Study 3, from a wide range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, and of both genders, engaged in a range of organised leisure activities at a local level – e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Awards,

drama, music and sports. Their involvement in these activities challenges the tendency to stereotype minority ethnic people as insular and not engaged in local activities:

‘I’m in the school hockey team. Well, the hockey season’s finished but when it’s on I play in the hockey matches. I also go to the youth club. There is a football tournament in Inverness and I train for that every Thursday night with my friends and that.’ (YP, Pakistani, 13)

‘Well I play basketball and we [*school team – my italics*] got through to the Scottish Cup finals. Yeah, so we’re like second best in Scotland now and that was pretty good. Our teacher was very pleased. I also go to like ATC (Air Training Cadet) training. Yeah, we go everywhere, Glasgow, everywhere. There’s also tennis, I started off playing tennis, so the tennis club asked me to come again on Saturday, cos they thought I was pretty good.’ (YP, Indian, 12)

In common with young people generally in the Highlands, young participants in Study 3 spent a great deal of time socialising with friends at school, and in each other’s homes. They highlighted similar issues raised by young people in general concerning access to relevant facilities: a lack of access to clubs, cinemas and sport centre (see Erskine and McIvor 2000). Distance, transport and cost emerged as the main barriers, particularly for those who lived on the outskirts of Inverness, and in other parts of the Highlands:

‘For people like us, we are skint. We do not have any money. Things cost so much. You can’t just say “let’s go to the cinema”. You have to organise it like a couple of weeks before-hand.’ (YP, Japanese, 10)

Despite the barriers, participants in both studies pointed to a number of initiatives they were engaged in to address the absence of activities which promoted and sustained their culture. They cited a variety of strategies to overcome social isolation and maintain links with their cultures. With few exceptions, these were mostly at an individual/household level. Some households travelled great distances to access relevant facilities: for example, participants mainly from professional households reported sending their children from Inverness to Glasgow (a round trip taking 8 hours) once a month for mother tongue classes in Urdu. Muslim parents organised private lessons for their children to be taught to recite the Quran. Households met in each others’ homes to engage in faith activities and

celebrate their festivals – e.g. Diwali, Id and Chinese New Year. The young participants in Study 3 identified the use of the internet as an important tool for maintaining relationships with family and relatives living at a distance and overseas. In addition, participants in both studies identified regular visits to family and relatives overseas, and within the UK, as an important aspect of maintaining ties with their culture.

In addition to the establishment of a Muslim place of worship highlighted in Chapter 5, there were a few cultural/faith based activities in Inverness, beginning to emerge around 1999. Chinese parents, with assistance from an individual in the Highland Adult Basic Education Service, organised Chinese language classes for their children once a week. However, despite the success of the initiative, lack of financial support and commitment from the Local Authority made it unsustainable after a year. The Workers' Education Association (WEA) established a Women's International Group with crèche facilities in Inverness which a small number of the participants in Study 2 were actively engaged in. The Group was facilitated by a minority ethnic woman employed by the WEA. It met once a week, and was established around minority ethnic women whose husbands were employed in the local hospital as medical professionals. It focused on social activities such as crafts, cooking, as well as inviting speakers to talk about local services. However, the Group tended to be inaccessible to women who could not speak English, were working or lived outwith Inverness, highlighting the importance of recognising differences within the minority ethnic population, as well as taking into account issues of geographical location.

Overall, the activities that young people were engaged in, the individual/household based strategies and the small but growing number of group initiatives highlighted by parents/carers, challenge the dominant stereotype of rural minority ethnic households as victims, perpetuated by previous research on this subject. Households were even prepared to access support from outwith the region to maintain their culture and/or faith. Examples provided by the participants in both studies, showed that they were actively involved in negotiating their identities and daily lives, by organising and engaging in initiatives reflecting their different positionalities with regard to socio-economic, gender and individual circumstances.

## Conclusion

The studies discussed in this chapter revealed the complex and diverse experiences involved in relation to ethnicity / 'race', rurality and other sources of social identity from the perspectives of young people and parents/carers. The experiences of participants in Studies 2 and 3 highlighted the impact of weak infrastructures for addressing ethnicity / 'race' due to the perceived lack of relevance of these issues in the Highlands, on the one hand, and their 'visibility', small numbers and dispersion, on the other hand, on shaping their sense of identity/belonging, experiences of rural life and adaptive strategies.

While the studies discussed in this chapter revealed that ethnicity interacted with other markers such as accent, place of birth, faith and so on to shape young people's experiences and claims to identity, they also experienced constraints with regard to how they defined themselves. There was a tendency amongst their peers to equate 'visibility' with 'othernesses' not associated with places such as the Highlands. Being from a minority ethnic background and 'Scottish' were perceived as mutually exclusive by their peers, reflecting the persistence of racialised frames of reference particularly in relation to those who were 'visibly' different (see Scourfield et al 2005). Hall (1995, p.258) highlights the importance of understanding ethnicity as the characteristic of all people: 'We are all, in that sense, *ethnically* [*his italics*] located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are.' The lack of 'space' provided to 'analyse whiteness' has meant that we know and understand very little about the 'racialised identities' of the 'white' majority in areas such as the Highlands (Rutherford 1997, discussed in Chapter 2). Ignoring the ethnicity of the 'majority white' young people, particularly in rural areas, not only reinforces the invisibility of 'whiteness', but also problematises minority ethnic groups and their cultures.

The propensity to reproduce a largely monolithic view of culture, to underplay cultural differences and not to address the ethnicity of 'white' people was strongly evident in the Highland schools. The experience of participants in both studies revealed that apart from the very occasional involvement of parents to demonstrate aspects of their culture, there was little or no acknowledgement of the culture of minority ethnic children and young people in most Highland schools. Despite participants' attempts to accommodate various aspects of the local cultures and to engage in a variety of organised activities, there was little or no reciprocity generally within institutions such as schools, or in the communities

at large. Consequently, from the perspectives of the participants, ‘integration’ was largely experienced as assimilation.

However, as discussed in this chapter, ethnic groups were not all treated in the same way. For example, schools displayed more favourable attitudes towards bilingualism with regard to children from Japanese households than those from African or Indian households. This hierarchical ordering of ethnicities challenges the portrayal of ethnicity and ‘racism’ as being fixed and monolithic, thus reinforcing the importance of taking into account context. In addition, socio-economic status played an important role with regard to how parents/carers felt they were perceived, and treated by the school and others in the community. Those from professional backgrounds displayed more confidence in contacting the school, if they were concerned about their children’s treatment or progress, and were more likely not to accept the school’s advice on issues of bilingualism. They felt that they were treated with more respect because of their professional status. On the few occasions where their culture was acknowledged, – for example, parents or children being asked to display aspects of their culture – there were diverse reactions. On the one hand, some parents welcomed the attention, and saw it as affirming their children’s cultural identity, on the other hand, others perceived it as promoting static and stereotypical views of their culture, and most young people preferred not to be singled out for attention in this context.

Despite the challenges of organising to sustain particular faith/cultural activities, the chapter highlighted a small number of initiatives by participants to develop solutions for their particular situations, enabling them to combine aspects of their culture with the local culture and norms. Difficulties in sustaining activities at group level led to a reliance on individual household level initiatives, often focusing on faith based activities. These were perceived by some participants, as one way of positively reinforcing their sense of identity, and of helping to overcome personal, social and cultural isolation, reflecting the findings of a study on rural ‘race’ issues in Britain (de Lima 2002a, p.28). In some cases, households went to considerable length to access and maintain cultural practices by travelling outwith the region, reflecting similar practices in rural England and Wales (e.g. Craig et al 1999; Scoon 1998).

Having focused on the experiences of children and young people, the discussion moves on to Chapter 7, to explore the experiences of minority ethnic individuals in the next life

course stage – that of post school education in the Highlands and Islands. Chapter 7, reflects the changing ethnicities of the rural minority ethnic population, and seeks to explore further the complex relationships between ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background, as they negotiate their lives in rural areas.

# **Chapter 7 Minority Ethnic Experiences of Post School Provision in the Highlands and Islands: Exploring Differences**

## **Introduction**

Chapter 7 represents the last of the empirical chapters based on a re-analysis of Study 4 which was undertaken in 2003-2004 (See Table 1.2, Chapter 1). This chapter aims to develop an insight into minority ethnic people's experiences, and in particular how they unfold over the lifecourse in relation to post school education, following the focus on minority ethnic parents/carers and young people's perspectives in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 contributes to the overall thesis by exploring further issues which emerged in Chapter 6, such as multipositionality/multi-identities (e.g. gender and socio-economic background), and the ways in which these shaped participants' experiences and their adaptive strategies.

Reflecting the changing ethnicities and drawing on a larger sample, the post school education context is used to explore and provide a more in depth account of the differences between rural minority ethnic households. It seeks to explore the ways in which the cross cutting identities/multipositionality of individuals and their location in different parts of the Highlands and Islands, not only impacts on their experiences of post school education, but more generally their experiences of life in the Highlands and Islands. Chapter 7 focuses on the complex factors (e.g. structural, institutional, spatial, social, ethnic and individual) that shape the take up and experiences of post school education and life in communities and the strategies adopted by rural minority ethnic households in negotiating life, including post school education in rural communities.

For the purposes of this study, the Highlands and Islands covered the following Local Authority areas: Highland, Moray, and Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. In addition as previously highlighted in Chapter 3 and 4, the term 'minority ethnic' in the context of this study was widened to include so called 'visible' and 'non-visible' minority ethnic groups as a reflection of the changing demographic trends. Post school institutions in this chapter refers to institutions offering further and higher education.

This chapter discusses the findings which emerged from the interviews, focus groups and questionnaires conducted with minority ethnic participants, and is structured around the following: (i) profile of the participants; (ii) awareness and access to information on post

school education opportunities; (iii) experiences of making contact with post school institutions; (iv) post school provision – minority ethnic views and experiences; (v) impact of living in the Highlands and Islands; and (vi) strategies to overcome social and cultural isolation. The chapter concludes by arguing that socio-economic and other social markers, as well as location and personal circumstances appear as relevant alongside ethnicity/’race’ in making sense of the experiences of minority ethnic participants and their adaptive strategies.

### **Profile of Minority Ethnic Participants in Study 4**

Overall, 112 minority ethnic individuals participated in this study in one of the following ways: focus groups (67), interviews (11) and questionnaires (34). The profile of all those involved in the study reflected the trends reported in the Census 2001, and the informal information provided by key EAL informants (see Chapter 4).

The participants taken as a whole represented, at least 10 different ethnicities: e.g. Indian, Pakistani and Chinese – as reflected in the 2001 Census - as well as others i.e. Thai, African, Caribbean, Spanish, German, Bulgarian, Russian and people from the former Soviet Union; thus reflecting the diverse nature of the minority ethnic households in the Highlands and Islands (see Table 7.1). The decision to include ‘non visible’ as well as ‘visible’ minorities in Study 4 was a reflection of two factors: the changing and growing minority ethnic population of the Highlands and Islands which was beginning to include individuals from the former Communist countries on special work visas; and a recognition from Studies 2 and 3 that ethnicity / ‘race’ are hierarchically ordered. With the exception of a very small minority, the majority were born out-with the UK; however, Scotland was the next most common country of birth.

**Table 7.1: Profile of Minority Ethnic Participants in Study 4**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Employment</b>
Approximately 64 Chinese (Hong Kong and Mainland) Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan.  48: Thai, African, Caribbean, Spanish, German, Middle-Eastern, South American, and those from the former Communist Countries	84: aged between 26-59 years of age.  26: between 18 and 25 years of age,  2: over the age of 60.	71 Women  41 Men	Majority of Africans, Indians and Middle-Eastern participants had degree and above qualifications.  Chinese, Bangladeshi and Pakistani were the least well qualified	Self employment was high among the Chinese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi  Indians and most of the Africans were employed as medical practitioners

Most participants were aged between 26 and 59 years. The majority of women, even those with qualifications, classed themselves as not available for work. Having to look after children and difficulties in communicating in English were cited as two of the main reasons for not being in work. In general, qualification levels among African and Indian participants were highest, at first degree level and beyond, with the majority of Chinese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants being the least well qualified. Apart from those involved in the Health/Medical sector, most were involved in a narrow range of sectors, such as retail and catering. There were a small minority dispersed in other sectors, e.g. computing, administration, hospitality and fish processing. Self-employment was high among the Chinese, Bangladeshi and Pakistani participants.

### **Minority Ethnic Awareness and Access to Information on Post School Education Opportunities: Issues of Differences and Diversity**

One of the first steps in accessing services, in general, is an awareness of the options that are available. Research, since the early 1990's and the findings from Study 1, has consistently highlighted that a lack of awareness, and/or access to information about services is a major barrier in minority ethnic groups accessing services, and from exercising their full rights as citizens in rural contexts (Chapters 2 and 5). The majority of

participants were unaware of the UHI Millennium Institute<sup>7</sup>, or what it offered by way of degree level provision. In contrast to the previous studies discussed in this thesis, Study 4 involved a larger sample which enabled a more finely grained analysis to be undertaken with regard to differences. Contrary to previous research which has treated the informational and support needs of minority ethnic groups as homogeneous, the research undertaken in the Highlands and Islands found differences in experiences between and within minority ethnic groups.

Issues of access and decision making in relation to post school opportunities were influenced by a complex interaction between educational level, ethnicity, gender and geographical location. While it is important to exercise caution in making stereotypical judgments about specific groups, this has to be balanced with the importance of developing a more nuanced understanding of the complexities that affect issues of access, and assists with the development of appropriate policy interventions. Broadly speaking, there were five potential groups, some of them overlapping, among the participants with different requirements for information and some provision discussed in more detail below: (i) the 'well-informed' group; (ii) 'adult re-trainers with overseas qualifications'; (iii) 'those with EAL need and who possessed no qualifications'; (iv) 'adults without qualifications but who have potential for career development'; and (v) the 'poorly informed' group.

(i) Group 1: *'The well-informed' group*, in the 16-24 categories, and their parents who were in a position to make well informed educational choices. In the study, this was represented by mainly the Indian, African and Middle-Eastern participants, who were qualified at degree level and above, the majority of whom had gained their qualifications in the UK. This group demonstrated a high level of awareness of post school provision in the Highlands and Islands, and expressed no difficulties in accessing relevant provision. There was, however, a tendency to show a preference for subjects (e.g. medicine, law, housing, etc.) which were not available in the area. In addition the lack of cultural

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<sup>7</sup> In April 2001, the Scottish Executive granted UHI Millennium Institute (UHI) status of Higher Education Institution to provide university level courses throughout the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. It does this through an educational partnership of further education colleges and research institutions based in Perth, Moray, Argyll, Highland and Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. (UHI nd)

diversity of the area was seen to be a disadvantage. Their choice of education was more likely to be driven by perceived quality of education and institutional reputation:

The way the [*Institution - my italics*] promotes learning is good, because it is a known brand. They run it [*post graduate course - my italics*] very well, but it can be off putting as not everyone can afford it. People have to be keen to do it. They have high standards and I cannot see how they can keep standards and lower the cost. The course gives you a wide view. You feel you have gained something even if you do not get the qualification. You gain knowledge and skills which you can use anywhere.’ (African, Male, 4)

(ii) Group 2: ‘*Adult re-trainers with overseas qualifications*’. This group included mainly those from the Indian subcontinent and small numbers from the former Communist countries (e.g. Hungarians and Bulgarians), China (mainland) and Africa. They had varying levels of English competency and degrees/qualifications in a variety of subjects, including medicine, computing, accountancy and physiotherapy. Even those with a reasonable fluency in English displayed a great deal of language anxiety, which was most evident amongst women who had been out of education for a period of time. The majority of the participants in this group were born overseas.

A number of barriers in accessing further or higher education were identified by this group. First of all, the information provided did not take into account people’s lack of familiarity with the UK system of education and the complexity of information on web sites was found to be problematic:

‘There are good websites, but often there is too much detail. There are lots of courses, but what do the qualifications mean? What can you do with the qualifications? You have to be Einstein to understand the information. They need to simplify the information, make it straightforward to understand.’ (Indian, Female, Focus Group (FG) 1)

Issues such as the modes of study on offer were confusing – i.e. part-time, full-time and so on – and a number failed to understand why in some cases ‘full-time’ meant attending college for only two days per week. Secondly, a lack of guidance to help participants

build on their overseas qualifications and experience, so that they might maximise their entry into the labour market was considered an issue in terms of access:

‘We have certain qualifications but there is not enough of guidance. How can we build on it? What are the opportunities here? Which is the most important thing that is really important to do to get a job? Opportunities are here, so many opportunities. We need someone to help us make the choices.’ (Indian, Female, FG1)

Thirdly, when individuals approached local Further Education Colleges (FECs), their experience was one of being ‘passed around’ between members of staff, and experiencing what they considered to be long time lags in receiving responses to their queries. And fourthly, the EAL provision (especially in terms of volume) which would help them to make rapid progress in gaining English fluency and enable them to move on to further study, or work in occupations they had been trained for, was considered to be inadequate. For some, in this category, the cost of provision was an issue and the lack of access to affordable childcare.

(iii) Group 3: *‘Those with EAL need and who possessed no qualifications’*. This included adults who required EAL and other basic cultural familiarisation provision. Approximately half of the focus group participants fell into this category and were mainly from the following ethnic backgrounds: Chinese, Bangladeshi, South East Asian (e.g. Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam) and a small minority from the former Communist countries (e.g. Bulgarian, Hungarian, Polish and Russian). The majority were born outwith the UK. Those who had lived in the Highlands and Islands longest (some for over 30 years), were mainly from the Hong Kong Chinese community, some of whom were women in their forties and fifties who had previously relied on their children to help translate and communicate in English. However, as their children had now left home, the issue of communicating in English had become a problem. Most of the adults in this group experienced high levels of social and cultural isolation and expressed anxieties about a range of day to day issues often taken for granted- e.g. visiting the doctor, attending hospital, and making sense of their children’s education. In the majority of cases, the children in these families were the interpreters/translators for their parents/carers.

Two issues in particular were highlighted by those in this group. The first was the inability to communicate in English. This was a major barrier in accessing all services, including education. The Chinese participants in particular, felt that they were unable to carry out some aspects of their family roles effectively. For example, most of the participants in this group felt that they could not attend parents' evenings or keep a track of their children's progress at school because of a lack of translation and interpreting facilities. The second issue was an anxiety among the Chinese in particular that they and their children were losing out on sources of financial assistance in accessing further and higher education. For most individuals in this category, access to basic English language classes which focused on helping adults gain functional literacy to survive and participate more effectively in the society was a priority. The Chinese in particular, felt that given their level of English, bilingual provision would be the most effective way for them to acquire the language.

(iv) Group 4: '*Adults without qualifications, but who had potential for career development*'. Participants in this group overlapped with (iii), and involved individuals mainly from the Chinese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. They included a mix of employed and self-employed in the catering and the retail trades. The majority were born overseas. There was an interest in undertaking courses, such as business management, health and safety and computing. For some members of this group, communication in English was a potential barrier to accessing information on educational opportunities and participating in educational provision. The other barriers to accessing post school education for this group included lack of awareness of appropriate courses on offer, lack of understanding of the educational system and the qualifications framework; long working hours and lack of flexible provision that took into account their work patterns.

(iv) Group 5: '*The poorly informed*' group: This group, mainly 16-24 year olds and their parents from the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities in particular, overlapped with the third and fourth category with regard to their ethnicity and the barriers faced. They had little or no experience of higher education, or the UK labour markets, and lacked the social capital necessary to make the best post school choices, or sense of the information they received. This young person's experience reflects these difficulties:

‘My father sends confusing signals at times. He prefers me to focus on education and to do well and yet he also seems to want me to do something with the family business. This can lead to conflict and it is not exactly what I want. He wants me to get on with my education and then he gives me signals. He also wants me to be involved in the business. I have applied to University. My parents chose Aberdeen not because of the courses available but because my father has a restaurant there and that is where they want me to go’. (Bangladesh, Male, 11)

### **Making Contact with Post School Institutions – ‘Invisibility’ of Minority Ethnic Population**

Another aspect of accessing post school education is the impression given out by institutions and the experiences of potential students of their first encounter with the institutions (see Ball et al 1998; 2002; Chapter 2 in this thesis). Participants in Study 4 found that the local Further Education Colleges (FECs) had poor external communications, a lack of awareness of the ethnic diversity of the local population, and were inflexible. Their enquiries to the FECs were often ‘passed around’ from one person to another, as the following two participants highlighted:

‘It takes a whole day at times, you get passed around from one person to another. It took one week to find out about the course. They keep putting me off. I left three messages and then they sent leaflets I couldn’t understand.’ (Caribbean, Female, Focus Group (FG) 1)

‘The reception desk is the first point of contact. They should be knowledgeable about what is on offer in the College, as if you do not get a positive response you don’t go back. When I went to the college the first time, they gave me a few leaflets. I had to take these home and try and make sense of them myself. This is not feasible or possible for everyone to do, because of their language skills, or their lack of understanding of the system and the qualifications on offer.’ (Middle Eastern, Female, 8)

Consequently, participants felt they required to have a great deal of determination and needed to invest considerable time and effort to access what they wanted. It was especially difficult for those who had overseas qualifications, or had little or no

qualifications and were unable to communicate in English (i.e. groups 2 to 5 described above).

The majority of participants felt that the FECs made little, if any, effort to try to understand and accommodate their needs. Furthermore, from the perspectives of a number of women, and the Chinese participants in particular, the institutions appeared inflexible, and lacked sensitivity: for example, it was difficult to arrange appointments that did not conflict with their childcare responsibilities, and the EAL provision did not take into account working patterns. The majority of participants in Study 4 were unaware of marketing initiatives such as ‘open evenings’ held in some institutions, and felt that these events were highly unlikely to attract minority ethnic individuals for at least two reasons. Most participants did not have the confidence to go to events held in an institution. In addition, childcare issues or their patterns of working ruled out attendance at these events during a weekday evening for the majority of the participants, but especially for those who were self-employed, and working in the catering business.

Despite the lack of interest displayed by some of the institutions, some participants did make an effort to try and understand the system. For example, women involved in one of the focus groups were also active members of the Women’s International Group in Inverness (discussed in Chapter 6), and invited speakers to discuss education and other opportunities at their weekly meetings. In addition, they arranged a visit to their local FEC to find out more about potential educational opportunities. The participants described their visit as ‘a waste of time’, as they felt unable to make much sense of the courses and qualifications on offer, and felt that they were ‘talked at by two people’, with no follow up from the particular institution. Despite this experience, four women who had been members of the Women’s International Group since its inception had developed enough confidence to persist and went on to study vocational courses successfully.

Most participants did not perceive the institutions based in the Highlands and Islands as particularly attractive places to study, if one had a choice. These negative perceptions did not only affect the adults’ decisions with regard to studying locally, but were critical in influencing post school decisions with regard to their children. The local institutions were perceived as being disinterested in other cultures and the opportunities for mixing with people from diverse backgrounds were seen as limited for young people, as highlighted by this participant:

‘They [*referring to her children - my italics*] don’t like being here. They see it as limited socially. The opportunities are limited and it is possible they may not come back.’ (Middle Eastern, Female, 8)

In general, the difficulties in accessing information, advice and opportunities for studying were interpreted by participants as “blocking” manoeuvres by the institutions, rather than difficulties that could be surmounted with patience and determination. From the perspectives of the participants, the main institutional barriers faced by minority ethnic households were institutional apathy and lack of sensitivity to ethnic diversity in the region. However, not all minority ethnic individuals shared the same experiences with regard to access to post school education, as highlighted in the previous section, and the following sections highlight further the ways in which factors such as social class linked to previous educational level, and factors such as age and gender, combined with ethnicity and institutional barriers to create complex patterns of access to these services.

## **Post School Provision – Minority Ethnic Views and Experiences**

This section presents the re-analysis of the views and experiences of minority ethnic participants on post school provision focusing mainly on EAL, and to a limited extent on other further and higher education provision.

### **Experiences of Accessing English as an Additional Language (EAL) Provision**

For more than half of the participants in this study, (probably a facet of the way in which the samples were recruited) English language provision was the first priority which they linked to their day to day survival. EAL provision fell into two broad categories: informal classes targeted at those who spoke little or no English and was mainly delivered by Local Authority Adult Basic Education/Literacy Departments and the voluntary sector; and more formal classes targeted at those who possessed some English language skills and delivered by some of the FECs.

The availability, levels, pattern and geographical reach of the provision varied across the area, and with a few exceptions most of the provision was during the day. In general, participants felt that the provision for learning English was minimal across the area, and individuals rarely had the opportunity to study the language for more than three hours per

week. For those who spoke some English, EAL provision was available at the local colleges based in Moray, Inverness, Shetland, and the Western Isles. There were gaps in provision in the North and West Highlands (e.g. Caithness and Sutherland, Skye and Lochalsh), and the Orkney Islands.

The option of sitting the Cambridge Certificate examination, which is the most widely (internationally) recognised qualification for students studying English as a Foreign Language, was only available in Inverness due to the potential for attracting a reasonable number of students. Consequently, access to college based provision depended on geographical location, and opportunities for progression beyond the basic level, especially for those living in the remoter communities, were not available. Many classes could only be sustained by offering mixed level classes. For students who had little or no competence in the language, and required extra support, and for those that had a reasonable level and were keen to get to the next stage, this was a frustrating experience.

Minority ethnic participants, particularly in and around the Inverness-shire area, who had been attracted to the area because of the city of Inverness, expressed surprise at the inadequacy (with regard to volume and levels) of EAL provision:

‘Although Inverness has city status, it is a mix between a town and a city. In cities there are more opportunities. If it wants to become a city and attract tourism, etc, it has to offer more opportunities for things such as learning English. There are not enough of classes.’ (German, Male, 7)

‘I don’t like cities. Before I came here, I wanted to visit Scotland, so I came to Edinburgh. It was my first city here. Scottish people are very kind, but Liverpool was a big city with a lot of noise. But here it is quiet, the air is clear, the scenery is very good. But also it is not like other cities, there are not many classes for studying English.’ (Chinese, Female, FG3)

Potential loss of economic opportunities due to the failure to provide adequate EAL provision and the inflexibility of provision was commented on by others:

‘Inverness could make a lot of money from Chinese people wanting to learn English. There are a lot Chinese people who want to learn English and they prefer

to live in the environment in the Highland. They do not want to live in London.’  
(Chinese, Female, FG2)

‘Between July and October there is a big gap. The college could do something. There is a need for full time English classes, there is a big gap.’ (South American, Female, 6)

Lack of learning resources was seen as yet another factor prolonging the acquisition of English language competency. For example, a lack of language laboratory facilities, and limited English language learning resources in the local FECs, public libraries and book shops. With the exception of one bookshop in the region, the rest were seen as poorly stocked for English learners:

‘I have been looking for English language resources in the library and book shop. It is not very good, except ... has some good material, but on the whole access to resources is very poor here and there is a lack of resources for learning English.’  
(German, Male, 7)

Generally, the poor infrastructure for learning English was seen as symptomatic of a more widespread apathy, especially among public agencies towards minority ethnic cultures generally. A recurrent theme that emerged was that potentially there was a lot going for the Highlands, and in particular for areas such as Inverness. However, it was felt that the agencies appeared to make little or no effort to provide the infrastructure that was required to maximise opportunities, especially in relation to people from other cultures:

‘Highland is a beautiful area, but there is a difference between a good environment and one that encourages a broad minded view. Inverness has to widen itself, broaden its views. People are still clinging to the past. Those in the hierarchy need to demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunity. Organisations pay lip service to equal opportunities. The informal racism which exists is even more difficult than overt racism. You feel left out, attitudes need to change in a way that stops excluding certain people. Development comes from recognising difference and doing something about it. I can relate a lot to Inverness it is like a town in ... However, underneath the society it is difficult to integrate/interact with people.’  
(African, Male, 1)

Despite these infrastructural barriers to EAL provision and the minimal level of provision, minority ethnic participants went to extraordinary lengths to maximise the opportunities to learn English. In addition to attending formal classes, a number sought private tuition as well as attending informal classes. The motivation to achieve a reasonable level of English competency as quickly as possible, in order to function more effectively in their various roles, have a voice and seek employment, were the main driving forces. Some participants were in a position to use personal connections to make things happen. For instance, one of the participants who had been attending formal EAL classes described her decision to start an informal English class through her connection with the Church, i.e. she was married to a Minister of one of the local churches. She described the class as ‘relaxed, giving people the opportunity to practice their newly developing English language skills’. The possibility of accessing informal provision was mainly feasible for those who lived in or within easy access to Inverness, due to the concentration of numbers, and the range of organisations in situ that were in a position to deliver. For those who lived in the remoter parts of the Highlands and Islands, there often was little or no choice of any provision, and some resorted to private tuition.

For participants in Group 2 (above), their previous educational qualifications, basic knowledge of English and age were significant factors in facilitating access to EAL provision. In the words of two participants in their early 20’s:

‘Every city has a college. Once you locate the college and make contact, it is easy to get information about English Language classes.’ (Chinese, Female, FG3)

‘I did not find it difficult, when you come to a place, you expect to find classes at the local college or secondary schools. I expected it from the college.’ (Slovakian, Female, FG3)

By contrast, those who spoke no English and did not possess any formal qualifications (i.e. Groups 3 and 4) were more likely to state that they had received support from family and/or friends and would have found it difficult to access EAL provision without their support:

‘My husband found out for me ... College is the only place around. It is difficult for a person who cannot communicate in the language to find classes. It is easier with someone who can speak English.’ (South American, Female, 6)

A heavy dependence on the family and relatives for support was a constant in the lives of most rural minority ethnic households. However, not all individuals, and women in particular, were necessarily fortunate in having support for improving their language skills. In the case of some women, lack of encouragement on the part of their spouse was a barrier to accessing EAL provision, and had an impact on their ability to communicate in English as they were discouraged from having contact outside the family. Examples were given where women, predominantly Muslim, had difficulties accessing any type of post school provision due to the negative attitudes of their spouses or partners. There were instances where the women themselves were keen to attend classes, but the spouses were against this. The tutors from time to time found themselves in a ‘no-win’ situation as they felt that if they encouraged the women to attend classes, there probably would be repercussions for the women at home. On the other hand, tutors and other minority ethnic participants were painfully aware that the women did require support, but in the end, most felt unable to intervene.

There were instances where women who were keen to access paid provision were unable to do so, because their partner/spouse were unwilling to provide them with the financial support required to enrol on courses. However, it is important to recognise that there were also cases where spouses were very supportive, and were important in ensuring that the women accessed EAL classes:

‘The support of a husband or wife is very important to access language classes and make progress. There should be a three way communication between the teacher, student and the husband/wife, so that that he or she is aware of what is required and how best to support the person whose English is not good. I was lucky I had a supportive husband. Before that I was heavily dependent on him for communicating on my behalf, going to the doctor, etc. He encouraged me to do things for myself. But I know this doesn’t happen to all women.’ (Thai, Female, 10)

The inability to communicate in English resulted in a lack of confidence in approaching providers and in attending classes, because of the embarrassment of being seen as not quite as good at English as others: I was very frightened to come to classes as my English was very poor and there were so many students who could speak better than me.’ (Thai, Female, 10)

This participant felt that most Thai women lacked the confidence to find out what provision was available, let alone attend classes, and needed support and encouragement to take the first step. This view was reinforced by the participants in the Chinese focus group. The feeling of being ‘frightened’, and a lack of confidence was a dominant theme among participants whose level of English communications skills was poor to non-existent. For these groups, the preference was for language classes which were supportive, informal and helped to build their confidence, with some suggesting bilingual provision as the preferred option to begin with.

#### **EAL Classes as a Life Line – ‘It was like medicine for my heart’**

Generally, those in a position to access EAL provision were very positive about the quality of teaching, the support and commitment of teaching staff:

‘The teachers (at the college) are really nice, good personality, good help, and help to get into the culture. The pre-course assessment is good as they make sure we are studying at the right level.’ (South American, Female, 6)

Tutors, in the context of both formal and informal provision, were seen as vital sources of support in assisting participants to learn English, but also more importantly, in helping them to understand the social and cultural mores of the local cultures and communities. This view was most strongly expressed by those whose functional literacy levels were low and all those who lived in the remote areas and the Islands. In the majority of these cases, the language tutor was often the main, or the only contact with the majority culture, taking on an extensive pastoral role. For most participants, there were few opportunities to meet people (discussed further below). Many of them put this down to their inability to communicate effectively in English. In this context, attending classes was perceived as a lifeline and vital in developing confidence: ‘When someone tells you that you’re English is getting better, that gives you confidence. It made me feel good about myself. It was like medicine for my heart.’ (Thai, Female, 10).

The classes focusing on functional literacy tend to be viewed as more than a learning experience. They also tended to have a social purpose, which was valued equally by all those attending these classes. The informal, yet practical focus of EAL classes, was highly valued. It was perceived as critical, especially by those who had low levels of English fluency, before engaging more formally in the language classes provided by some of the colleges. Although the English classes, based on helping individuals to acquire basic functional literacy, tended to attract mainly those whose level of English and qualifications were low (i.e. Groups 3 and 4), this was not exclusively the case. In some areas (e.g. Shetland and Highlands) attending classes with a focus on functional literacy was welcomed as an extra opportunity for practising their English, especially in the case of those attending more formal English language classes. In the absence of viable numbers from the same ethnic/cultural/faith communities, and distances to travel, the social aspect was seen as an important lifeline, and the informal atmosphere of the classes, as providing a more conducive context for learning English.

A combination of individual commitment in some FECs and agencies delivering EAL, and the determination displayed by some minority ethnic participants to improve their situation, was critical in overcoming barriers. Participants went to extraordinary lengths to access as many opportunities for practising their English as possible, from organising informal conversational groups to paying a taxi fare of approximately £30.00 per trip on one of the Islands to attend classes once a week. In the majority of cases, they were not expecting or looking for more structured learning. For a number, this was often the only occasion in the week when they met people who they felt were in the 'same shoes' as them: 'The class is like a family. We communicate, have a social life and make friends.'(Middle-Eastern, Female, FG5) The majority of the participants deeply valued the companionship and friendships which developed, particularly those living in remote rural and islands areas, as for many of them it was the only opportunity to get together.

For participants, the attendance at English classes was as much about being able to interact with others, as learning to speak the language:

'My reading and writing was OK, but conversational English was very poor due to lack of practice. It was difficult to get to know anyone here when I first moved. So, I started to go to the English classes provided at ... community centre. They were free and very good. People from different countries all met together and were

given the opportunity to learn and practice English. It also got me out of the house.’ (Middle-Eastern, Female, 8)

### **Access to and experiences of other post school provision**

There were 18 participants in the study who had previously or were accessing post school educational provision other than EAL in the Highlands and Islands. At least 11 of these were those who responded to the questionnaires. The range of courses pursued were varied – e.g. vocational courses such as hairdressing, beauty therapy, first degrees in subjects such as computing and business studies, and post graduate qualifications. With regard to the vocational courses, participants attended the local colleges which are part of the UHI Millennium Institute, while post graduate qualifications (mainly Masters level courses) were mainly undertaken with the Open University or institutions based outwith the region. The majority of participants cited enhancing work/career opportunities, increasing knowledge, being a ‘useful person’, and self development as the main reasons for accessing post school education opportunities.

With a few exceptions, the main reasons given for not choosing to study with institutions in the Highlands and Islands were lack of institutions with a ‘known academic reputation’, and the lack of relevant undergraduate and postgraduate courses. With regard to the latter, comments such as these were not unusual:

‘I would have preferred to do a qualification in housing or social work, but this was not available up here.’ (Mixed Ethnic Background, Female, 1)

They [*Referring to children - my italics*] would have stayed here if the educational job opportunities were there, but there were not available locally.’ (Pakistani, FG 4)

A simple crude analysis drawn from the UHI Prospectus for 2002-3, and a House of Commons Select Committee report suggested that courses (e.g. law, sciences and medicine) that were likely to be most popular with minority ethnic groups were not available at UHI institutions (de Lima 2005 et al, p.97). Consequently, the opportunities for encouraging minority ethnic entrants appeared to be limited. Research (e.g. Allen 1998b; Chapter 2) suggests that there might be a role for educational providers and advice agencies to provide enhanced support in assisting minority ethnic individuals to make

more informed post school education choices. In the context of this study, this was particularly important given the lack of appropriate information and/or educational qualifications of those in Groups 4 and 5. In general, uptake of careers advice among minority ethnic participants appeared to be low, and for those who had experience of the service, the advice was not always straightforward:

‘If you know what you want to do, people provide you with information. It is more difficult if you do not know what you want to do. I am not sure what I want to do with my life. The information they [*Careers - my italics*] provide is useful. It gives you a better idea of options, but it is difficult if you do not know what you want to do. They [*Careers - my italics*] should try and focus more on what your strengths and weaknesses are and then give you the information.’ (Bangladeshi, Male 11)

Participants expressed an interest in many courses that were unavailable in the region, such as medical courses, law and engineering, post graduate courses in social work, and teacher training, and professional examinations in subjects such as accountancy, interpreting and translation, reinforcing much of the research on this issue (e.g. Allen 1998a). For adults with little or no qualifications and EAL needs (Groups 3 and 4) – i.e. the Chinese and Pakistani participants in particular - there appeared to be quite a high level of demand for basic courses in computing. The Chinese participants were particularly keen to have computing classes with bilingual keyboard facilities. However, individuals from both these ethnic groups felt that the lack of flexibility of the provision at the FECs and understanding of their cultures – e.g. tendency for Muslims to travel overseas for religious reasons during certain times of year – created barriers to accessing provision.

With the exception of Group 1 participants – the ‘well-informed’ group – few of the others were aware that higher education was available in the region through the UHI Millennium Institute. This was not surprising given the lack of interaction between the FECs which were part of the UHI, and minority ethnic households living in the region. There was also a gender dimension: for a number of women, issues such as lack of access to transport, childcare (access, inflexibility and costs) and being ‘out of the study mode’ acted as barriers:

‘I always wanted to be a doctor, but after I got married priorities changed. I have two children and how do I do it [*referring to sitting the exams to practice as a*

*doctor in the UK - my italics*]. Being with children for five years, I have not studied for a long time. In India, I would have childcare, but here you have to pay a lot of money on top of the fees that would have to be paid to sit examinations, etc.’ (Indian female, FG1)

And, for those who finally managed to make contact with institutions the experience, at times, was off putting:

‘I dropped out of school with no qualifications. I would like a refresher, may be try languages. I would like to have a qualification, be a career woman. I did not know what I wanted, but now, I have a baby and I am determined to make something of my life. I speak to different people each time [*referring to making contact with a local college - my italics*]. I want to do something, but keep getting the door slammed in my face.’ (Caribbean Female, FG1)

Overall, experiences of those who had participated in post school educational provision in the local colleges were positive, and the lecturers were described as being supportive, ‘friendly and helpful’, particularly by those who had taken up practical courses such as hairdressing and beauty therapy. There were others who had a more negative view of their experiences. For instance, one participant contrasted his experiences of studying with two different institutions:

‘The post graduate course gives you a wide view. They respect the views of students. It is a participative course. Through on-line discussions you feel you are part of the institution. If you are dissatisfied with the assignment, there are people to talk to. The feedback was good and you are not treated like a kid. You feel you have gained something even if you do not get the qualification: gained knowledge and skills which you can use anywhere. I feel like I understand the systems here, and I have gained confidence and I can now go to my supervisors and ask questions. I have a sense of belief in what I am saying.’ (African, Male, 1)

He contrasted this with his previous experience of attending a local FEC:

‘My experience of doing [an HNC] course at ... was a little disappointing. The workforce was restricted in terms of cultural diversity and in terms of their

experience and knowledge of the subjects they taught, which did not take into account other cultural experiences. They appeared to have little interest or knowledge about what happened outside Britain. Lecturers were speaking down to you and they had false ideas of developing countries. They treat people like children. The college needs a mix of staff. They need to widen their skills and experience and they need to recruit staff with different backgrounds.’

For this and a number of other participants, lack of knowledge and an acknowledgment of other cultures within the curriculum, and the lack of diversity of the workforce were major weaknesses in the local institutions:

‘They [*lecturers - my italics*] seemed to have false ideas of developing countries. For example, the lecturer was discussing issues of banks and made an assumption that there were no banks in the country from where I come from. The lecturers made generalisations without qualifying what they were saying and displayed a sense of ignorance of issues and conveyed false ideas of what was actually happening in the developing world.’ (African, Male, 1)

## **Impact of Living in the Highlands and Islands**

While accessing post school opportunities was important for most participants, it was also seen as one aspect of life in general. Their inability to communicate in English impacted more widely on opportunities for interaction and engagement in community life. In addition, issues of social isolation, and the attitudes of agencies and communities towards other cultures also impacted on their day to day experiences of living in areas such as the Highlands and Islands, which is the focus of this section.

### **‘It’s like being Dumb’: Impact of Not Being Able to Communicate in English on Day to Day Living**

Participants viewed their inability to communicate effectively as impacting on their ability to function on a day to day basis in a variety of ways. Even those who had a high level of language fluency displayed ‘language anxiety’ in a number of different contexts – e.g. returning to study, or work, taking their driving tests (including sitting the theory test) and visiting the doctor.

Apart from being able to participate more effectively in the society, one of the other primary motivations for learning English for the majority of participants was to be able to find work, or to operate more effectively at work. Returning to work was perceived as an essential priority by a number of participants, enabling them to be independent, as well as providing a means of meeting people: ‘I want to find a job in my profession, may be open a business here.’ (Russian, Female, 3) For this participant, and others in a similar situation, their previous qualifications and work experience were not recognised: learning English was essential if they wished to practice their profession. The process of getting back to work was, however, tortuous, time consuming and costly, and often led to an erosion of self-confidence. This was, for example, reflected in the experiences of a participant who came to the Highlands with a PhD in agriculture obtained overseas, and had experience of teaching at a university. Although fluent in at least two other European languages, his English language skills were basic. Funding himself throughout, and juggling part time jobs and family commitments, he attended a local College to learn English. Following this, he completed a Higher National (HN) certificate in Business Management and applied for relevant work. Ten years later he still had not managed to obtain a professional job, and has worked in semi and unskilled employment, while completing Masters level study through distance learning. This experience was not untypical of a number of individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds who usually ended up in jobs for which they were overqualified, as in the case of this individual who described her previous employment as ‘high administrative jobs’ in China:

‘Because my English is not good, the only work I can get is physical work, but my body is bad [*she was not well enough to do physical work – my italics*] and so I had to leave the job and I cannot find work.’ (Chinese, Female, FG 2)

Lack of reasonable English language skills can close off opportunities as reflected in this quote: ‘Normally I prefer not to work with Chinese people, but because my English is not so good, it is easier to get a job with another Chinese business.’ (Chinese, Male, 5) The inability to communicate effectively in English was identified as a barrier to accessing other courses. This affected a number of self-employed adults who were involved in running businesses mainly in the catering and the retail sectors, and had little or no formal qualifications (Group 4 above). For example, a self-employed participant felt that his poor English language skills acted as a barrier to accessing business studies courses which he

felt he might have pursued to add value to his business. In addition, there were specific difficulties experienced by the Chinese communities working in the catering trade concerning access to hygiene, and health and safety courses, necessary for working in the sector. In the case of one participant, as the only English speaker amongst those he employed, this meant that he had to attend all the courses and cascade the information to the others in the business as best as he could. Shetland Islands Council was the only Local Authority in the region that had offered hygiene and health and safety courses in Mandarin for the Chinese businesses. Although this group of participants expressed an interest in improving their English, their long shifts, combined with the limited, and inflexible EAL provision in many areas, were significant barriers (see for example, Song 1995).

This situation was especially acute for the majority of the adult Chinese participants, whose level of English literacy was low, and who had little or no formal qualifications. Language barriers posed problems with regard to accessing relevant information and services – such as access to post school educational choices, and careers advice. In these circumstances, participants, in general, identified family, relatives and friends as the primary sources of information. A lack of attendance at parents' evenings, the difficulties experienced in making sense of their children's progress, and the lack of familiarity with the educational system, meant that a number of parents were not necessarily in the best position to advise their children on future career options. The Chinese adults in particular, expressed concerns that they might be losing out on possible sources of financial support for their children's studies in further and higher education. This was because, in most cases parents depended on their children to fill in the relevant forms which they felt were too complex for their children to understand. The burden, and difficulties of having to be responsible for these matters were also confirmed by the young Chinese participants involved in the study.

Communication difficulties were encountered in other important areas of life. For instance, a number of women participants said that they often had to be accompanied to the doctor by their partners/husbands/in-laws and/or their children. In the event of having to go there by themselves, they resorted to using pictures, drawing on sheets of paper, and gestures to describe their ailment. Confidentiality issues, not understanding the diagnosis, opportunities for misunderstanding and possibilities of misdiagnosis were perceived to be high, and a cause of much anxiety among participants whose communication skills were poor.

### **Social and Cultural Isolation**

For those living in remoter areas of the Highlands and the Islands, feelings of social isolation were more intensely experienced, and attending EAL classes, where these were available, was a life line. This was particularly the case where there were few other opportunities to meet people, because of their geographical isolation and/or their work patterns. For example, women (mainly South East Asian) who were working in fish factories, and participants working in the tourism sector in the more remote rural parts of the region, found that the work patterns and the long hours, militated against interacting with work colleagues. In addition, the work was seen as too exhausting to have time for socialising after work hours.

Many cited their inability to communicate in English as a major barrier to mixing with local people, amplifying their isolation: 'It is like being dumb. You cannot express yourself, your feelings. You cannot communicate.' (Russian, Female, 3) For some of the Russian participants in the study who were married to Scottish men, their inability to communicate effectively within the home and with their spouses was a source of much anxiety and frustration, and was a major contributing factor in reinforcing their isolation: 'He doesn't want to talk sometimes because he is tired and it is difficult for me to talk, and so, I have to write things down.' (Russian, Female, 4)

Lack of fluency in English interacted with different cultural expectations making it difficult for individuals, especially if they had no support to engage in community life. This not only exacerbated their feelings of isolation, but possibly prolonged their achievement of language competency. Opportunities for social interaction were perceived as few and far between, and were made more difficult by the prevalence of different cultural norms in relation to socialising. Participants for example, contrasted the 'formality' of having to make appointments to see neighbours in the local communities in which they lived, rather than just dropping in, as they were used to in their countries of origin:

'It is very difficult to get to know people in the community. In Russia, you can go to people's houses, just knock on the door and have a cup of tea. You don't have to make an appointment in advance.' (Russian, Female 3)

‘People here live in their own little houses. In ... the family group matters and it includes the whole community. A child of one family is looked after by everyone in that community group. Here it is a different. Everyone lives their own lives.’  
(African, Male, 1)

For a number of women in particular, their sense of isolation in the locality where they lived was intense, and much of their contact was often with other students/individuals who were learning English as highlighted above. Being in the same situation was often seen as important in developing friendships. For those who were unable to drive, or did not have access to some means of transport, this increased their dependency on others – mainly family members. In addition, the lack of open public spaces (such as streets, markets, etc.), and/or the racialisation of public spaces also impacted on opportunities for social interaction:

‘I do not have this feeling here [*in his work - my italics*] because I work with intellectual people. We have legal contracts and they know they need us. They [*work colleagues - my italics*] respect us and are well educated and I feel well respected. I do not meet Scottish people out side work. I know if I go to the city they look at me in this way. I sense that people resent somebody with a dark colour. So, I do not go to their parks and pubs. I do not have the time, and at the same I do not like it very much. Social life for foreigners is very difficult. I mean we do not have a ... community here. Without a community, you are a foreigner. Nobody considers you are one of them. You are isolated. Although isolation is a factor people do not always complain about, because they are busy.’ (African, Male, Questionnaire (Q) 4)

However, the individual goes on to articulate the complex relationship that exists between ‘colour’, professional status and the ability to exercise choices:

‘People think that anyone with colour is an asylum seeker. So even us doctors are seen as the same. But when I walk on the street is not like when I drive my car because my car is expensive. It is very strange you know you are treated differently.’

A recurrent issue amongst most of the participants was the lack of recognition, and respect for other cultures, and in general, a sense of covert racism, which reinforced the otherness of people from a different ethnic background:

‘They [*the local community - my italics*] sometimes are a bit racist. The people in the community seem very nice. I meet lots of them as they come into the shop. I spend a lot of time talking to people. However, when he [*son - my italics*] applied for a job at the local College and did not get it, it was disappointing. It is disappointing when you have kids who have studied and have been part of this community all their lives and there is no support behind them.’ (Pakistani, Female, FG 4)

Participants expressed general disappointment in the lack of interest in, and understanding of other cultures, and the stereotyping that prevails: ‘People think that all Russians like vodka, and that Russia is full of Mafia on the street.’ (Russian, Female, 4) They were disappointed that these stereotypes were perpetuated by people who they felt should know better, for example, in some cases, tutors. Feelings of social and cultural isolation were often reinforced by living in a small town/village where they were perceived as ‘outsiders’. Furthermore, stereotyping, lack of interest in other cultures, and lack of diversity (this was mentioned specifically in relation to Inverness, given its city status), were all highlighted as constant themes which contributed to their sense of isolation and difference. Together these constants were perceived as making entry into Scottish/Highland communities extremely difficult, especially if there was no support:

‘If I was alone, it could be so difficult. One, because of the language. Second, because of the culture. It is difficult for a person who cannot communicate anything. I know people who have been living here for 10 years and they are isolated. This depends on the individuals, but Scottish culture can improve by opening up, and helping to understand more foreign cultures.’ (South American, Female, 6)

The lack of cultural diversity affected a variety of people from different cultures and ages. For example, a young women in her 20’s who had come to join her mother/step father from the Indian subcontinent, and was enrolled in a vocational course at a local FEC

remarked on the difficulties she had experienced of adjusting to the Highlands (see also Bains 2002 in Chapter 2):

‘I do not have any friends here of my age. I study, go home and watch television. I do not have friends of my own age here and I don’t like it here. I would like to be in London, as I have friends there and it is easier to meet people from different cultures.’ (Sri Lankan, Female, 9)

However, this feeling was not just confined to newcomers, but also to individuals who had lived in Scotland, and the Highlands for most if not all of their lives. The Chinese and Pakistani participants raised the issue of having Mandarin and Urdu language provision being met with obstacles, even when they were prepared to organise these classes themselves:

It is important if you are part of the community that they should have some language provision. The Pakistani community had made some effort to set up language provision. We had contacted the Council about providing Urdu classes with little positive response. We then made some attempts at renting the YMCA hall to run an Urdu class, but this was met with suspicion. They [*referring to the Local Authority - my italics*] think we are plotting something.’ (Pakistani, Female, FG4)

Many participants had internalised the prevailing dominant view that they should not expect their needs to be met given their small numbers: ‘Well, we are not a large population. We are a very small minority, one in 1000 or something like that.’ (Bangladeshi, Male, 11). Their lack of access to appropriate information and services, and a lack of recognition of their cultures were perceived as a ‘fact of life’. There did not appear to be a sense that minority ethnic individuals should expect a certain level of service as their ‘right’. Rather, there almost seemed to be a reliance on the good will and/or benevolence of service providers and rural communities to be accommodating. There was a strong inclination not to make a fuss or create trouble by being too demanding, but to accept things as they are. However, this was beginning to change as discussed below.

## **Moving beyond Stereotypes: Strategies to Overcome Social and Cultural Isolation**

Although there tended to be an overwhelming feeling of isolation, not everyone's experience of living in the Highlands and Islands was negative. There have been situations in remote rural areas, where the local communities have rallied around individuals who have been threatened with deportation; in one case, successfully stopping the deportation of one of the participants in the project (Hughes 2007). This participant contrasted her experience of feeling safe, and being able to travel on public transport on her own in the community she lived in, with that of her country of origin where she would not have countenanced travelling on her own. In many respects, some of the positive aspects of living in the region, articulated by minority ethnic individuals are not that different from those of people who choose to move from urban areas to rural areas, such as the environment, the safety, being a good place to bring up children and the friendliness of the people (see Chapters 2 and 5):

‘I came here in 1998 and I love it ... It is very peaceful, and a good place to bring up children to let them grow up.’ (Chinese, Female , FG5)

‘I don't like London. The people are not friendly. People are more friendly here. Scottish people, they are easy going and friendly, but I don't have a lot time to meet people, because of my work.’ (Chinese, Male, 5)

However, the situation in the Highlands in particular, was beginning to change, as minority ethnic participants involved in this study were beginning to establish associations (see also discussion in Chapter 6). Although most of the activities were Inverness based, the events attracted people from across the Highlands. A Highland Indian Association was established in Inverness by health professionals employed in the local hospital, and a small number of individuals from the Chinese community established a Highland and Islands Chinese Association with approximately 150 members.

Activities included: celebrations of their respective religious/other festivals; social gatherings where adults, children and young people perform traditional dances and practice other art forms; and outings/picnics in the summer for families and older people. Activities centred around the celebration of religious and other festivals in Inverness

attracted a wide range of individuals from across the Highlands, including members from the ‘majority’ communities. In addition, Muslim women had established a group in Inverness with assistance from some public and voluntary agencies, to promote activities for children and young people from Muslim backgrounds. These included summer schools, classes on the Quran and exchange visits to cities. This initiative had emerged from ongoing anxieties about the struggle to sustain aspects of their cultural identity amongst their children, and lack of opportunities for the women to meet, in contrast to the men who met for weekly prayers.

This increase in activity may partly be due to the increase in numbers, particularly Inverness, which has made it more feasible to come together in groups. But there were also individuals who were willing to take the lead, and invest time in making things happen. In general, much of this activity was driven by a strong desire to create opportunities for sustaining aspects of their culture for their children and young people: The motivation, to address the social and cultural isolation of households from the same ethnic backgrounds, and to build the capacity of their members to articulate their views more publicly, were also important factors. The latter was especially noticeable in relation to the Chinese participants, who were increasingly asserting their right to have access to services, based on their status as tax payers. They complained about refugees/asylum seekers and new migrants being allowed to access state benefits, while they, as tax paying citizens did not believe they were receiving the same level of support and advice to access the services that they were entitled to.

Although much of this increase in activity was associated with Inverness in particular, generally, participants living across the Highlands were prepared to make long journeys to travel to these events. For those living in remote rural areas outwith towns, and the Islands in particular, EAL classes and strategies at the household level continued to be important vehicles for overcoming social and cultural isolation.

## Conclusion

The overall aims of this chapter, in the context of this thesis, were two fold: to explore the complex and contingent interaction between ethnicity / 'race', place, socio-economic background, gender and other relevant social markers; and to highlight adaptive strategies developed by minority ethnic participants to address their situations. These aims were explored using the context of post school education in the Highlands and Islands. Given that the minority ethnic population had increased since the 1991 Census, and there was an increasing diversity of ethnicities, the study was able to draw on a larger sample. Thus, it was possible to provide a more in-depth account of the differences between rural minority ethnic households, and reflect the changing context since Studies 1, 2 and 3 were undertaken.

The impact of adjusting and living in an environment that did not acknowledge the presence of diverse ethnicities impacted on all minority ethnic participants. For example, cultural stereotyping cut across ethnicities, as 'non-visible' minorities were just as likely to be negatively stereotyped, as someone who was from a 'visible' minority ethnic background, irrespective of class or status. Such stereotyping and the perceived 'racialisation' of public spaces impacted on their use of such spaces, irrespective of social status. However, some participants, because of their socio-economic and professional status, were in better position to make strategic decisions which 'protected' them from such negative experiences. In addition as highlighted in this chapter, the support of rural communities towards a deportation case suggests that the minority ethnic – local community interactions are complex.

Overall, despite similarities in experiences, Chapter 7 demonstrated the importance of addressing the issue of differences. Participants' cross cutting identities/multipositionalities, based on factors such as socio-economic status linked to previous educational levels, gender, ethnicity, personal and family circumstances and geographical location, resulted in different patterns of access to services, and post school provision in particular, and experiences of life in the Highlands and Islands in general. These differences manifested themselves in varying ways.

For example, ethnicity / 'race' appeared alongside other factors- e.g. previous educational experience and social class - in accessing post school/EAL opportunities. Participants in

Group 1 (*The well informed group*) reported no difficulties in accessing post school opportunities, and were most likely to make post school decisions based on subject availability, quality and reputation of institutions. In contrast, those most negatively affected with regard to access to post school education and/or EAL provision were participants in Groups 2 to 5. Participants in these categories were for varying reasons (e.g. lack of knowledge of the Scottish system, inability to communicate in English, and lack of qualifications), less likely to have the social and cultural capital required to overcome some of the barriers without support at a personal level, or from post school institutions which has been shown in this chapter to have been poor (see also Ball et al 1998; Allen 1998a&b; Chapter 2)

Factors such as geographical location and gender emerged as important cross cutting issues amongst participants. Access to post school, and EAL provision in particular, was more difficult for those out-with Inverness. Women's ability to access post school and/or EAL provision was affected by lack of child care and its affordability, and a lack of economic independence. While these issues affect all rural women to some extent, the lack of cultural sensitivity, different cultural norms of interaction, prevalence of cultural stereotypes and the lack of ability to communicate in English created additional barriers for some participants. It also made them more vulnerable to social and cultural isolation. However, not all women participants were affected in the same way. Issues of support, particularly from family members and EAL practitioners, for women in groups 2-5 emerged as vital, and cut across ethnicity. For example, some South American and Thai women participants cited the importance of their spouses in enabling them to access EAL and other provision. By contrast, the Russian participants felt unsupported by their spouses in their efforts to learn English when they tried to practice at home, and examples were cited of predominantly Muslim women not being allowed to attend classes.

Despite the constraints, participants did not always passively accept their situation, and adopted a variety of strategies to address their circumstances. For example, the participants who experienced a lack of support at home for learning English took every opportunity to attend EAL classes, and in some cases, supplemented their classes with private tuition. Where EAL provision was available in remote areas, participants were prepared to go to great lengths, including incurring high taxi fares to attend classes each week.

Study 4 (Chapter 7) revealed a growing number of minority ethnic associations being established in the Highlands to address the lack of opportunities for socialising and maintaining their cultures. The growth in organised activities demonstrated a strong interest on the part of minority ethnic households to address their social and cultural isolation. This growth was perhaps a reflection of the increase in numbers in areas such as Inverness, the willingness and the confidence of individuals prepared to take the lead, and a changing policy context as Inverness, gained city status. As highlighted in this chapter, against a complex interaction of ethnic, personal, social, institutional and geographical factors, and despite the constraints, individuals were not always passive recipients of services, but displayed high levels of self determination and motivation in response to their circumstances.

The next and final chapter draws the thesis to a conclusion focusing on the main themes that have been discussed in this thesis.

## **Chapter 8 Conclusion: Making Sense of ‘Ethnicity, ‘Race’ and Rurality**

### **Introduction**

This thesis has focused on examining the ways in which conceptualisations of rural have been mobilised to shape ideas and practices about who does and who does not belong in rural Scotland. In particular, it has sought to explore the ways in which rural minority ethnic households, parents/carers and young people have felt they have been ‘invisible’ in relation to policy and service delivery issues. The four studies considered in this thesis have highlighted the complex, changing and contingent nature of the interaction between ethnicity / ‘race’ and place, by focusing on the experiences of rural minority ethnic households in Scotland and the Highlands and Islands in particular.

Within this context, this concluding chapter addresses the following themes which the thesis has considered and which have emerged from the research. These are: (i) the overall theoretical and conceptual contributions of the thesis; (ii) the importance of understanding ethnicity / ‘race’ as contingent and flexible; (iii) the importance of moving away from binary perceptions – i.e. that minority ethnic groups are ‘passive victims’ and the host communities are ‘perpetrators’ of racism – by recognising the diversity of experiences and the strategies adopted by rural minority ethnic households; and (iv) the added value of considering four studies which were undertaken over a period of six years to the thesis. The chapter then goes on to consider some of the limitations of the research and concludes by identifying some ideas for future research.

### **Contribution of the Thesis to Theoretical and Conceptual Developments**

This thesis makes an important contribution to ongoing theoretical and conceptual developments in relation to four social science areas: rural literature on ‘others’ and urban literature on ‘ethnicity /’race’; literature on rural social exclusion/inclusion; on going debates regarding the significance of the urban/rural divide; and the potential role of ‘public spaces’ in the social life of communities and individuals.

## **Ethnicity, 'Race' and Place – Making the Presence of Rural Minority Ethnic Households Visible**

In this thesis, I have demonstrated how four separately commissioned research projects when considered together can contribute to developing a more nuanced understanding of ethnicity / 'race'. I have done this by addressing the dearth of research which has rendered the experiences and lives of rural minority ethnic households invisible in both rural literature on 'others' and urban literature on ethnicity / 'race'. The thesis has moved beyond the traditional focus on urban areas and addressed a relatively neglected aspect of academic research – i.e. making sense of the ways in which minority ethnic households negotiate their lives and their identities in rural Scotland, and the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Furthermore, by focusing on rural minority ethnic experiences, it has sought to foreground their voices by making their presence and experiences 'visible', adding to the growing body of academic discussion on rural 'others' (e.g. Cloke and Little 1997; Cloke 2004; Philo 1992; Shucksmith et al 1996).

The tendency in academic research with regard to ethnicity / 'race' has been to assume a certain 'place blindness'; that is the experiences of urban minority ethnic groups have been accepted as the norm and generalised to all minority ethnic groups (see Chapters 2 and 5). Central to my argument in this thesis is that to generalise from these studies to all minority ethnic groups, by assuming that spatial location in terms of rural/urban is irrelevant, fails to consider the specific and contingent nature of people's experiences as they negotiate their daily lives and identities. Interestingly, it has often been the same academics (e.g. Brah 1996; Donald and Rattansi 1995), whilst strongly advocating for ethnicity / 'race' to be considered as contingent, that have themselves rarely made explicit their own assumptions about spatial location.

In addressing this gap, my thesis has demonstrated that the experiences of rural minority ethnic participants across all four studies were distinctive in some respects from rural residents in general, and from their urban counterparts. Their small numbers, diversity and dispersion, and the limited availability of open public spaces (e.g. streets, markets, etc.) shaped their experiences of rurality and issues of social and cultural isolation were consistently identified by research participants, particularly in the context of remote rural areas, such as the Highlands and Islands. These experiences were reinforced by the prevailing assumption that 'ethnicity / 'race' were irrelevant in rural areas. This in turn

has led to a lack of investment in policies and institutional infrastructures for addressing ethnic diversity and issues of discrimination, and to strong assimilatory pressures impacting on rural minority ethnic households disproportionately.

By focusing on ethnicity, this thesis adds to our knowledge of the complex process of adaptation, and acceptance of 'others' in rural communities, as reflected in discussions on 'incomers' and on rural minority ethnic households in the English and Welsh contexts (Chapter 2; see also Day and Murdoch 1993; Day 1998; Garland and Chakraboti 2004a). My research revealed that acceptance of rural minority ethnic households was conditional; that is, the onus was on them to adapt and conform to the predominantly mono-cultural local communities in which they lived, thus necessitating no changes in the so called mainstream society. For instance, in Chapters 5 and 6, examples were cited of individuals converting to Christianity and celebrating Christian as well as their own festivals with no evidence of reciprocity on the part of the local communities in which they lived. Rural minority ethnic participants experienced strong pressures to assimilate in the absence of others from a similar background. Understanding the specificities of the rural context, which this thesis contributes to, is highly relevant to on going discussions in general on social cohesion in rural communities (e.g. Rogaly et al 2007) and is also an area which has been relatively under researched.

Rural minority ethnic participants perceived as erroneous the persistent view coming from agencies: that understanding other cultures or addressing issues of ethnicity is only relevant if the groups are present in large numbers. Their invisibility in relation to access to services and lack of sensitivity to their cultures are two cross cutting themes which emerge across all four studies, despite the changing policy and legislative context over the six years during which these studies were undertaken. In this context, my thesis suggests that the lack of acknowledgment of ethnicity has been problematic for at least three reasons, which have not been previously explored in the Scottish rural context. Firstly, the conflation of ethnicity with 'visible' minorities, and the assumption that 'white' people do not have an ethnicity, has resulted in the othering of minority ethnic participants and questioning their claims to belong. It has also resulted in a lack of examination of the power relationships between and within groups, as demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6 (see also Dyer 1997). Secondly, it ignores the evidence presented in this thesis which showed that the interaction of people from minority ethnic households in rural areas often occurred in a 'racialised' context discussed in Chapter 2. This was reflected across all studies; for

example in relation to accessing services in general (Chapter 5), experiences of young people and bringing up children in rural areas (Chapter 6) and, adults in the post school education context (Scourfield et al 2002; 2005). And thirdly, it also raises questions more generally about the preparedness of rural out-migrants, particularly young people who are predominant in this group, in interacting and working with diverse communities that characterise urban areas, a concern also echoed by others (for example, see Osler 1999; Chapters 2).

My thesis provides some insights into the often contradictory and complex positions that rural minority ethnic households adopted: for some, being the only individual or household in a rural area made them feel highly 'visible' and more vulnerable to discrimination and racism. Whilst others, however, welcomed the anonymity that being in a rural area afforded them, reflecting the importance of taking into account the complex, and often conflicting views and experiences of how 'rural' is experienced.

To sum up, the four studies in this thesis contribute to a more rounded understanding of ethnicity / 'race' generally, and in Scotland in particular, by highlighting the importance of making explicit 'place' (in relation to urban/rural) in order to arrive at a better understanding of minority ethnic people's experiences of life in general. It seeks to address the problems of 'ecological fallacy' – that is the assumption that urban minority ethnic experiences can be generalised to all minority ethnic groups irrespective of geographical location- evident in the literature on ethnicity / 'race'( discussed in Chapter 2). Consequently, this thesis not only addresses a gap in research on ethnicity and rurality, but also contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the interaction of ethnicity, 'race' and place relevant to understanding ethnicity/ 'race' in general, making a contribution to the largely urban focus within which these concepts have been researched and articulated.

### **Social exclusion/inclusion in rural areas**

Some of the insights that have emerged from this thesis also make an important contribution to ongoing theoretical and conceptual developments with regard to the literature on rural social exclusion/inclusion (e.g. Shucksmith 2000; Shucksmith 2004; Shucksmith and Phillip 2000), as well as the focus more recently on specific groups such as 'older people' in rural areas (Keating 2008). The general tendency in the rural social exclusion/inclusion literature has been mainly to focus on labour market issues, privileging structural approaches with little consideration of agency. There has also been

a tendency to treat those considered to be socially excluded as ethnically homogenous and or to make brief passing references to minority ethnic groups as potentially one of the groups that may be experiencing exclusion without exploring the nature of their experiences (de Lima 2003).

With the exception of some recent literature (e.g. Keating 2008) which has begun to explore the diversity amongst older people in rural areas, in general much of the discussion in the rural social exclusion/inclusion literature has rarely explored the multi-dimensional aspects of identities amongst those who are considered 'socially excluded' (e.g. young people from minority ethnic backgrounds). The thesis foci on issues of multiple identities in relation to notions of belonging and identity, accessing services and engagement in community life, provides important theoretical insights which could be usefully applied in the rural social exclusion/inclusion literature in order to facilitate the development of a more nuanced understanding of social exclusion/inclusion. In addition, the focus on the adaptive strategies adopted by rural minority ethnic households in this thesis also provide a useful bridging concept between agency and structure which the literature on social exclusion/inclusion could usefully drawn from to overcome the somewhat deterministic focus evident in some of the literature.

### **Urban/rural divide**

Finally, the thesis also highlights the complexities that exist with regard to making sense of the urban/rural divide, adding to the ongoing debates in the literature on notions of 'rural as a distinct type of rurality and rural as a social representation or construct'. (e.g. Keating 2008, p3 amongst others discussed in Chapter 2). While the research for this thesis revealed that those in remote rural areas of the Highlands and Islands did experience more social and cultural isolation due to distance from the major population centres compared to those who lived within reach of large cities such as Dundee and Glasgow, overall the picture was not clear cut (see for example, Chapter 5). Thus confirming the importance of understanding concepts such as urban and rural in the context of people's lives and experiences. For example, most research participants did not consider Inverness as a city (see Chapter 7). This was based on their expectations of an infrastructure associated with city life – for example, institutions and services which were culturally sensitive, choice of public spaces to meet and socialise, and attitudes which reflect the city's capacity to cope with a diverse population. Their less than positive experiences in trying to access culturally sensitive services and the lack of opportunities for engaging in

cultural and social activities reinforced their ideas that Inverness was not really a city despite its city status.

However, as the research also showed, some individuals in remote rural areas found ways of overcoming social isolation by engaging in activities centred on the local church, thus suggesting that the complex and contingent interactions between people and places cannot be easily inferred from merely focusing on spatial definitions. Consequently, the research on these issues in this thesis underlines the fundamental importance of understanding experience of 'place' as a complex interweaving of objective definitions with subjective perceptions and experiences, as well as providing opportunities for people to connect with each other (for example, see Chapter 7), hence contributing to the more recent literature which has started to focus on how rurality (both socially and in terms of the physical environment) is experienced by specific groups (Keating 2008).

#### **'Public spaces' in rural areas**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of 'public spaces' (e.g. streets, markets, retail centres and so on) while contested, has received increasing attention in urban literature to provide an insight into the conditions for facilitating interaction between diverse populations and enhancing the social life of communities (Holland et al 2007; Warpole and Knox 2007). In the context of this thesis a continuing theme that emerged was the constraints minority ethnic people experienced in relation to access to public places, such as streets and community centres. For example, some participants found the main street a difficult space to be in, due to the prevalence of what was seen as a 'drink culture' in Inverness as well as in the small towns and rural areas they inhabited (Chapters 5 and 6). This constraint in rural areas can be seen to be particularly significant due to the lack of choice that prevails, associated with the fact that in most small towns and villages in the Highlands and Islands, as well as in Inverness, social activities take place in a tightly defined physical space which often is also the main, and in some cases the only, street.

While it is important to recognise that public spaces can exclude individuals and groups on a variety of grounds – e.g. gender, ethnicity, and age and so on- it is also important to explore the ways in which public spaces can be used to promote inclusiveness and sense of belonging to place (Mean and Tims, 2005). Much of the research on the issue of public spaces so far has concentrated on urban areas, with a few exceptions. For example, Eales et al (2008, p.111) provide some initial explorations of 'age-friendly rural communities'

and highlight the importance of taking into account both the ‘human-built environment’ (e.g. roads, post offices, retail stores, services, etc) and ‘social environment’ (e.g. other people, community and civic organisations, etc), There is also some limited research which has identified providing social spaces for young people in rural areas as important (Accent Scotland and Mauthner 2006). However, overall there is little understanding of the factors that shape access and use of public spaces in rural areas by minority ethnic groups. While this thesis has started by providing some preliminary insights into the issue, it has not been in a position to explore the issue in great depth.

### **Ethnicity / ‘Race’ as Contingent and Flexible/Multiple Identities**

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate the limitations of conceptualisations of ethnicity which essentialise and homogenise differences within and between groups and conflate it with ‘visible’ minorities. It has also illustrated the importance of avoiding the ‘imperialism’ of ethnic identity (discussed in Chapter 2; also see Sen 2000, p.322). By focusing on the interactions between ethnicity, age, socio-economic factors and gender, the thesis provides a more nuanced understanding of ethnicity in rural areas, in contrast to much of the literature on the subject as highlighted by Robinson and Gardner (2004; 2006).

Drawing on Arber (2000), this thesis revealed the impact of the multipositionality of rural minority ethnic participants, in relation to social markers such as socio-economic position, age and gender, on their experiences of specific services (e.g. education), as well as life in general. It also highlighted the ways in which these factors interacted with personal circumstances (e.g. family support) and individual commitment in institutions to shape rural minority ethnic participants’ lived experiences. Thus, this thesis challenges the prevailing tendency in rural areas to treat minority ethnic groups as homogenous, by providing important insights into the complexities that require to be considered in addressing the rights of rural minority ethnic households in policy and service delivery, and in understanding their lives in rural areas. It also adds a new dimension to the vast body of urban literature (e.g. Brah et al 1999; Yuval-Davis 1997) that already exists on the multipositionality/multiple or cross cutting identities of minority ethnic groups.

Another theme that emerges from my thesis is the way in which the experiences of minority ethnic participants in the research were contingent on location. Participants, who

lived in remote rural areas, such as the Highlands and Islands, expressed greater social and cultural isolation in Chapters 5 (Study 1) and 6 (Study 4). While some of these experiences were associated with distance from facilities, such as places to meet for faith activities, it was also a reflection of the lack of priority given to ethnicity in contrast to areas such as North Ayrshire where there had been some investment in initiatives by the Local Authority. As discussed in Chapter 5, the investment in initiatives, such as the appointment of a Development Worker to work with the Chinese community led to an increase in the use of services by this group. This example illustrates the way in which my thesis challenges the view taken by rural agencies in the Highlands and Islands, and rural areas more generally: small numbers should not prevent the investment in culturally appropriate services (see literature reviewed in Chapter 2; and also Chakraboti and Garland 2006a; Dhalech 1999a). My thesis highlights the importance of avoiding the conceptualisation of rurality as homogeneous, by highlighting the varying experiences of minority ethnic participants in areas such as Inverness in the Highlands, and the remote communities, especially the Islands, particularly in Chapters 5 and 7.

### **Minority Ethnic Strategies in Overcoming Challenges of Living in Rural Areas**

My thesis illustrates that the perception of rural communities in simple binary terms: minority ethnic households as ‘passive victims’ and the host communities as ‘perpetrators’ of racism is too simplistic, reflecting the work of others in areas, such as Wales (Robinson and Gardner 2004; 2006). My research found examples where rural residents had rallied around minority ethnic households in deportation cases (see Chapter 7, for example). Exceptional though these were, they, nevertheless, highlight the importance of taking into account the particular local contexts which are changing, and the relationships developed between the minority ethnic individuals/families and the wider rural communities in which they live.

The thesis revealed examples where minority ethnic participants used a variety of strategies to address their isolation, particularly in the Highlands and Islands. For example, as discussed in Chapter 5 and above, some individuals adapted to the circumstances they found themselves in by making calculated decisions to forgo aspects of their own culture and converting to Christianity. Whilst others, especially those with children, adapted by practising their own cultural/faith practices as well as that of the local

communities (discussed in Chapter 6). The thesis highlighted examples of a wide range of organised activities that minority ethnic young people and children were engaged with in their local communities, challenging the tendency to stereotype minority ethnic groups as not willing to 'integrate'. In addition, individuals who were unable to communicate in English used all the opportunities available to them to improve their language and communication skills (Chapter 7). In areas such as the Highlands and Islands, households invested much time and resources in accessing cultural/faith relevant activities and foods in cities out-with rural areas. Although, many of the activities that rural minority ethnic households were engaged in to sustain aspects of their cultures and faith were mainly at the household level or inter-household level, the thesis suggested that the situation was changing. For example, there was a growth in self-organised ethnic and faith based groups in the last four years, especially in areas, such as the Highlands, and Inverness in particular, perhaps reflecting a changing demographic and policy context. These and all the other activities at an individual and household level, challenge the tendency to portray rural minority ethnic households as mainly victims.

### **Charting Rural Ethnicity / 'Race' Issues over Time**

My thesis has charted the nature and experiences of the rural minority ethnic population in some of Scotland's most remote rural areas, by drawing on four studies that were undertaken over a period of six years. Considering these four studies together in this thesis makes an important contribution to enhancing our understanding of the way in which the political and policy context (discussed in Chapter 1) has evolved and shaped the way in which rural ethnicity issues have come to be articulated and researched over a period of time in Scotland. It has been important in providing a more dynamic account of the changing population and their experiences by identifying some of the changes and more enduring continuities.

The thesis has shown that in contrast to the relative inactivity on race equality issues at a strategic level in Pre-Devolutionary Scotland, there were some noticeable changes over the period covered by the studies (discussed in Chapter 1; see also Williams and de Lima 2007). From a rural perspective, this was reflected in the inclusion of a rural dimension in the growing number of initiatives and research funded on ethnicity and 'race' generally in Scotland (Netto et al 2001; Scottish Executive nd). In addition, the changing legislative and policy context resulted in the requirement for more information on the minority ethnic

population at the regional/local level. This provided an important impetus for funding the four studies discussed in this thesis; from addressing the invisibility of rural minority ethnic households and the lack of information of their lived experiences in Study 1 (Chapters 4 and 5), to the commissioning of Studies 2 and 3 (Chapter 6) and Study 4 (Chapters 4 and 7), in response to policy concerns such as the 5-14 Curriculum Framework, social inclusion and widening access (see Chapter 1).

Against this background, chapters 6 and 7 reflected a greater focus on the experiences of specific groups – such as children from the perspective of parents/carers, young people and adults in relation to post school education. Despite policy changes over a period of six years, the thesis also revealed a continuing dependence on the commitment of individuals within institutions to address issues of ethnicity / ‘race’ across all studies. From the perspective of minority ethnic participants, particularly in the Highlands and Islands, this resulted in weak institutional infrastructures for addressing ethnic diversity, and issues of discrimination that emerged in the context of all four studies.

And finally in this context, the thesis has also provided some insight into the importance of taking into account the changing demographic context to make sense of ethnicity / ‘race’. In contrast to Studies 1, 2 and 3 (Chapters 5 and 6) which focused on the ‘visible’ rural minority ethnic population, Study 4 was able to adopt a more inclusive definition of ‘minority ethnic’ to include ‘visible’ and ‘non-visible’ minorities. Thus reflecting the changing demographic context in areas such as the Highlands and Islands from 2002 onwards and also the socially constructed nature of concepts such as ethnicity / ‘race’.

## **Researching Rural Minority Ethnic Lives**

### **Limitations of research**

The research discussed in this thesis was constrained to some extent by the fact that the four studies discussed were commissioned and undertaken for different agencies to meet their changing and different agendas. The short time scales and limited budgets characteristic of such commissioned research, as well as the expectations of the funders shaped the foci of the studies, choice of methodologies (i.e. semi-structured interviews and focus), the time that I was in a position to spend on interviewing and or conducting focus groups, made it difficult to return to participants to clarify issues and points and to take conversations further and to perhaps involve them in helping to validate the findings.

Consequently, these factors did have some constraining effect on the depth and direction the interviews could take, as well as possibly impacting on the quality of some of the interviews and the findings (discussed in Chapter 3).

Given the emphasis in the research on understanding participants' experiences and perspectives, the use of alternative methods such as ethnographic methods ( combining interviews/conversations and observations) and or diaries may have been more appropriate, on the grounds that these methods are considered to be 'holistic' and provide opportunities for developing in-depth insights into everyday life and experiences than is possible from one off interviews or focus groups (Creswell 2003, p.198-205; O'Reilly 2004). However, it would not have been realistic to conduct an ethnographic study over six years and may have resulted in providing a rather static account of rural minority ethnic issues and experiences. Drawing on different studies undertaken over a period of time has enabled, as discussed above, a more dynamic account of rural minority ethnic experiences to emerge from a variety of perspectives. While it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the research discussed in this thesis, all research involves making finely balanced judgements about what is feasible and practical in particular contexts and situations (e.g. Maxwell 1996; Patton 2002; Temple and Moran 2006a&b), and researching rural minority ethnic experiences is considered particularly challenging for reasons already discussed in previous chapters (e.g. Reeve and Robinson 2004a).

### **Challenges in undertaking research**

Chapter 3 in this thesis has highlighted the challenging nature of undertaking research on rural minority ethnic households. Despite the limitations, the thesis provides useful insights for those interested in undertaking research not only on minority ethnic issues but also in relation to other groups that were may be small in numbers in rural areas. The issue of identifying and accessing minority ethnic participants in rural areas is a challenge faced by most researchers working in this field, underlining the importance of moving beyond 'methodological orthodoxies' and of being flexible in the employment of strategies that are used in sampling and accessing households, in order to develop a demographic profile which takes into account the changing population and their diversities in local areas ( e.g. Chapter 3; see also Robinson et al 2004). Given the demography of the rural minority ethnic population, qualitative research methods were best suited to providing insights into how they experienced rurality. In this context, researching rural minority ethnic households is time consuming and resource intensive, and achieving

appropriate samples can be challenging, and the thesis adds to the on-going discussions in the social sciences about accessing so called 'hard to reach' groups.

In addition, the thesis (Chapter 3) also highlighted the importance of addressing ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity sensitively, and building trust with participants as a crucial part of the qualitative research process and in attempting to be balanced and fair by taking into account and presenting multiple perspectives, interests and realities (Lincoln and Guba 1986)

### **Research Agenda: Some Ideas for The Future**

The research in this thesis has touched on some areas that merit further research. For example, by focusing on the lived experiences of rural minority ethnic households, my research has not been in a position to comment on the perspectives of rural agencies, service providers, and those who belong to the so called majority 'white' communities, who are also characterised by complex cross cutting identities and differences. Researching these perspectives is important for at least two reasons. Firstly, for developing a more holistic picture, than has been possible in this thesis, with regard to the diverse views that may prevail on ethnicity / 'race' in rural contexts. Secondly, it is also important for deconstructing the 'black/white' binaries that have characterised ethnicity discourses in the UK, by developing a focus on issues of power disparities across and within ethnic groups, in order to take into account the complex cross cutting identities that may be drawn upon in specific contexts.

The insights developed on adaptive strategies and multipositionality in the context of ethnicity / 'race' in rural areas may also be usefully explored in the context of research on social exclusion/inclusion in rural areas, in order to arrive at a more balanced understanding of 'structure'/'agency' and multiple identities in shaping experiences of exclusion and inclusion.

The thesis has only briefly touched on the potential significance of 'public spaces' in rural areas in relation to minority ethnic households. While recognising that the concept is highly contested and the importance of providing a balanced understanding of the significance of public spaces, much of the research has focused on urban areas. There is scope to explore in more depth some of the recent research and thinking on this issue not

only from the perspectives of rural minority ethnic households, but rural residents in general, especially in the light of the more recent closures of post offices and schools and centralisation of some services in rural areas (Keating 2008). These trends raise important questions about how the disappearance of these public spaces in rural areas might affect opportunities for social/community activities and interactions for all rural residents, taking into account their diverse identities, perspectives, social situations and geographical location.

The thesis has highlighted that minority ethnic households have consistently perceived their access to services in rural areas as being shaped by what might be described as a 'numbers' approach to addressing their needs. However, as highlighted in Chapters 4 and 7 of this thesis, the demography of the Highlands and Islands has been changing. One of the recent factors that has helped to raise the profile of ethnicity in rural areas is a concern about the declining and ageing Scottish population, which has led to wide ranging discourses on the best ways to encourage migration into Scotland, and rural areas in particular (de Lima et al 2007). In addition, the changing policy context with the establishment of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, and its focus on all aspects of equalities (e.g. age, gender, disability, faith/religion, 'race' and sexual orientation) and human rights potentially creates opportunities for addressing issues of difference and diversity in a more meaningful way that takes into account cross cutting multiple identities, avoids discourses that perpetuate a simplistic minority ethnic/'white' divide and helps to establish common ground to address inequalities and discrimination. Research in the future might usefully explore the potential impact of this changing policy context and discourses, and the greater emphasis on human rights on access to services for rural minority ethnic households as well as other minorities in rural areas. My thesis provides an important starting point by arguing for the decoupling of ethnicity from 'visible' minorities, and highlighting the importance of cross cutting identities and place, in order to provide the space for all individuals in rural areas to explore their ethnicity alongside other cross cutting social identities.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Example: Information Sheet – Study 3

Appendix 2a: Study 2: Semi Structured Interviews Topic Sheet

Appendix 2b: Study 3: Semi Structured Interviews Topic Sheet

Appendix 3: Study 4: 2001 Census Data – Highlands and Islands

# Appendix 1

## Example: Information Sheet – Study 3

### **The experiences of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds living in the Highlands**

We need your help with a study on the experiences of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds living in the Highlands.

The aims of the study are to:

- Find out about their experiences and views on life in the Highlands
- Highlight suggestions for improving life for young people

The study involves interviewing up to 20 young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. The discussion will last about an hour and concentrate on:

- Place of residence
- School
- Leisure time and activities
- Experiences of racism
- Biographical information and the family
- Life style

Any personal information provided, including names, will not be linked with the information in the report and will remain confidential. An individual will be free to stop and leave at any time during the interview, if they feel they do not wish to continue.

Those between aged 12-16 years of age must have a parental consent form completed.

The study has been funded as part of the Social Inclusion Partnership work by the Highland Wellbeing Alliance, which includes the public agencies in the Highlands, such as The Highland Council, NHS Highland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Northern Constabulary.

So far the Social Inclusion Partnership has involved many young people in a wide range of circumstances in the Highlands and Islands. The views of young people are very important in helping to make improvements for them in the Highlands.

#### **Contact for Information:**

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## **Appendix 2a**

### **Study 2: Semi Structured Interviews Topic Sheet**

**1. Child's experiences at primary school**

Positive aspects: examples

Negative aspects: examples

Was the school welcoming? In what ways?

**2. School's attitudes towards other cultures/'race'**

Faith/cultural issues taken into account/discussed? – examples

Specific examples where school were sensitive/not sensitive to the needs of their child/children

Anti-racist education?

Attitudes towards bilingualism; EAL/bilingual support

**3. Information**

Information 5-14 Curriculum Guidelines provided/explained? Other Language formats?

Information of equal opportunities/race equality policies provided? Other Language formats?

**4. Suggestions for improvement**

**5. Other**

## Appendix 2b

### Study 3: Semi Structured Interviews Topic Sheet

**1 Where you live:**

Description of place: town, village, etc.  
Contact and relationship with people where you live  
Things to do where you live  
Safety issues: day and night

**2 About School (if not at school go to 2a)**

School attended? Year?  
What do you enjoy most about school?  
What do you like least? Why?  
How would describe your experience at school?  
School's attitudes towards other cultures/faiths/languages  
Experience of bullying – If yes what action was taken by the school  
What do you plan to do after you leave school? Where will that be?  
If the intention is to leave the area. What are your reasons?

**2a. If not at school**

At what age did you leave school and why?  
What are you doing now?  
How would you describe your experience at school?  
School's attitudes towards other cultures/faiths/languages  
Experience of bullying – If yes what action was taken by the school  
What has made you stay in the Highlands?  
Are you planning to move elsewhere? When? Why?

**3. How do you spend your time?**

What do you do in your free time?  
What types of facilities – e.g. leisure, sports, clubs, and etc - are available where you live?  
How easy are these facilities to access? How often do you access them?  
How do you get there?  
Are there things you would like to do but can't – such as..? And what stops you...?  
Do you have access to a computer and the internet ...at home or at school?  
Suggestions for improvements

**4. Experiences of Racism**

Can you tell me what you think racism is?  
Have you or anyone you suffered from racism?  
If yes: describe experiences; where did these occur? Did you tell anyone about your experiences/s? Who? What was the outcome?  
How easy is it to talk about racism?  
Do you think the schools/ colleges could do more about racism? What?

**5. About you and your family**

Age

Ethnicity: How would you describe yourself?

How do you think other see you?

Faith/religion?

Household? How many? Who?

Other languages?

**6. Life Style**

How many portions of fresh fruit and vegetables do you eat a day?

Have/do you ever smoked? If yes how old were you when you first smoked?

Have/do you tried/drink alcohol? If yes how old were you when you first started?

Have you taken/do you taken other substances?

**7. Any other comments you would like to make?**

## Appendix 3

### Study 4: 2001 Census Data – Highlands and Islands

**Table 1: Size of Minority Ethnic Groups in the Highlands and Islands and Scotland - Numbers**

Scotland "Standard" definition	Scotland Population	4 Local Authorities	Highland Region	Moray	Western Isles	Shetland Isles	Orkney Isles
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>5062011</b>	<b>363589</b>	<b>208914</b>	<b>86940</b>	<b>26502</b>	<b>21988</b>	<b>19245</b>
White Scottish	4459071	305573	176611	69948	24093	18728	16193
Other White British	373685	48358	26477	14629	1910	2660	2682
White Irish	49428	1884	1176	409	126	91	82
Other White	78150	4848	2979	1189	201	277	202
<b>All "White"</b>	<b>4960334</b>	<b>360663</b>	<b>207243</b>	<b>86175</b>	<b>26330</b>	<b>21756</b>	<b>19159</b>
<b>All minority ethnic</b>	<b>101677</b>	<b>2926</b>	<b>1671</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>86</b>
Mixed	12764	709	432	150	42	63	22
Indian	15037	289	165	71	17	19	17
Pakistani	31793	330	133	124	32	35	6
Bangladeshi	1981	169	126	17	11	13	0
Other (South) Asian	6196	188	127	39	10	11	1
Caribbean	1778	162	90	54	8	5	5
African	5188	140	80	36	16	7	1
Black Scottish and Other Black	1129	58	33	19	3	2	1
Chinese	16310	480	271	151	14	27	17
<b>Other</b>	<b>9571</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table KS06

**Table 2: Gender Profile by Ethnic Groups, Highland and Islands - Numbers**

	<b>White</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>PBSA</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Min Eth</b>
<b>Total</b>	360663	289	687	480	1470	2926
<b>Males</b>	177958	159	384	237	656	1436
<b>Females</b>	182705	130	303	243	814	1490

Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table CAST07

**Table 3: Age Structure of Ethnic Groups in the Highlands and Islands - Numbers**

<b>Age</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>PBSA</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Min Eth</b>
Age 0-15	71194	67	240	126	516	949
16 to 29	53628	63	123	94	285	565
30 to 49	105776	96	221	174	430	921
50 to Pensionable age	59510	46	56	58	137	297
All Pensionable age	70555	17	47	28	102	194
<b>Total</b>	<b>360663</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>1470</b>	<b>2926</b>

Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland Table CAST07

**Table 4: Qualifications in the Highlands and Islands by Ethnic Group - Numbers**

<b>Number</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>PBSA</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Min Eth</b>
No qualifications or qualifications outwith these groups	85982	35	165	161	268	629
Group 1	69949	49	103	68	200	420
Group 2	40018	9	45	46	135	235
Group 3	16538	14	33	14	58	119
Group 4	50038	109	91	51	254	505
<b>Total</b>	<b>262525</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>1908</b>

Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table CAST07

Chart Category Definitions:

Group 1: 'O' grade, Standard grade, Intermediate 1&2, C&G Craft, SVQ 1&2

Group 2: Higher grade, CSYS, ONC, C&G Advanced Craft, and RSA Advanced Diploma, SVQ 3

Group 3: HND, HNC, RSA Higher Diploma, SVQ 4&5

Group 4: 1st Degree, Higher Degree, Professional qualification

**Table 5: Industry by Ethnic Group, Highlands and Islands – Numbers**

	White	Indian	PBSA	Chinese	Other	Min Eth
Agriculture/Forestry	6643	1	5	0	10	16
Fishing	3379	0	4	3	4	11
Mining etc	2792	0	2	0	6	8
Manufacture	17042	5	13	6	54	78
Electricity/gas	1553	0	1	1	1	3
Construction	15291	3	9	3	18	33
Wholesale/Retail	23688	9	84	8	62	163
Hotel/Restaurants	12791	11	90	152	70	323
Transport etc	11825	6	11	6	21	44
Financial Intermediation	3073	0	3	0	7	10
Real Estate/Renting	15034	21	15	5	40	81
Public Admin	15071	11	9	10	44	74
Education	11566	11	9	5	35	60
Health/Social Work	20298	42	29	20	104	195
Other	9196	1	8	1	40	50
Not currently working	93283	95	145	120	399	759
<b>Total</b>	<b>262525</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>1908</b>

Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland Table CAST07

**Table 6: Occupation Minority Ethnic Groups, Highlands and Islands - Numbers**

Number	White	Indian	PBSA	Chinese	Other	Min Eth
Managers/Sen.Officials	19444	17	72	34	57	180
Professional	14600	58	30	14	80	182
Ass.Prof/Tech	23133	10	25	14	85	134
Admin/Sec	17078	3	15	8	22	48
Skilled	29195	10	40	89	69	208
Care	13743	3	11	5	47	66
Sales/Cust Occupations	12936	8	37	22	39	106
Manuf	16205	2	12	3	25	42
Unskilled	22908	10	50	29	92	181
Not working	93283	95	145	120	399	759
<b>Total</b>	<b>262525</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>1906</b>

Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland Table CAST07

**Table 7: Economic Activity Profile of Minority Ethnic Groups, Highlands and Islands - Numbers**

Aged 16 to 24	All people	White	Indian	PBSA	Chinese	Other	Min Eth
Employed	18159	18057	7	23	13	59	102
Self Employed	743	734	0	3	3	3	9
Unemployed	2343	2332	1	1	2	7	11
Full-time student working	4140	4086	4	15	14	21	54
Student not working	5603	5459	16	26	37	65	144
Care of home/family	1122	1108	0	2	0	12	14
Other	1564	1534	2	1	2	25	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>33674</b>	<b>33310</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>364</b>
Aged 25 and over	All people	White	Indian	PBSA	Chinese	Other	Min Eth
Employed	121396	120670	91	164	120	351	726
Self Employed	25718	25477	18	84	66	73	241
Unemployed	8035	8068	5	10	4	48	67
Full-time student working	822	799	3	6	4	10	23
Student not working	1161	1136	2	2	0	21	25
Care of home/family	14336	14146	28	38	28	96	190
Other	59192	58919	40	62	47	124	273
<b>Total</b>	<b>230660</b>	<b>229215</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>1545</b>
Combined Ages	All people	White	Indian	PBSA	Chinese	Other	Min Eth
Employed	139555	138727	98	187	133	410	828
Self-Employed	26461	26211	18	87	69	76	250
Unemployed	10378	10400	6	11	6	55	78
Full-time student working	4962	4885	7	21	18	31	77
Student not working	6764	6595	18	28	37	86	169
Care of home/family	15458	15254	28	40	28	108	204
Other	60756	60453	42	63	49	149	303
<b>Total</b>	<b>264334</b>	<b>262525</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>1909</b>

Source: Scotland's Census 2001. General Register Office for Scotland, Table S208