



# Myths and statistics: An exploration of the assumptions connected to ethnicity and family support



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# 'Look after their own' - myth or reality?

## Reported by:

- National Council for Voluntary Organisations survey (Dungate 1984)
- Social Services Inspectorate report (Murray & Brown 1998)
- Commission for Racial Equality report (White 1978)

## Refuted by:

- Review article (Atkin & Rollings 1996)
- Qualitative research (Katbamna et al 2004)

# Different ways support has been operationalised

Social networks

Perceived support

Enacted support

# Social support and ethnicity

Ways ethnicity has been theorised to link with social support:

- Cultural values
- Social inequalities

# Cultural values

Modern and traditional cultures

The value of independence

The importance of family

Idealising and pathologising?

# Social inequalities

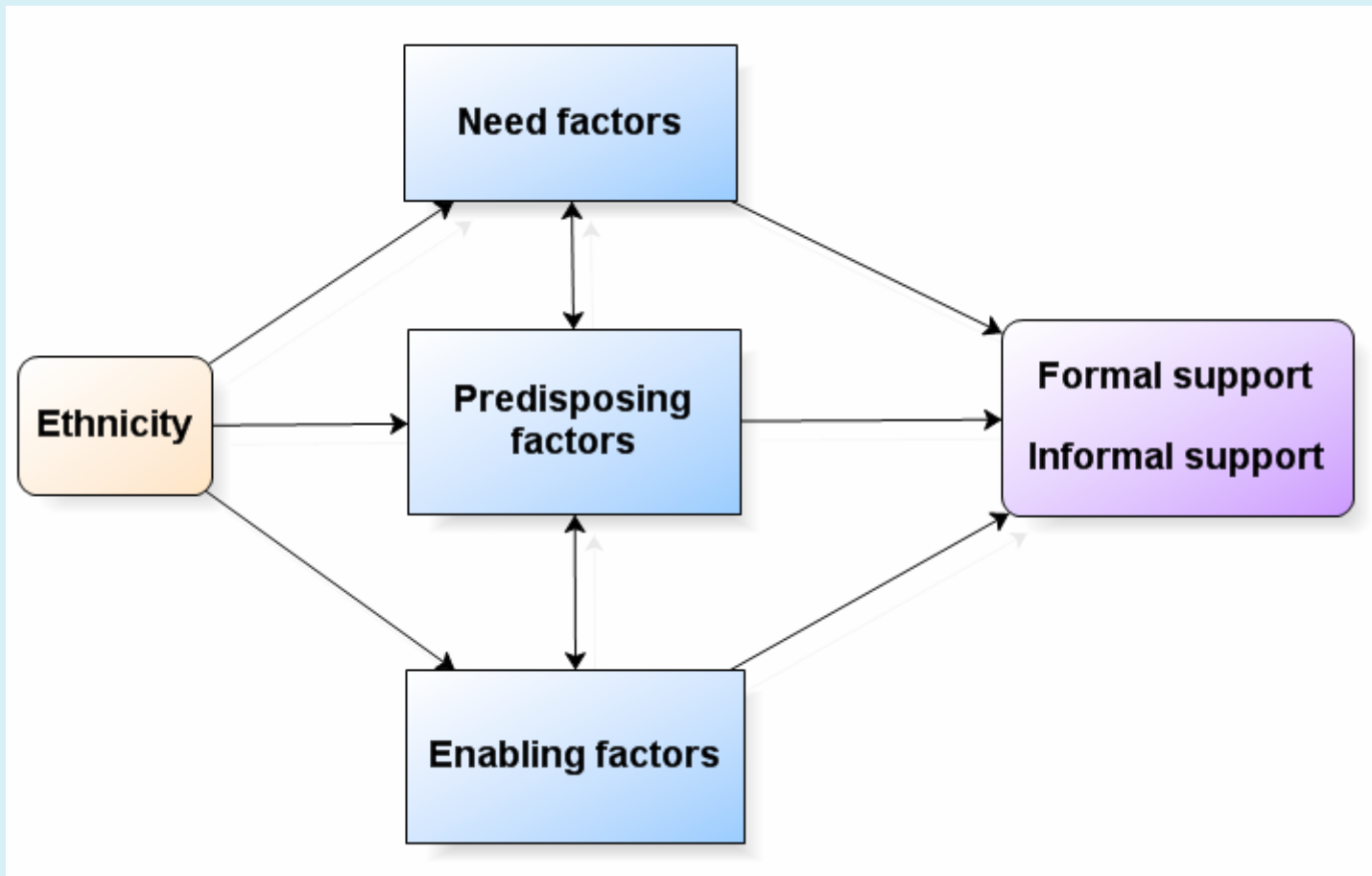
Ill health and disability

Income

Employment

Housing

# Conceptual framework



# Home Office Citizenship Survey

## Biennial survey since 2001

- Originally carried out by the Home Office
- Since 2007 carried out by the Department for Communities & Local Government
- Questions on community cohesion, civic participation, volunteering, informal support, and experiences of discrimination
- Nationally representative sample of 10,000 adults, plus booster sample of 4,500 minority ethnic adults



# Analysis

Help or support given to relatives who do not live with you (UK and abroad) in the last year

Help or support received from household members in the last month

Excluded financial help

Examined people aged 55 or over

HOCS 2005 dataset

# Help given to relatives outside the household

66% of people aged 55 or over gave support to relatives

Ethnic groups most likely to give support to relatives -  
Other White (73%), White Irish (67%)

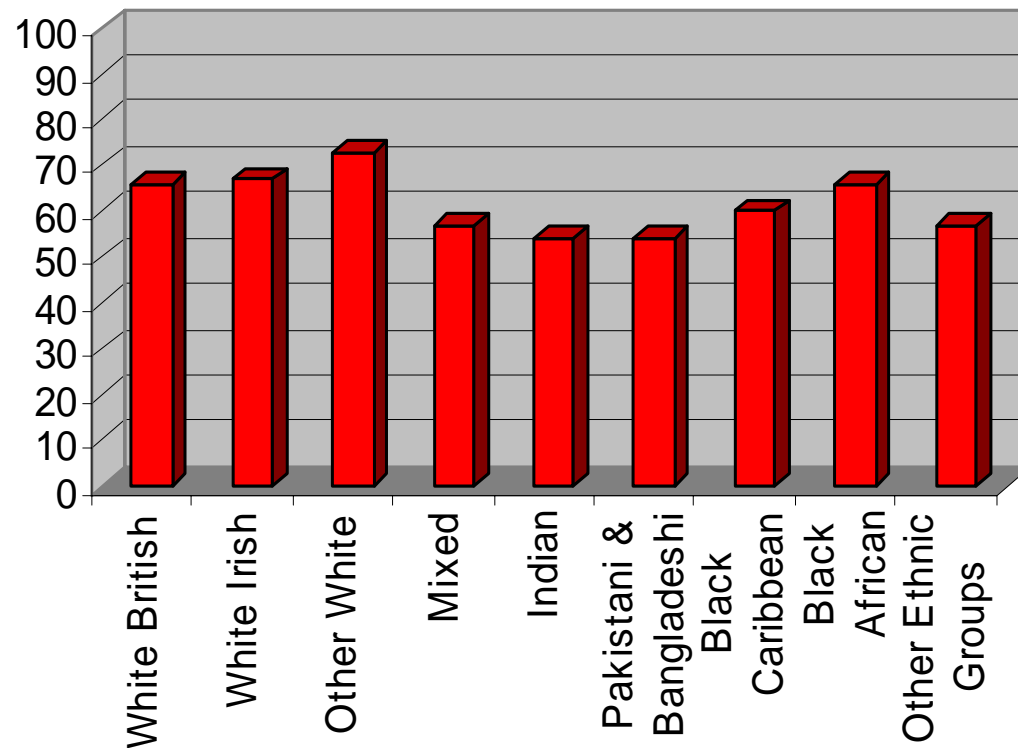
Ethnic groups least likely to give support to relatives -  
Pakistani & Bangladeshi (54%), Indian (54%)

Relatives most support is given to:

- Daughters aged 16+ (36%)
- Sons aged 16+ (31%)
- Grandchildren (26%)

# Help given to relatives outside the hh

Percentage of respondents aged 55+  
giving help to relatives outside the household in the last year



# Logistic regression results

Help given to relatives outside the hh

## Statistically significant findings (selection)

Ethnicity - ref group White British

- Indian group (OR 0.514, CI 0.377 - 0.702)

Sex - ref group men

- Women (OR 1.304, CI 1.081 - 1.574)

SES - ref group Managerial & Professional

- intermediate (OR 0.754, CI 0.597 - 0.953)
- routine & manual (OR 0.735, CI 0.591 - 0.915)
- 'other' (OR 0.526, CI 0.355 - 0.778)

# Help received from household members

91% of people aged 55 or over received support from HH members

Ethnic groups most likely to receive support from HH members - Indian (96%), Mixed (94%), Black African (94%)

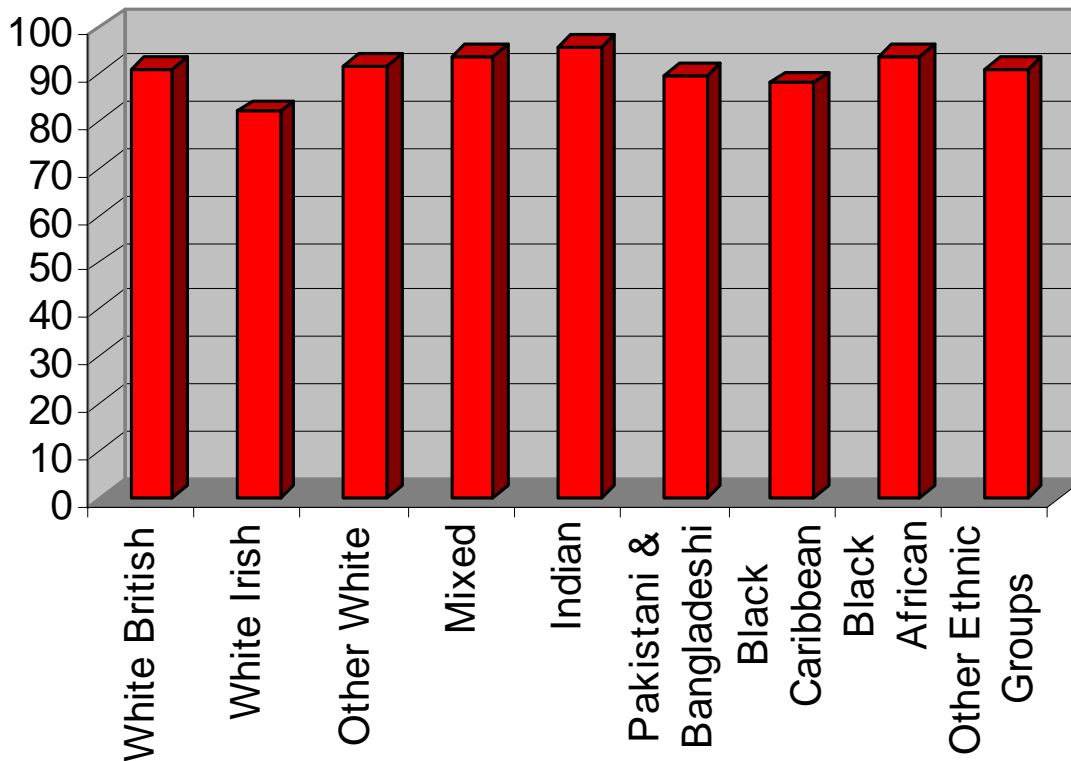
Ethnic groups least likely to receive support from HH members - White Irish (82%), Black Caribbean (88%)

Household members most support is received from:

- Spouse/partner (82%)
- Sons aged 16+ (10%)
- Daughters aged 16+ (6%)

# Help received from HH members

Percentage of respondents aged 55+  
receiving help from household members in the last month



Only those who share a household

# Logistic regression results

Help received from HH members

## Statistically significant findings

Ethnicity - ref group White British

- Indian group (OR 2.418, CI 1.148 - 5.093)

Educational level - ref group Degree/A level (or equivalent)

- No qualifications (OR 0.385, CI 0.213 - 0.694)

SES - ref group Managerial & Professional

- intermediate (OR 0.457, CI 0.279 - 0.750)
- routine & manual (OR 0.637, CI 0.408 - 0.994)
- 'other' (OR 0.461, CI 0.219 - 0.972)

# Summary

Social support is theorised to vary by ethnic group because of cultural differences and social inequalities

Findings for and against the 'look after their own' concept

- it depends on the direction and source of support

Consistent result - lower SES links with less informal support





Thank you

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