

# ‘White flight’? How ethnicity matters for migration in Britain, and the threat to neighbourhood data Beyond 2011

*Is Britain Pulling Apart?*

Radical Statistics 2014 Conference, Manchester

**Nissa Finney (University of Manchester)**



© Tim Hunkin

**1. Need for a spatial perspective**

**2. Need for evidence of process, not just pattern**

**3. Need for small area (census) data**

27 Jan 2013



## Britons 'self-segregate' as white flight soars

**Mark Easton**

Home editor

[More from Mark](#) | [Follow Mark on Twitter](#)



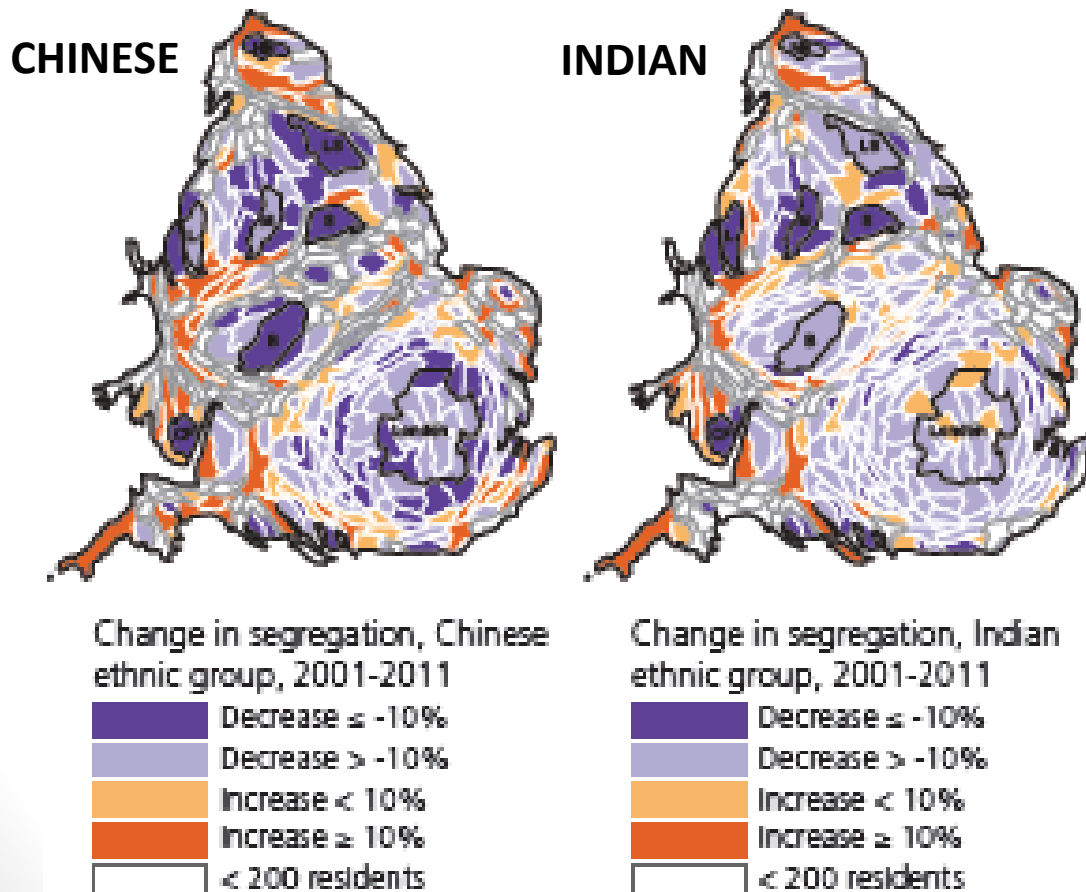
# Why have the white British left London?

6 May 2013



20 Feb 2013

# Reasons to be sceptical about 'white flight' pulling Britain apart



(A) The 2000s, like the 1990s, have seen increased ethnic mixing, residentially, in households and in relationships

Change in Index of Dissimilarity for Output Areas within Districts, 2001-2011  
Source: Catney 2013 at [www.ethnicity.ac.uk](http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk)

(B) Past evidence suggests people of all ethnic groups are moving away from minority concentrations and urban centres

<i><b>Group concentrations</b></i>	<b>Balance of migration, % of population</b>	
	<i><b>Group</b></i>	<i><b>White</b></i>
Indian	<b>-0.40</b>	<b>-1.23</b>
Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Other South Asian	<b>-0.34</b>	<b>-0.79</b>
Chinese	<b>-0.21</b>	<b>-1.23</b>
Black	<b>-1.65</b>	<b>0.13</b>

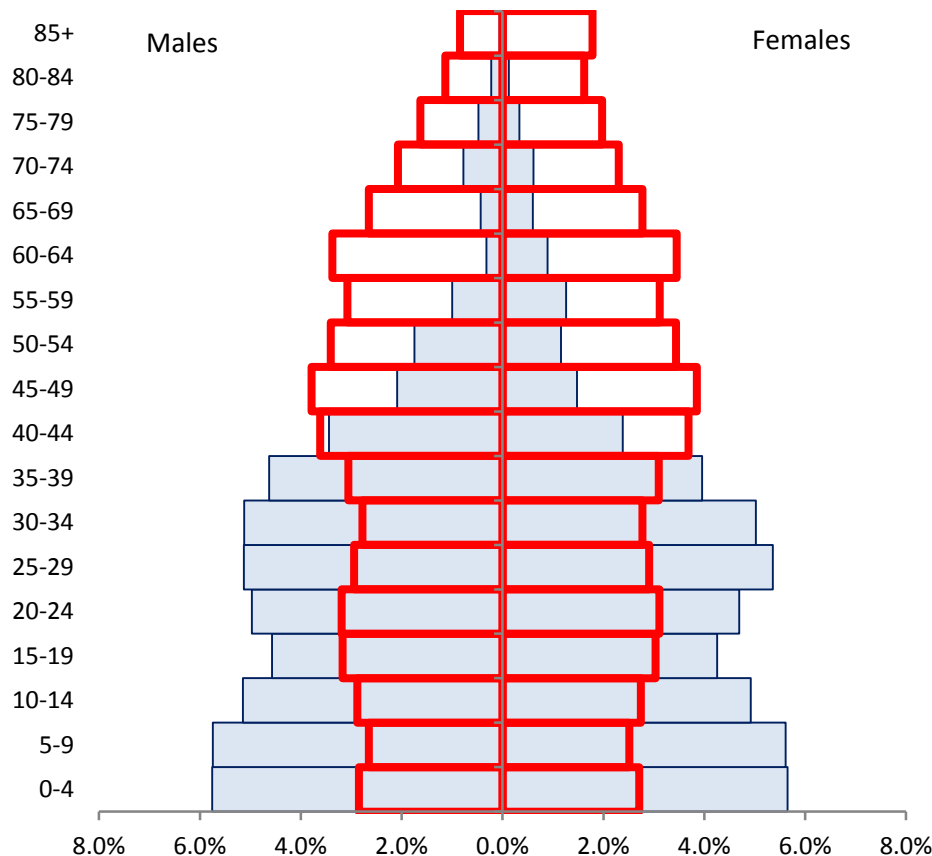
Source: Simpson and Finney (2008) using Census 2001, for districts in GB. For a review of this evidence see also Finney and Simpson (2009), Finney and Catney (2012)

(C) Ethnicity matters in migration processes in ways other than 'ethnic conflict' .....

*So, let's look at some alternatives to 'white flight' interpretations*

# 1. Demographics of ethnic groups

affect migration patterns



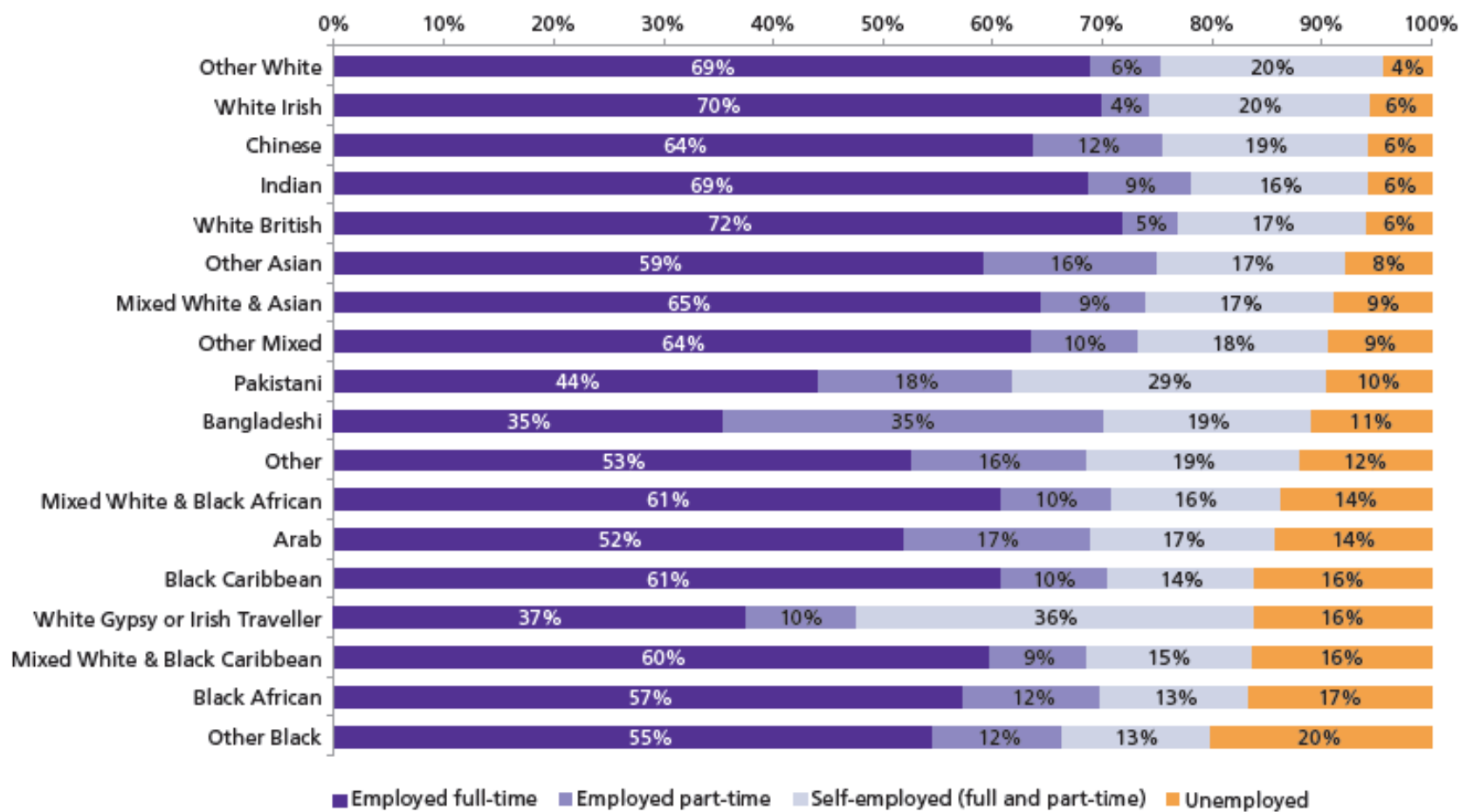
**Bangladeshi**  
**White British**

Older populations are more likely to counterurbanise  
(Champion 2005, Hardill 2006, Stockdale 2013)

Source: Simpson (2013), Local Authority Age Profiler at [www.ethnicity.ac.uk](http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk) England and Wales, 2011 using Census data

## 2. Socio-economic inequalities

affect where people (can) live



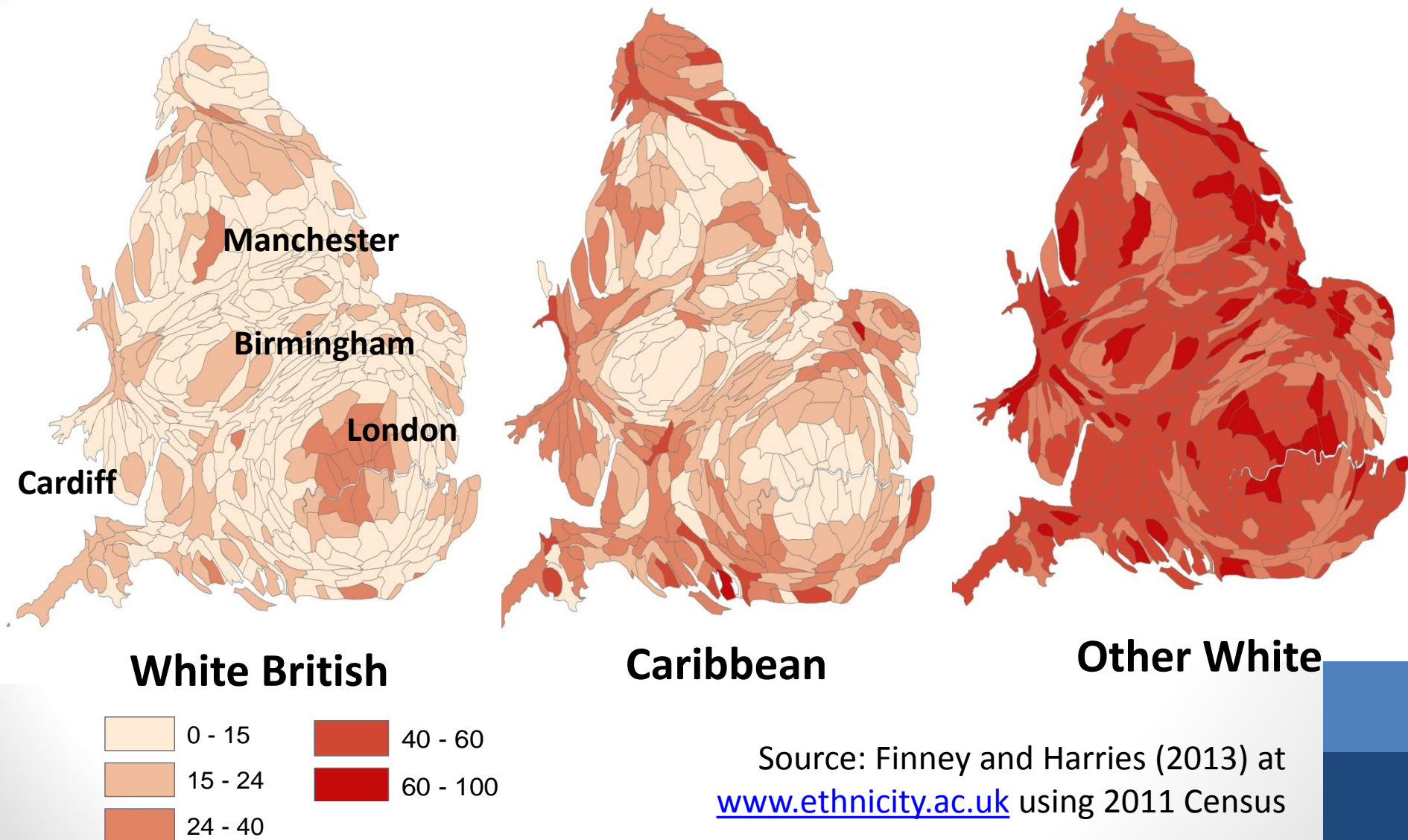
Men age 25-49, England and Wales, 2011 Census.

Source: Nazroo and Kapadia (2013) at [www.ethnicity.ac.uk](http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk)



# Insecurity of tenure affects residential mobility

Percent in private rented housing



# 3. Discrimination

affects where people (can) live

***“Estate agents discriminate against black people” (Guardian 14.10.13)***

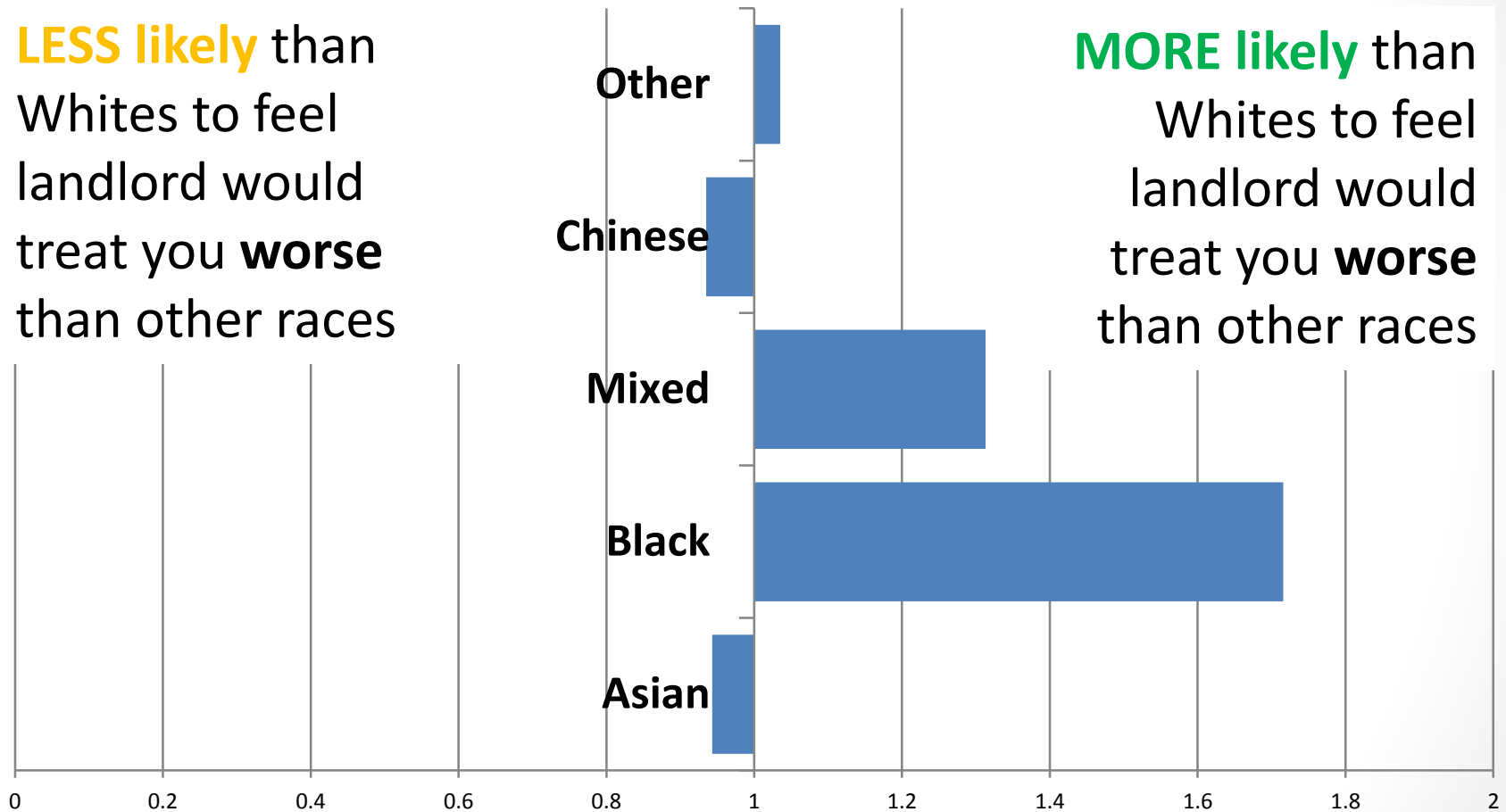


***“London letting agents 'refuse black tenants'” (BBC 14.10.13)***

# Perceived housing discrimination by private landlords

**LESS likely** than Whites to feel landlord would treat you **worse** than other races

**MORE likely** than Whites to feel landlord would treat you **worse** than other races

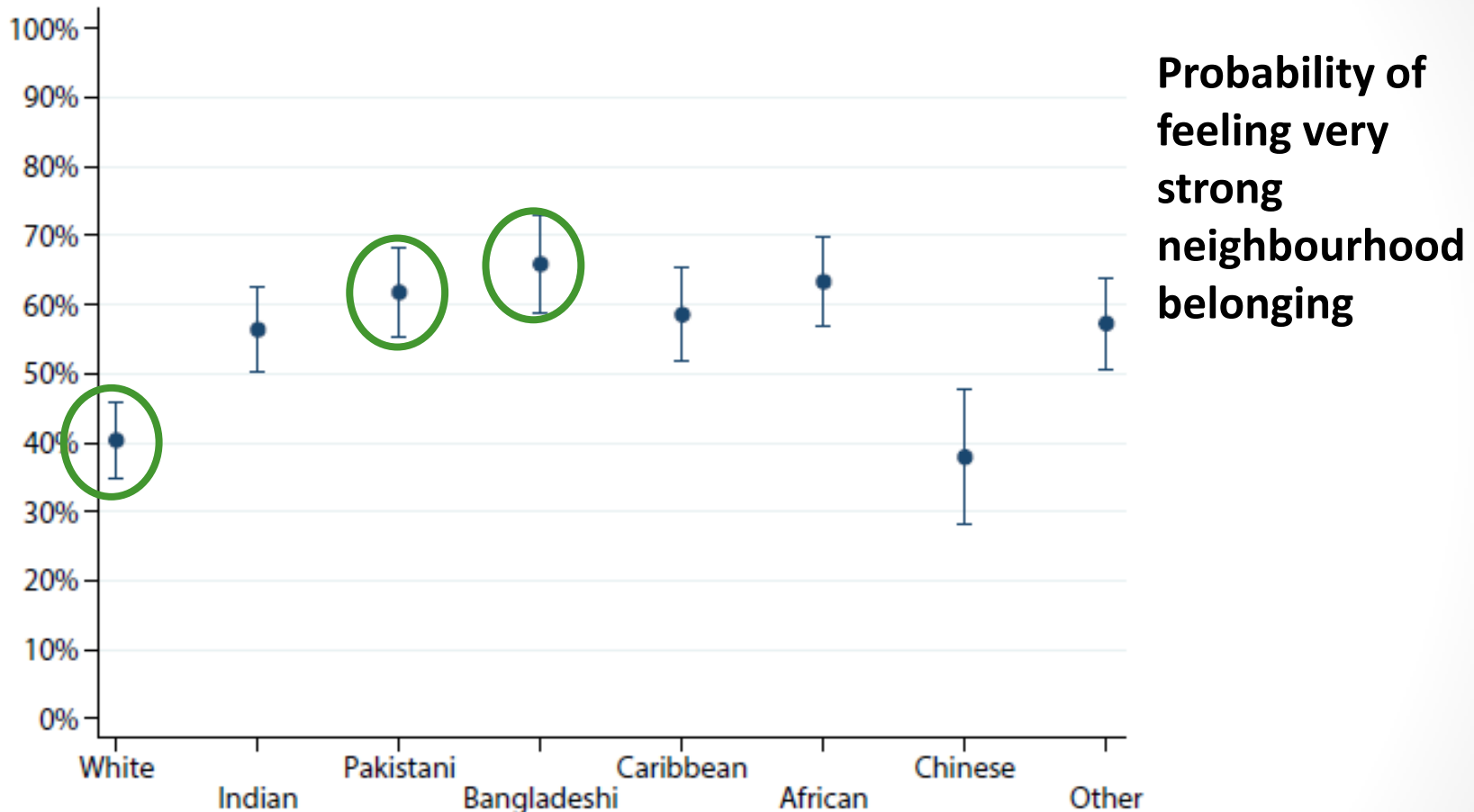


Logistic regression predicting perception of worse treatment by landlords V same/better treatment than other races (ref: White). Controls: ward minority concentration, ward deprivation, income, English language, born outside UK, marital status, age, sex. =  $p > 0.05$ .

*Citizenship Survey 2011.  
Thanks to Meena  
Parameshwaran.*

# 4. Neighbourhood Belonging

affects migration decisions, and varies by ethnic group



*Notes: Model predicts very strong neighbourhood belonging taking into account ethnic group, age, sex, NS-SEC, marital status, years living in neighbourhood, year of survey, region, percentage of own ethnic group in neighbourhood, deprivation of ward, DEFRA urban-rural indicator, age structure of ward, immigration rate of ward, gross internal migration rate of ward.*

*Source: Commissioned 2005 and 2007-8 Citizenship Survey*

Source: Finney  
and Jivraj 2013

# To recap

‘White flight’ interpretations of migration that claim Britain is pulling apart spatially can be critiqued because:

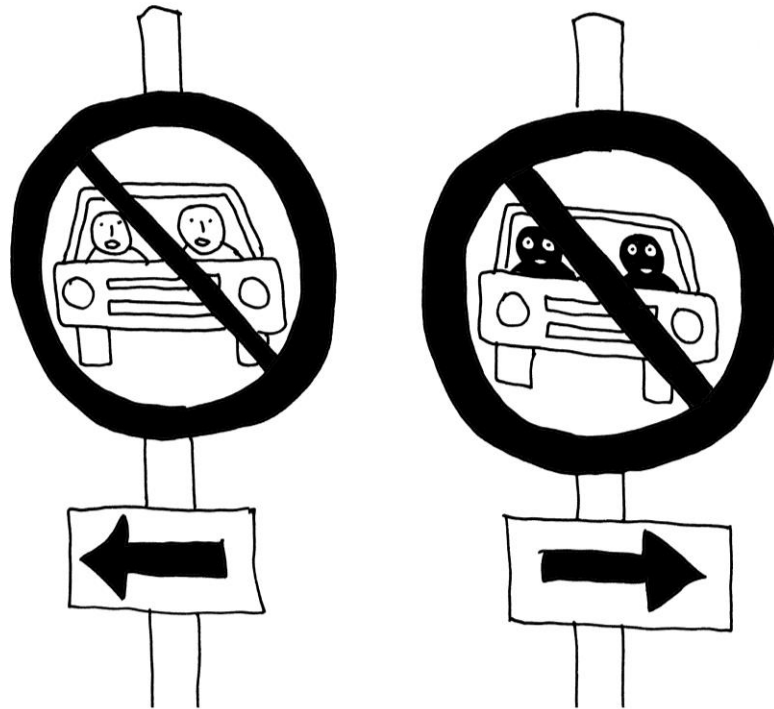
- A. Segregation is decreasing
- B. Past evidence shows all groups are dispersing from concentrations/urban centres
- C. Ethnicity matters in migration processes in ways other than ‘ethnic conflict’

Four alternative interpretations of ethnic differences in migration:

1. Demographic differences
2. Socio-economic inequalities, including in housing
3. Discrimination in housing
4. Neighbourhood belonging

# Forthcoming census data

Analysis of migration patterns needs to be accompanied by understanding of processes if misinterpretations are to be avoided.

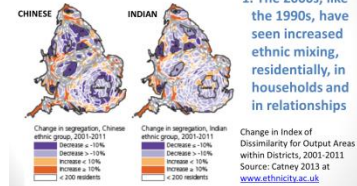




# Future census data?

- Evidencing ethnicity and internal migration relies on the census
- There is nothing comparable, particularly for small areas
- ONS is currently assessing responses to its 'Beyond 2011' consultation and will soon make a recommendation to the UK Statistics Authority
- There is still a possibility of no future census, with major implications for ethnicity, migration and small area data
- Make sure this message is heard by the UK Statistics Authority before they recommend to Parliament!
- Beyond 2011 Independent Working Group (<http://popgeog.org/beyond-2011-independent-working-group/>)

## Reasons to be sceptical about 'white flight' pulling Britain apart

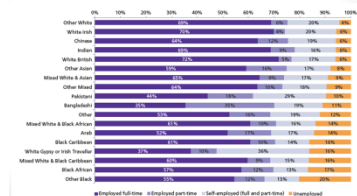


2. Past evidence suggests people of all ethnic groups are moving away from minority concentrations and urban centres

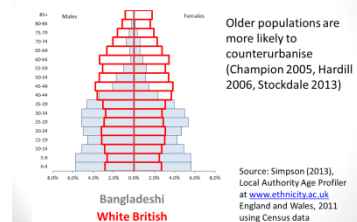
Group concentrations	Balance of migration, % of population	
	Group	White
Indian	-0.40	-1.23
Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Other South Asian	-0.34	-0.79
Chinese	-0.21	-1.23
Black	-1.65	0.13

Source: Simpson and Finney (2008) using Census 2001, for districts in GB. For a review of this evidence see also Finney and Simpson (2009), Finney and Catney (2012)

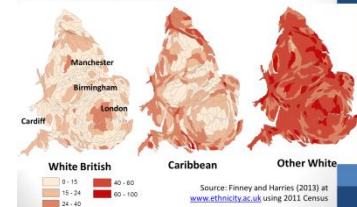
## 2. Socio-economic inequalities affect where people (can) live



## 1. Demographics of ethnic groups affect migration patterns



## Insecurity of tenure affects residential mobility Percent in private rented housing



# Conclusion

1. In considering whether Britain is pulling apart, we need to consider the spatial perspective.
2. Describing patterns of migration and local population change is not enough. These can easily be misinterpreted if evidence is not also presented on the processes and reasons for that change: *Patterns described as 'white flight' might alternatively be explained by demographics, socio-economic inequalities, discrimination, neighbourhood attachment.*
3. The spatial perspective needs rather special data that only the census currently provides. There's a need for us to make this case when ONS makes its recommendations (soon!) to the UK Statistics Authority who in turn will report to Parliament.