

TEACHER'S NOTES
ETHNIC MINORITIES
WHO LIVES HERE?
MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

In recent years there has been a growing interest in ethnic minority populations in Northern Ireland. The arrival of people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds has been noted in places such as Dungannon as well as in parts of Belfast. The appearance of racially motivated crime has also been widely covered in the media.

The actual numbers of people from minority ethnic groups who live in Northern Ireland are very low. Furthermore, the demographic growth that has taken place is not solely due to immigration but is also the result of a small expansion among already established ethnic minority groups.

It is difficult to calculate the rate at which ethnic minority groups have grown, as the data needed to make such an assessment has not been available. However, we can determine the size of the ethnic minority population from the government census¹ which is undertaken every ten years.

The last census was in 2001 and for the first time questions were included which asked people to identify which ethnic group they belonged to. Ethnic groups are determined in the NI Census of Population 2001² as:

- **collections of people who identify with one another on the basis of a boundary that distinguishes them from other groups;**
- **a boundary may take any of a number of forms (racial, cultural, linguistic, economic, religious, political).**

A common misunderstanding is that ethnic groups are made up of people who are not White. But a person's ethnicity is never simply based upon the colour of their skin. Black people, for example, can be from a Caribbean or African ethnic group. Indeed it would be possible to divide Black Africans into a whole series of ethnic groups given their various languages, customs, religious beliefs and national identities. Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis can also come from different religious and linguistic groups.

Another characteristic of ethnic groups is continuity in time, that is they have a history and a future as a people. This is achieved through the consistent use of a common language, institutions and traditions over many generations. It is important to consider these criteria if we are to distinguish them from a group of individuals who share a common characteristic, such as ancestry. It is also important to remember that a person may choose to hold, for example, a Chinese based ethnic identity even though he/she was born in Northern Ireland and has characteristics and beliefs similar to the majority of people who live here.

Everyone in Northern Ireland is part of an ethnic group. People who consider themselves to be

¹ The aim of the census is to find out how the population has changed. The census helps in the planning of Northern Ireland's future and ensures that policymaking is linked closely to the province's population profile.

² Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency: Northern Ireland Census Access
<http://www.nicensus2001.gov.uk/nica/public/index.html>

Irish or British often express signs of dissimilarity in their culture, religious and political beliefs and many people consider these differences as being ethnically different. However, in order to unravel some of the complexities of ethnicity we now examine the minority ethnic communities who live in Northern Ireland.

As shown in **Ethnic Map 1** (see Who lives here? section of website) and **Table 1** (see below) minority ethnic groups are a mere 0.85% of Northern Ireland's population. This is less than one in every hundred people. Northern Ireland has one of the smallest ethnic minority populations within the European Union.

Down through the centuries the UK has been a haven for refugees. The influx of Protestant and Jewish refugees was commonplace between the 17th and 19th centuries. More recently, it has been political refugees fleeing war and persecution as well as economic refugees leaving lesser developed countries for a better life in a first world economy. Many of these people come to the UK after acquiring work permits which allow them to stay for a defined period during which they must remain in employment. In more recent times there has been a very significant growth in immigration into the Republic of Ireland due to economic growth, increased affluence and labour shortages.

There have been a series of major migrations into the United Kingdom since the 1950s. These immigrants tended to come from countries that formed the British Commonwealth. The first major immigration in the 1950s came about due to labour shortages in the UK which had been created by World War II and the re-building of the post-war economy.

Table 1: Minority ethnic groups (%) in parliamentary constituencies in 2001

Parliamentary constituency	Total population	Total ethnic minority members	Ethnic minority members (%)
Belfast East	79269	797	1.01
Belfast North	86064	644	0.75
Belfast South	94978	2500	2.63
Belfast West	87613	643	0.73
East Antrim	84073	713	0.85
East Londonderry	88736	763	0.86
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	91122	538	0.59
Foyle	105078	962	0.92
Lagan Valley	101704	779	0.77
Mid Ulster	86507	541	0.63
Newry & Armagh	100956	641	0.63
North Antrim	101440	566	0.56
North Down	85998	744	0.87
South Antrim	99819	797	0.80
South Down	104660	517	0.49
Strangford	98141	757	0.77
Upper Bann	102955	936	0.91
West Tyrone	86210	514	0.60
Totals	1685323	14352	0.85

Source: census of population, 2001

Unlike Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland has never received a significant inflow of people. This is due to a range of reasons which include:

- **Physical remoteness means that Northern Ireland is largely unaffected**

by the current flow of immigrants and ethnic groups within Europe;

- **Northern Ireland is one of the poorest regions within the United Kingdom and few people migrate here due to a lack of jobs or business opportunities;**
- **Continued political instability may still discourage people from coming to live here.**

Despite not attracting many immigrants there have been Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani populations in Northern Ireland for over 60 years. The first Indian retail business began in Londonderry in 1943. Many of these original immigrants came to Northern Ireland via internal migration within the UK. These three communities are closely tied to the retailing and restaurant business as well as other professions, notably health.

The majority of Chinese immigrants originally came from Hong Kong, a British colony until 1997. Like the communities from South Asia they usually came to Northern Ireland after living in other parts of the UK. The first recorded Chinese restaurant (The Peacock) opened in **1962** in Belfast. The restaurant trade has become a major factor in the growth of the Chinese community. Around **60%** of Chinese people living in Northern Ireland were born here.

Irish Travellers represent the third largest group in Northern Ireland. Their definition as an ethnic group is based upon their language (called either Gammon or Cant), a preference for self-employment and the nature of their cultural activities. There are also significant populations of Black Caribbeans, Black Africans and Other Blacks.

In sum, there are **14,352** people who belong to ethnic minority communities. **Nearly a third** of them live in Belfast. This concentration may reflect the capacity to run businesses or find work within Northern Ireland's main economic and business centre. The location of two universities within the Greater Belfast area is also an important factor because both employ people from minority ethnic groups and draw overseas students to study here.

Belfast South (**2.63%**) is the only place where minority ethnic groups constitute more than **2%** of the resident population. In general the more significant ethnic populations tend to be in the urbanised parliamentary constituencies such as Foyle (**0.92%**), Upper Bann (**0.91%**) and North Down (**0.87%**). The smaller ethnic minority populations, in percentage terms, tend to be in the more rural constituencies such as South Down (**0.49%**), Mid Ulster (**0.63%**), North Antrim (**0.56%**), West Tyrone (**0.6%**) and Fermanagh and South Tyrone (**0.59%**).

Table 2 (see below) looks at the minority ethnic population in more detail within each of Northern Ireland's parliamentary constituencies. The largest group is the Chinese with a population of **4,155**. However, it is worth noting that the Chinese Welfare Association believe that this figure is an underestimation and that the true figure is twice as high at 8,000 people or more. This belief is based on information from the association's database. (More information on the difference between census figures and a number of community estimates is included in Daniel Holder's report "In Other Words?" which can be accessed on the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre's website - http://www.mcrc-ni.org/publications/publ_list.htm).

The second largest group (**3,317**) includes people whose ethnic background is Mixed and would have parents, grandparents or antecedents from different ethnic backgrounds. Irish Travellers (**1,719**) are the third largest group followed by Indians (**1,579**) and the **1,285** people who are designated as having an Other ethnic group classification. This latter group includes people who are Native Americans, and people from Latin America, Europe and Arabic speaking countries. Pakistanis (**683**) and Black Africans (**517**) are the only other groups to have populations over **500**.

Table 2: Ethnic minority group members by parliamentary constituencies in 2001

Parliamentary constituency	Ethnic	Irish Traveller	Mixed	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other Asian	Black Caribbean	Black African	Other Black	Chinese	Other ethnic groups
Belfast East	797	22	192	34	50	3	13	20	37	23	326	77
Belfast North	644	43	163	110	21	7	6	6	29	18	149	92
Belfast South	2500	62	395	294	79	76	52	30	89	20	1112	291
Belfast West	643	184	132	57	31	3	16	10	42	20	82	66
East Antrim	713	15	188	59	20	11	16	8	31	16	278	71
East Londonderry	763	59	197	94	15	0	6	15	25	90	188	74
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	538	120	138	39	24	6	8	3	17	33	104	46
Foyle	962	171	256	211	30	14	4	27	36	23	141	49
Lagan Valley	779	30	208	98	16	12	10	19	26	13	250	97
Mid Ulster	541	167	113	62	6	3	4	6	6	12	138	24
Newry & Armagh	641	293	120	26	18	0	4	10	15	6	120	29
North Antrim	566	97	128	61	44	6	7	3	18	11	144	47
North Down	744	24	241	31	58	37	21	33	29	9	220	41
South Antrim	797	25	207	140	88	6	3	15	22	13	229	49
South Down	517	72	158	18	15	3	3	19	15	37	109	68
Strangford	757	17	184	52	30	61	11	16	45	11	262	68
Upper Bann	936	150	187	95	126	9	0	10	21	23	248	67
West Tyrone	514	168	110	98	12	3	6	6	14	13	55	29
Totals	14352	1719	3317	1579	683	260	190	256	517	391	4155	1285

Source: census of population, 2001

The Chinese community constitutes over one quarter (29%) of all minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland. In Upper Bann, Belfast East, South Antrim, Lagan Valley, Strangford, North Down and East Antrim there are over **200** Chinese people in each of these constituencies. The Chinese population, in Belfast South (**1,112**) constitutes nearly half (45%) of all the minority ethnic groups living within that constituency (**2,500**). This community is the largest single concentration of any ethnic minority group in Northern Ireland.

The largest concentration of Irish Travellers is in Newry and Armagh (**293**) with other populations of over **150** in West Tyrone, Mid Ulster, Belfast West and Foyle. The higher than average concentration of Travellers within Newry and Armagh reflects a historical base for this group between counties Armagh and Louth.

The Mixed ethnic minority group is one of the most evenly spread populations across Northern Ireland.

The two largest concentrations of Indians are in Belfast South (**294**) and Foyle (**211**). The group in Foyle is significant because Indian immigrants set up retail businesses around the major textile industries there. South Antrim and Belfast North have also above average concentrations of Indians. Most are professionals and live within the suburbs of Greater Belfast.

The largest share of Pakistanis is in Upper Bann (**126**) and was initially linked to the market-based retailing of clothes. In relation to the Bangladeshi population the two main concentrations are in Belfast South and Strangford. Yet again their location in these places is due to the establishment of businesses. Just over a quarter of Other Asians (people from places such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Laos) live in Belfast South. The largest share of Black Caribbeans is in North Down, with slightly lower shares in Belfast South and Foyle. Black Africans tend to live in Belfast South, Strangford and Belfast West. There is a significant population of Other Blacks (**90**) in East Londonderry which is partly due to the proximity of the University of Ulster at Coleraine.

Table 3 presents data on the distribution of people born in European Union (EU) countries excluding the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. This includes Portugal, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Greece, Germany, France, Spain, Luxembourg, Austria, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands. As with minority ethnic groups the number is very low and only 0.41% of the total Northern Ireland population were born in these countries.

It is important to note that there is a potential overlap between Tables 1 and 3. For example, someone could be born in Germany and say their ethnic group is Chinese.

Table 3: Distribution of people born in other European Union countries by parliamentary constituencies in 2001

Parliamentary constituency	Total population	People born in other EU countries	People born in other EU countries (%)
Belfast East	79269	337	0.43
Belfast North	86064	282	0.33
Belfast South	94978	863	0.91
Belfast West	87613	160	0.18
East Antrim	84073	391	0.47
East Londonderry	88736	462	0.52
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	91122	234	0.26
Foyle	105078	406	0.39
Lagan Valley	101704	714	0.70
Mid Ulster	86507	102	0.12
Newry & Armagh	100956	193	0.19
North Antrim	101440	325	0.32
North Down	85998	644	0.75
South Antrim	99819	503	0.50
South Down	104660	303	0.29
Strangford	98141	396	0.40
Upper Bann	102955	383	0.37
West Tyrone	86210	184	0.21
Totals	1685323	6882	0.41

Source: census of population, 2001

Yet again Belfast South has the highest percentage share of people born in other EU countries. Like minority ethnic groups, people born in other EU countries tend to live in the more urbanised places such as Lagan Valley (714), and North Down (644). This may be due to a combination of factors such as employment with European companies located in these areas, the availability of work and intermarriage. People born in other EU countries make up very small shares of the total population in Newry and Armagh (0.19%), West Tyrone (0.21%), Belfast West (0.18%) and Mid Ulster (0.12%).

While the census of population is the only source of data on all people in Northern Ireland, it is limited in its usefulness. In particular, there have been huge social and demographic changes in Northern Ireland since the last census in 2001, for example the increase in the number of migrant workers. Thus, it is important to look at sources of information which reflect these changes.

Official government figures for the granting of work permits, for those wishing to come to Northern Ireland, show that in the four month period from April to August 2004 there were over 1,000 applications for work permits. These applications came from over 50 different ethnic groups, most notably Filipinos seeking employment in nursing. These data on work permits do not provide a complete picture, as there are also illegal workers who enter Northern Ireland via unregulated employment agencies. There are also people living here from the European Economic Area (which comprises Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) who do not require work permits.

A significant percentage of the migrant population are transient. Most are hired by recruitment agencies in their country of origin on six month, fixed-term contracts to work in the food processing sector, mainly meat and poultry. The majority return to their home countries and are usually replaced by new arrivals on similar contracts.

With regard to the Portuguese community, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has estimated that the number of Portuguese nationals living in the Dungannon area is as high as 1,500 or approximately 11% of the local population.³ Counties with migrant Portuguese populations include Antrim and Armagh.

In early 2001 the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland received a number of complaints from Portuguese citizens living and working in the Dungannon and Portadown communities. The complaints made reference to racial discrimination and unfair dismissal due to irregularities in terms and conditions of employment. The Equality Commission conducted research into the Portuguese community in 2001 and discovered that:

- **Nine out of ten (89%) Portuguese workers in the area are young, single males, aged 22-31**
- **The majority return to Portugal at the end of their contracts**
- **Two-thirds have previously worked in other countries, especially France, Germany and Switzerland**
- **Many commented on the lack of a cohesive community spirit among the Portuguese in the area**
- **Information gathered on the wages earned by Portuguese workers revealed significant differences between those employed by recruitment agencies and those working directly for the factories. The former group earned much less per hour.**

³ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland – article called “Migrant workers and the work of the Equality Commission for NI” (6 Nov 2002) by Evelyn Collins <http://www.equalityni.org/whatsnew/artspeech/details.cfm?StoryID=59>

MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS IN BELFAST

After analysing **Table 4** and **Ethnic Map 2** (see Who lives here? section of website), it is clear that Belfast South is the parliamentary constituency that has the largest number and mix of ethnic minority populations. **2.6%** of all the people who live in Belfast South come from an ethnic minority. Moreover, **55%** of all minority ethnic groups within Belfast live in Belfast South. Belfast South, with the exception of the Other Black and Irish Traveller groups, has the largest share of each ethnic minority group within the city.

Table 4: Ethnic minority groups in Belfast parliamentary constituencies in 2001

	Belfast West (Belfast %)	Belfast South (Belfast %)	Belfast North (Belfast %)	Belfast East (Belfast %)	Parliamentary constituency
Belfast totals (Belfast %)					
347924	87613 (14.03)	94978 (54.54)	86064 (14.05)	79269 (17.39)	Total population
4584 (100)	643 (14.03)	2500 (54.54)	644 (14.05)	797 (17.39)	Ethnic totals
311 (100)	184 (59.16)	62 (19.94)	43 (13.83)	22 (7.07)	Irish Traveller
882 (100)	132 (14.97)	395 (44.78)	163 (18.48)	192 (21.77)	Mixed
495 (100)	57 (11.52)	294 (59.39)	110 (22.22)	34 (6.87)	Indian
181 (100)	31 (17.13)	79 (43.65)	21 (11.60)	50 (27.62)	Pakistani
89 (100)	3 (3.37)	76 (85.39)	7 (7.87)	3 (3.37)	Bangladeshi
87 (100)	16 (18.39)	52 (59.77)	6 (6.90)	13 (14.94)	Other Asian
66 (100)	10 (15.15)	30 (45.45)	6 (9.09)	20 (30.30)	Black Caribbean
197 (100)	42 (21.32)	89 (45.18)	29 (14.72)	37 (18.78)	Black African
81 (100)	20 (24.69)	20 (24.69)	18 (22.22)	23 (28.40)	Other Black
1669 (100)	82 (4.91)	1112 (66.63)	149 (8.93)	326 (19.53)	Chinese
526 (100)	66 (12.55)	291 (55.32)	92 (17.49)	77 (14.64)	Other ethnic groups

Source: census of population, 2001

There may be several reasons for this. Firstly, overseas students and staff based at Queen's University will be included within the census. Secondly, there is a significant private rental market in South Belfast and this may attract minority ethnic groups especially those who are here short-term or who live on low incomes. Thirdly, Belfast South, which includes the city centre and the more affluent parts of the city, is the main area for restaurants and other

businesses owned by minority ethnic groups. Fourthly, many professional members of ethnic minority groups live in the more affluent parts of South Belfast.

Belfast South also contains the only identifiable, geographically based ethnic minority community in Northern Ireland with **1,112** Chinese people living there. This concentration of Chinese people has led to the creation of Chinese businesses such as travel agents, a bakery, supermarkets, language centres, a welfare association and a Chinese Christian church.

The Chinese are the largest minority ethnic group in Belfast and constitute **0.48%** of the total Belfast population or **1 in every 200** people in the city. People from a Mixed background are the second largest group and they make up **0.25%** of the population or **1 in every 400** people. The Indian community make up **0.14%** of the city's population and there are significant populations of Indians in Belfast South and Belfast North. There is also a sizeable Irish Traveller community (**184**) in Belfast West due to the location of sites for this community within that part of the city. **291** people from Other ethnic backgrounds live in Belfast South. Yet again this is due to the location of Queen's University and the availability of rentable accommodation and work.

In sum, **1.3%** of Belfast's population is from an ethnic minority background. That means that **13 in every 1,000** people who live in Belfast are from an ethnic minority group.

INTOLERANCE AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

In recent years there has been an increase in the incidence of racial attacks and the Police Service of Northern Ireland have been encouraging those affected to report every incident.

However, not all incidents are reported and there are many reasons why some members of minority ethnic groups do not register crimes committed against them, including:

- They may not wish to be seen to be complaining about their neighbours
- They may feel that the police will do little to help so reporting a crime would be a worthless task
- There may be language difficulties
- There may be a lack of knowledge of what the laws are regarding racial crime
- Many members of minority ethnic groups may be reluctant to register such crimes because they have experienced police brutality in their country of origin. Others are simply too afraid to speak out; they are silenced by racial crime.

The rate of recorded incidents of racially motivated crime doubled from **93** in **1999** to a highpoint of **260** in **2001**. The latest released data recorded **185** incidents in **2002**. Racist attacks in Northern Ireland are running at **16.4** per **1,000** of the minority ethnic population compared to **12.6** in England and Wales. The data for **2002** showed that of the **185** incidents reported **52** were based upon verbal abuse and threat. There were **39** physical assaults and **71** attacks upon homes and property. There has been a continuation of such attacks over the past three years.⁴

The most up-to-date statistics on racially motivated crime in Northern Ireland can be found on the Police Service of Northern Ireland's website in the 'Hate Crime' section.

http://www.psni.police.uk/index/hate_crimes.htm

⁴ Police Service of NI statistics

USEFUL WEB LINKS

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency provides information and detail on the 2001 Census of Population carried out in Northern Ireland, including key statistics and evaluation reports.

<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/census/start.html>

Statistics on hate incidents and crime are accessible on the Police Service of Northern Ireland's website.

<http://www.psni.police.uk/>

Under community relations publications useful reports can be found, such as 'The Hidden Truth: Racist Harassment in NI' and 'Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland'.

<http://www.research.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/publications.htm>

Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister offers a list of empirical studies on 'Race' and Racism in Northern Ireland. <http://www.research.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/raceandracism/list.htm>

ARK (Northern Ireland Social and Political Archive) contains useful figures on attitudes from the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey and the Young Life and Times Survey. The Online Research Bank (ORB) provides a searchable bibliography and summaries of social policy research, including work on minority ethnic groups.

www.ark.ac.uk

Multi-Cultural Resource Centre's website includes useful publications, as well as information on the Refugee Action Group and Anti Racism Network.

<http://www.mcrc-ni.org/menu.htm>

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland provides information on anti-racist initiatives, as well as an activity pack for schools and youth workers aimed at raising awareness of diversity and racism (see publications section).

<http://www.equalityni.org/>

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland website offers information on research resources for Caribbean Studies and the history of Black and Asian peoples in the UK, including a list of relevant local organisations and publications.

<http://www.casbah.ac.uk/surveys/archivereportsPRONI.stm#pronisurvey>

BBC's Born Abroad project published in September 2005 provides figures and information charting the development of immigration within Great Britain.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4266102.stm>

A look at race and racism. Cultural differences are explored through meeting a gang of young people from different backgrounds and hanging out in an imaginary town called Britchester.

<http://www.britkid.org>

What life is like for children around the world, including information on different faiths and cultures.

<http://www.globalgang.org.uk/reallife/>

(The BBC is not responsible for the content of external websites)