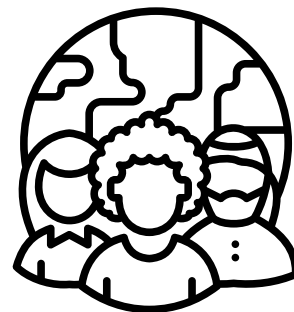


Modood et al (1994)

Changing Ethnic Identities



Conducted in the early 1990s, this study aimed to explore the experiences of people from various ethnic minority backgrounds and how they viewed themselves and their place in British society.

Methodology

A survey was conducted across the United Kingdom with around 5,000 participants from different ethnic backgrounds. The survey asked participants questions about their experiences with racism, cultural practices, family life, religion, and how they identified themselves in terms of ethnicity. In addition to the survey, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with smaller groups of people from each ethnic background.

Key Findings:

Many participants, especially younger people, held more than one identity. For example, a British-born Indian person might identify as both Indian and British, reflecting a blend of their ethnic heritage and their life in Britain.

Among South Asian groups, religion played a significant role in shaping their ethnic identity. For example, Muslims from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds saw Islam as a crucial part of their identity, while Hindus and Sikhs also emphasized the importance of their religious beliefs.

The study showed that many participants had experienced racism or felt socially excluded because of their ethnicity. This experience of discrimination often reinforced their ethnic identity, making them feel more connected to their cultural group as a way to resist or cope with the challenges they faced in wider British society.

Younger generations, especially those born in the UK, often had different views on their ethnic identity compared to their parents or grandparents. While older generations might hold onto traditional cultural practices more firmly, younger people were more likely to blend their ethnic background with British culture, creating new forms of identity.

While some aspects of cultural identity, like food, clothing, and language, were retained across generations, there was also evidence that these elements were being adapted to fit life in Britain. For example, many South Asian families continued to speak their native languages at home but used English in public or with friends.

The study also found that social class could affect how people saw their ethnic identity. For example, middle-class members of minority groups often felt more integrated into British society, whereas working-class members might face more discrimination, which strengthened their connection to their ethnic group.

