

A bigger melting pot: What the census really tells us

December 18 2012

The people we live next to and start a family with are more likely than ever before to be from a diverse range of ethnic identities, according to research at The University of Manchester.

The detailed analysis of the 2011 [census data](#) of England and Wales by the University's new research Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) reveals the term 'ethnic minority' is fast becoming redundant.

Previously passionate debates over how segregated we are, they say, should now be a thing of the past.

The research finds residential mixing has accelerated in the 2000s: Indians, Whites, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Africans, Irish, Caribbean, Mixed White-Caribbean, White-Africans and White-[Asian populations](#) all live more evenly spread through the country than in 2001.

According to their analysis, the 2011 census shows that one-in-five people identified themselves as coming from an ethnic group other than White British, compared with 13% in 2001.

Excluding one-person households, 1 in 8 households now have more than one ethnic group.

And the proportion of mixed households has grown in 346 out of 348 local authorities in England and Wales.

The research is funded by CoDE and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Professor Ludi Simpson, who lead the team said: "Last week's headlines which reported a rising [immigrant population](#) does not give us the whole picture.

"Segregation is a debate of the past. Our research actually identifies a rapid growth of mixing between ethnic groups. In fact, '[ethnic minority](#)' is a term which is becoming increasingly redundant for many people.

"We are not only becoming more mixed in terms of who our [neighbours](#) are, but also in terms of the people we choose to live and start a family with."

He added: "There are several explanations for why we are witnessing this steep rise in residential integration.

"We know from other studies that the groups which have settled earlier are moving to more suburban areas.

"For recently arrived Africans and Eastern Europeans, the greater spread in England and Wales is probably also down to them settling in new areas away from London and metropolitan centres."

Also according to the research, the minority group that has grown fastest in the last two decades is the African ethnic group, doubling in each decade to reach 990,000 in 2011.

The greatest increase in residential mixing has occurred within African [ethnic groups](#).

The 'Other' ethnic group categories – 'White Other', 'Other Black', 'Other Asian', 'Other Mixed' and 'Other' have all increased, in total by

over 2 million in the last 10 years – again indicating that official measures of ethnicity are redundant to many people.

Only the relatively small Chinese population is more concentrated than it was, though that, say the team, can be explained by overseas Chinese students moving to University towns and cities.

However, the Chinese were already the most mixed group and remain so, they add.

More information: The briefings are available on request and from 18 Dec at www.ethnicity.ac.uk/census/ .

Provided by University of Manchester

Citation: A bigger melting pot: What the census really tells us (2012, December 18) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-12-bigger-pot-census.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.