

What have the last three Censuses told us about changes in ethnic inequalities in labour market participation?

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Dharmi Kapadia & James Nazroo
Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE)
The University of Manchester
dharmi.kapadia@manchester.ac.uk
james.nazroo@manchester.ac.uk

Background

- Ethnic minority groups have a history of higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of employment than the White majority group.
- There has been significant policy concern in this field, although policy implementation has been inconsistent and partial:
 - Minority Outreach;
 - Specialist Employment Advisors;
 - Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group.
- But much policy concern has focused on specific minority cultures:
 - Muslim women and labour market participation;
 - Black youth and unemployment.
- To what extent have these issues persisted into the 2010s? Period and generation influences.
- And need to consider more than unemployment: economic activity, part-time employment and self-employment.

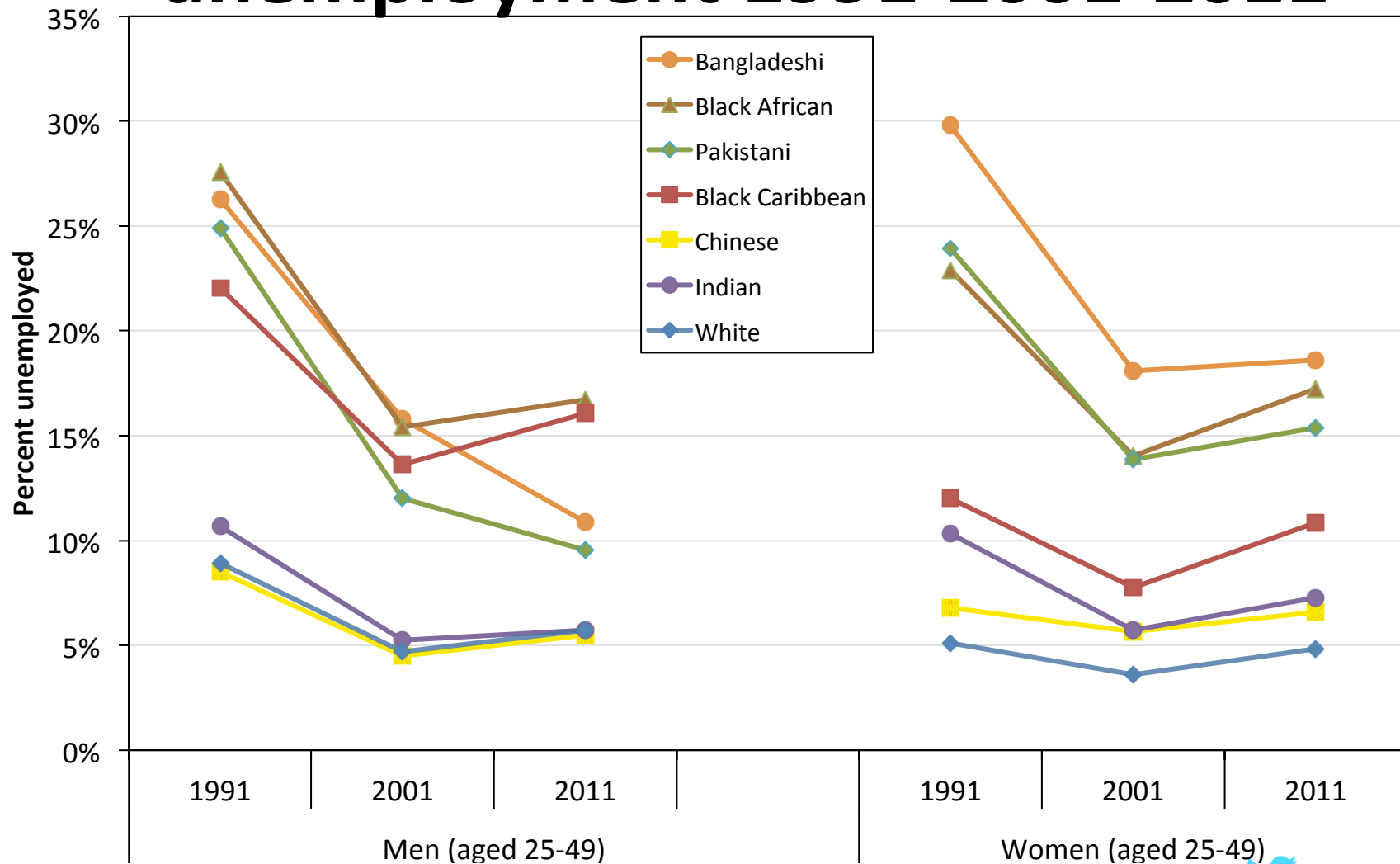
Data and Methods

- Analysis of 1991, 2001 and 2011 Census data for England and Wales.
- Comparisons over time use an abbreviated (seven groups) ethnic categorisation that is reasonably consistent across Census years.
- More detailed categories are used in analysis that only focus on 2011 (i.e. White Gypsy or Irish Traveller group, Arab group, White minority groups, mixed groups,).
- Focus on the 25-49 year old age group:
 - Avoids the complications of ethnic differences in the patterning of retirement and post-compulsory education.
- Examine men and women separately.

Employment Outcomes

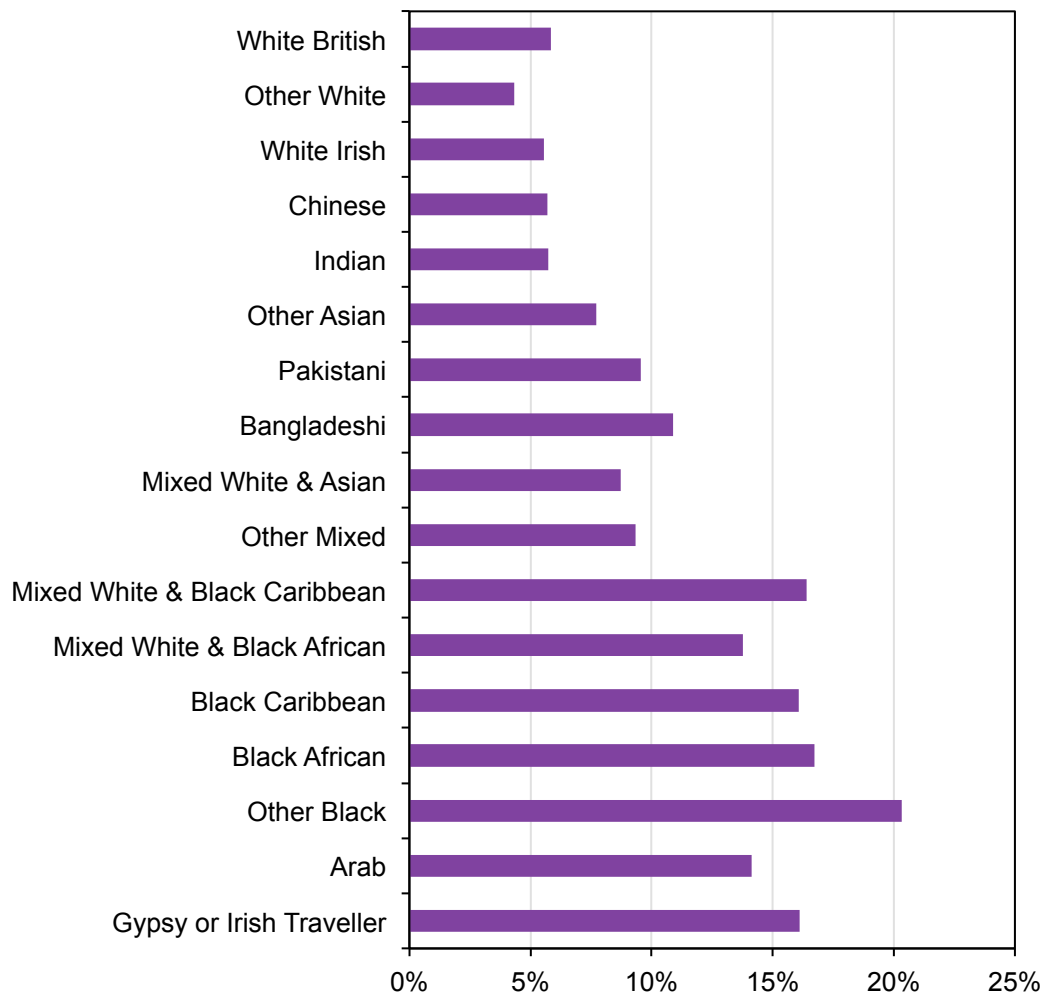
- **Economic activity:** In employment or actively looking for work i.e. employed, self-employed or unemployed. Those who are retired, students, looking after the home, or long-term sick or disabled are classed as economically inactive.
- **Unemployed:** Not in employment and either actively looking for work, or waiting to start work already obtained.
- **Self-employed:** People who operate their own businesses or work freelance, with or without employees.
- **Full-time employment:** Working 31 or more hours per week in a main job, but (for this analysis) not self-employed.
- **Part-time employment:** Working 30 or less hours per week in a main job, but (for this analysis) not self-employed.

Persistent ethnic inequalities in unemployment 1991-2001-2011

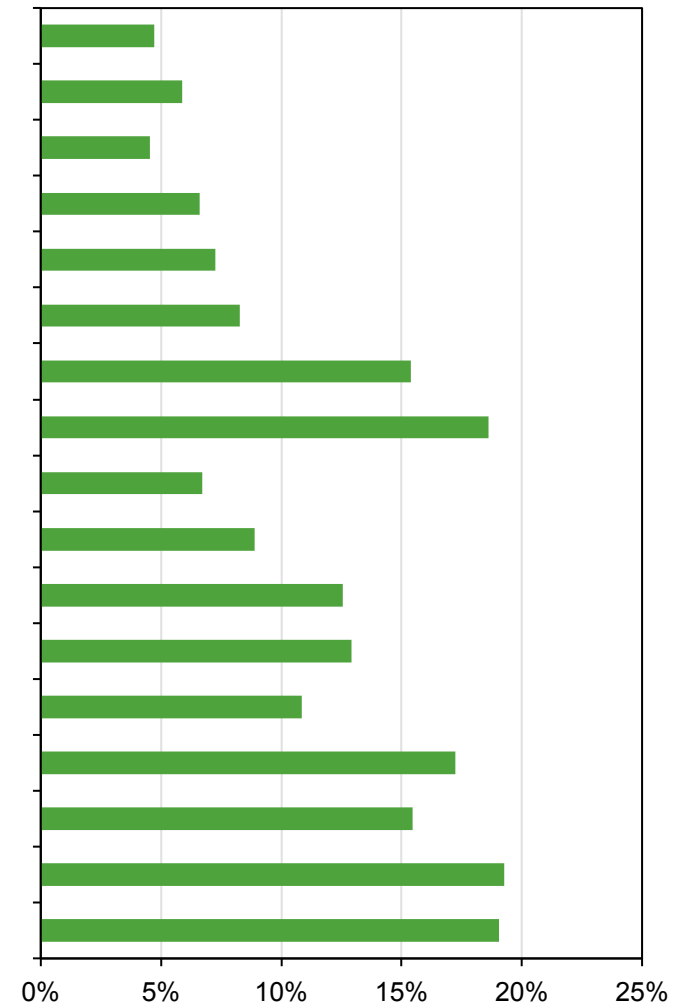


Ethnicity and unemployment in 2011

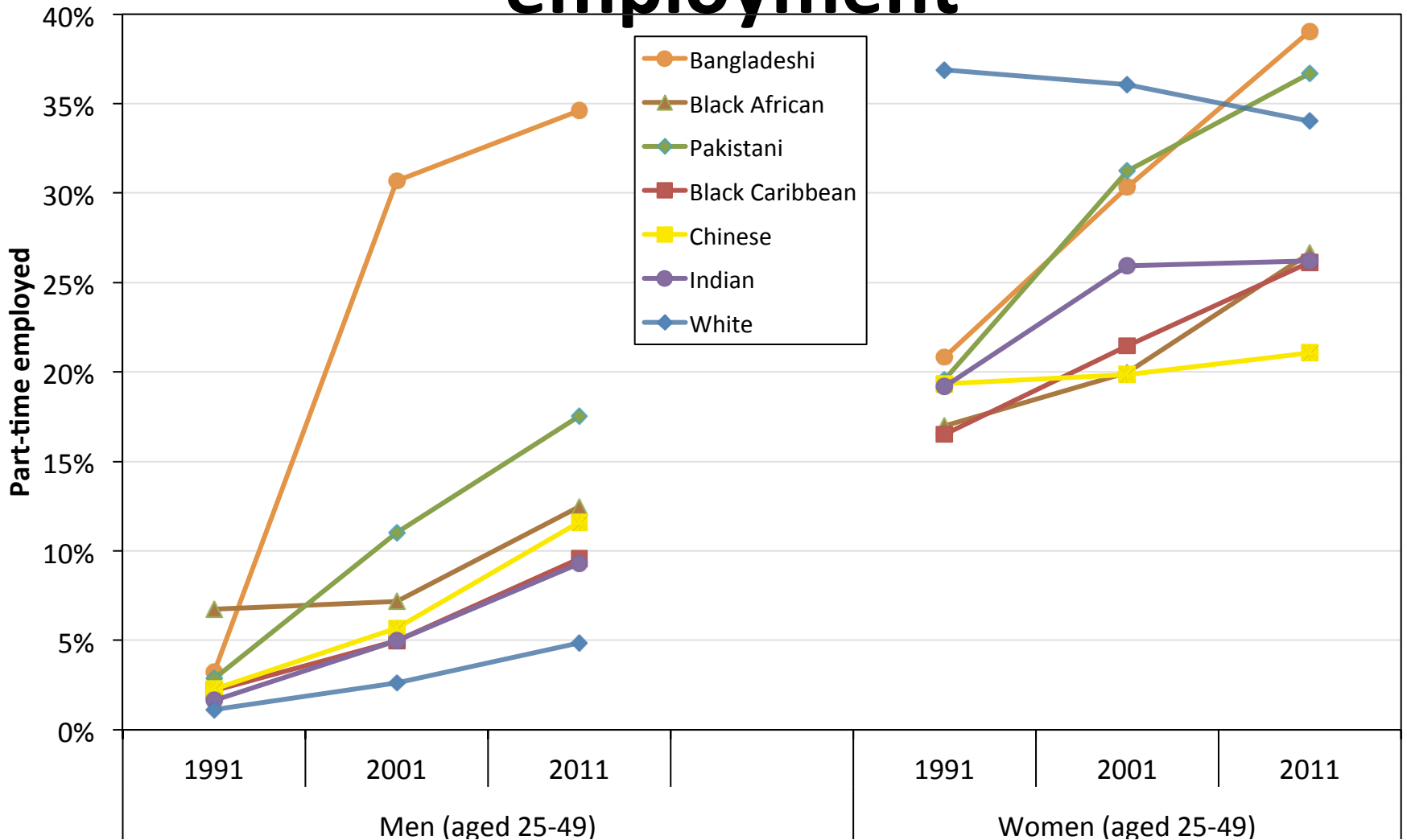
Men (aged 25-49)



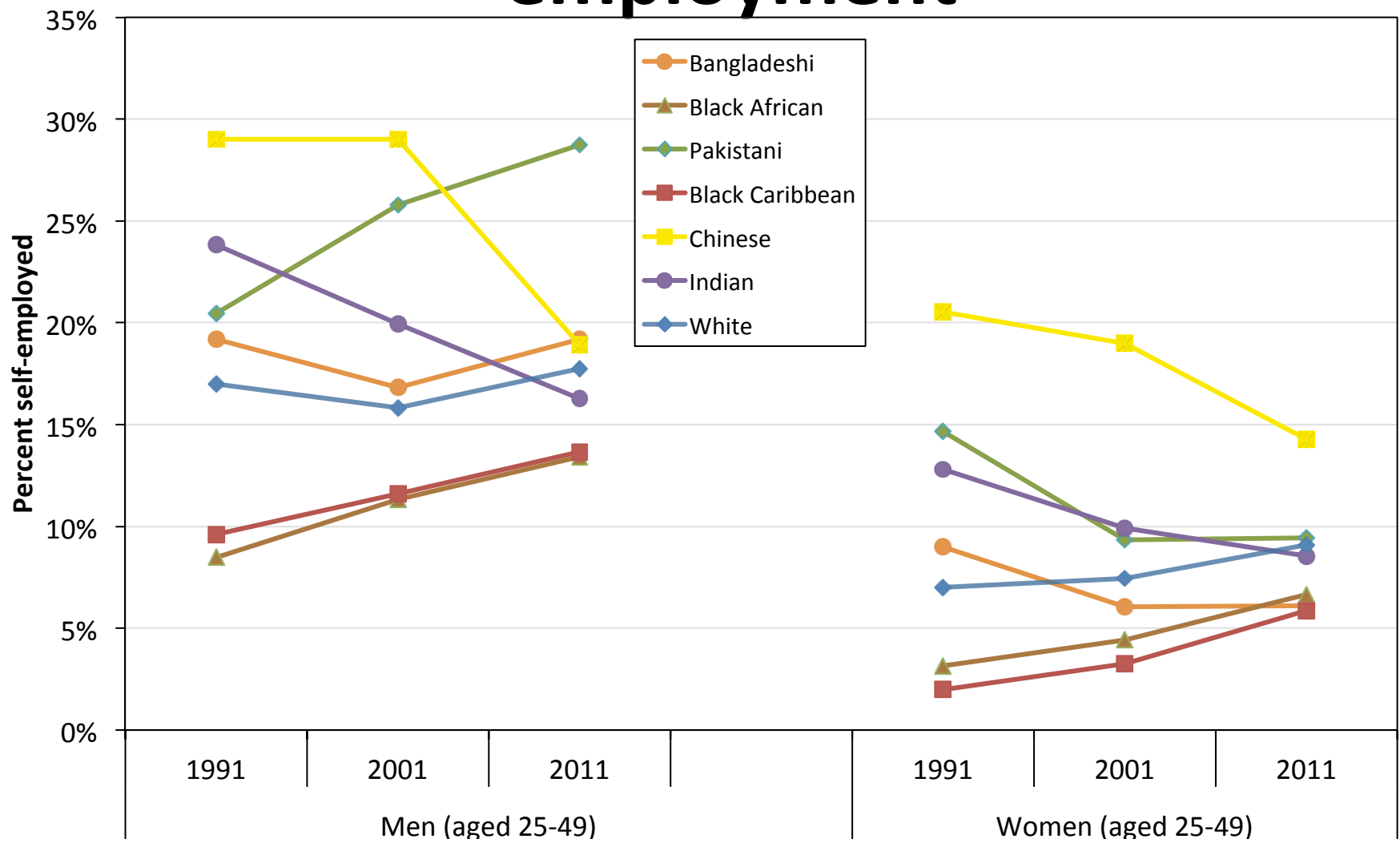
Women (aged 25-49)



Growing ethnic inequalities in part-time employment



Changing ethnic pattern of self-employment



Changing economic activity rates

Women aged 25-49

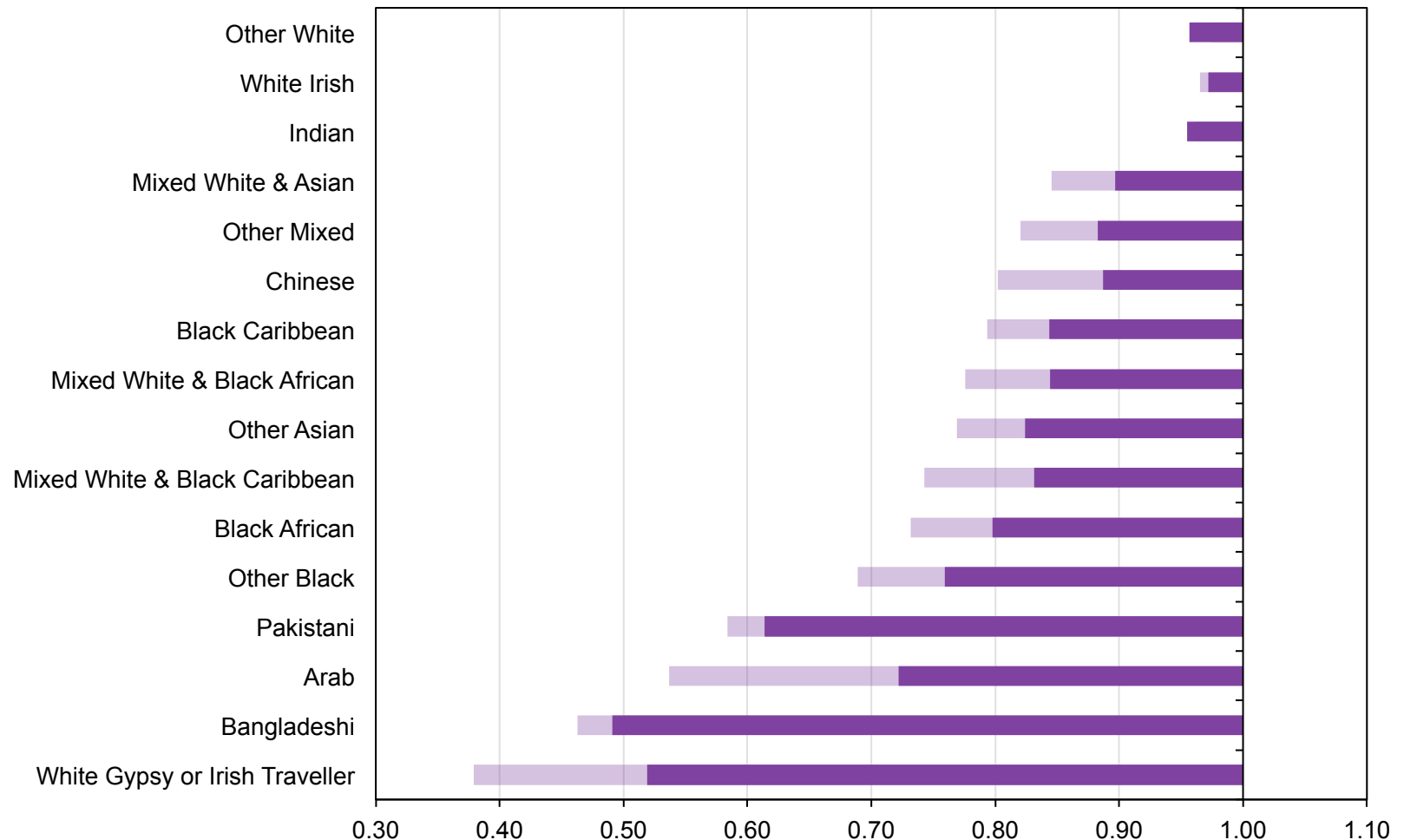


Economic activity: Arab & White Gypsy or Irish Traveller groups

- Very low economic activity rates in White Gypsy or Irish Traveller and the Arab groups, for both men and women.
 - Around 40% for Arab and White Gypsy or Irish Traveller women compared with over 80% for the White British women.
 - Around two-thirds of Arab and White Gypsy or Irish Traveller men, compared with over 90% for the White British men.
- For the Arab group this, in part, reflects high rates of participation in full-time education:
 - 13 times higher than the national average for men;
 - 8 times higher than the national average for women.
- For the White Gypsy or Irish Traveller group this reflects very high rates of sickness or disability:
 - More than 3 times the national average for both women and men.

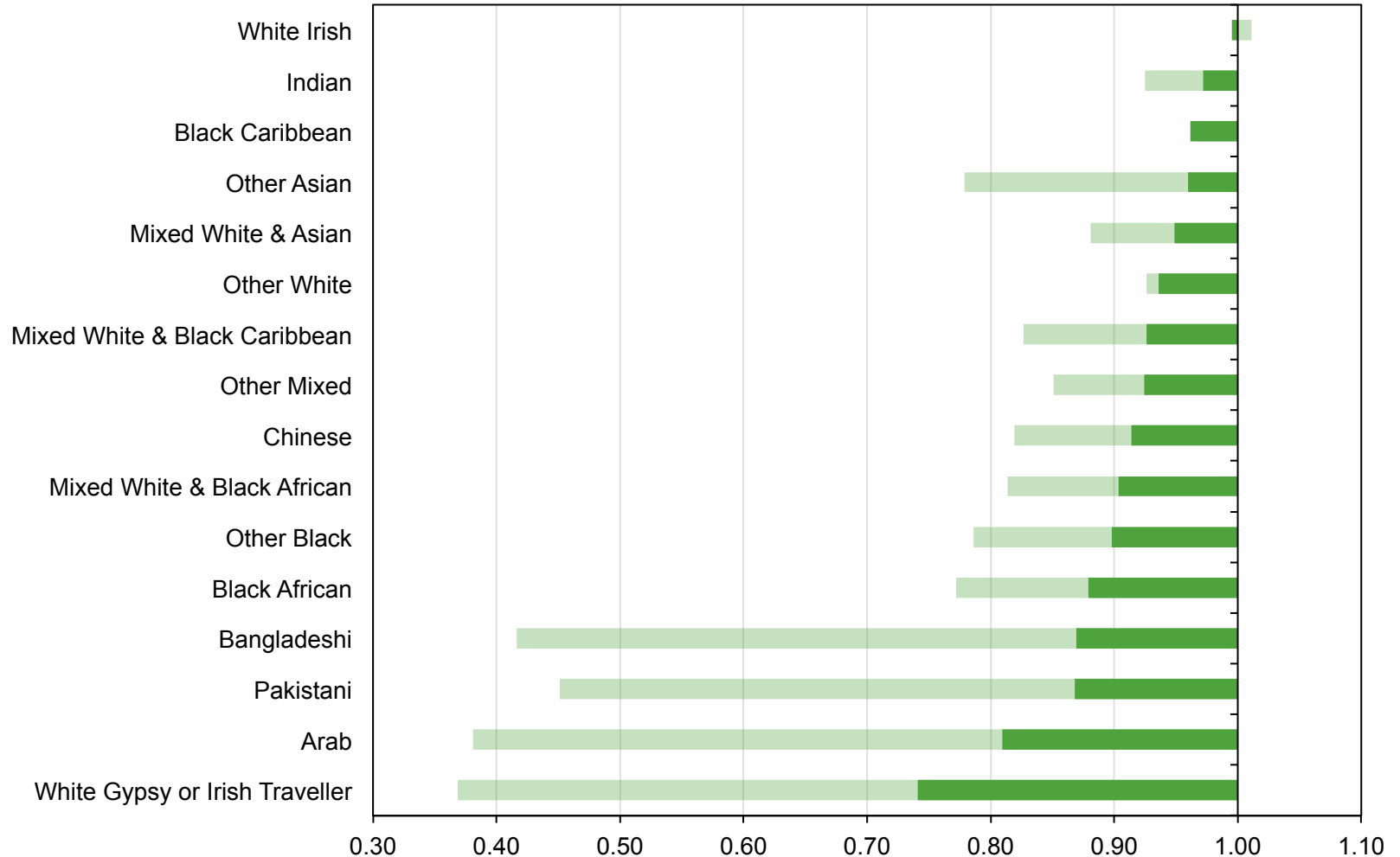
Ethnicity & full-time employment: men aged 25-49 in 2011 compared with White British

■ Relative full-time employment rate, economically active ■ Relative full-time employment rate, all



Ethnicity and full & part-time employment: women aged 25-49 in 2011 compared with White British

■ Relative full and part-time employment rate, economically active ■ Relative full and part-time employment rate, all



Summary

- Advantage of White men and women compared with other ethnic groups.
- But some convergence over the 20 years for Indian and Chinese people (particularly men) in relation to unemployment and self-employment.
- Although two of the most disadvantaged groups – Pakistani and Bangladeshi people – have seen some improvements, they continue to experience substantial inequalities.
- Inequalities faced by Black Caribbean and Black African people are consistent over the twenty years studied.
- Those in mixed groups are close to their non-mixed minority counterparts.
- The most substantial disadvantage is experienced by those in the White Gypsy or Irish Traveller group, with very low rates of economic activity and high rates of unemployment.
- Those in the Arab group also experience considerable inequalities.

Possible explanations

- The context of migration and evolution of contexts is important (region, occupational structures, economy, education, and processes of racialisation).
- Consistent age group, so not the same generation studied over the 1991, 2001 and 2011 Census periods: composition, generation and period differences are at play.
- The importance of geography: deprivation, schooling, and concentration in particular industries and occupations.
- Education important for all groups, but not sufficient to offset the large ethnic penalty of Pakistani and Bangladeshi people across generations.
- Reassertion of class background for Indian and Chinese people?
- Social networks and connections.
- Institutional and interpersonal discrimination, ethnic penalty.