

Multicultural Broadcasting: concept and reality

Report edited by Andrea Millwood Hargrave
Director of the Joint Research Programme
Broadcasting Standards Commission and Independent Television Commission

British Broadcasting Corporation
Broadcasting Standards Commission
Independent Television Commission
Radio Authority

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1 Summary

The research examined attitudes towards multicultural broadcasting held by the audience and by practitioners in the radio and television industries. Additionally, attitudes towards multiculturalism within advertising were explored briefly. Participants who took part in the qualitative audience research were drawn from the audience at large, including minority ethnic groups, while a sample of practitioners was interviewed qualitatively. A further sample took part in an online survey.¹

1.1 Audience attitudes

Levels of representation

In group discussions, participants from minority ethnic groups agreed that there had been an increase in the levels of representation of ethnic minorities within mainstream broadcasting over recent years. Nevertheless, they still saw the need for greater representation, both of their own communities as well as other minority groups.

Participants said it was important to be represented in mainstream broadcasts, be they radio or television, because they were considered to be the most influential of the media. Specialist services, while important to the communities they served, could not address this general need to be 'seen'.

The reasons for wanting increased and better representation in mainstream broadcasting included:

- demonstrating a sense of belonging within British society;
- fostering a better understanding of ethnic cultures among other communities, including the White population;
- allowing their children to identify with positive representations of people from their communities.

Radio

It was agreed that the issues of representation were less acute on radio. For example, it was not always clear what the ethnic origin of a presenter might be, although some participants used aural cues (such as names) to note ethnicity.

Television

Many said that they saw no representations of 'themselves' on mainstream television, especially, some said, in domestically produced television programmes. This was principally true of those participants who came from the non-Black and non-Indian sub-continent groups.

1. To distinguish between these various parts of the research, those interviewed as members of the audience are referred to throughout the report as 'participants'. 'Interviewees' is used to refer to those industry representatives who were interviewed qualitatively, while other representatives of the radio and television industry who answered an online survey are referred to as 'respondents'.

Types of representation

Participants were not just concerned about the levels of representation they saw or heard, but also about the content of such portrayals. In particular, they referred to difficulties they encountered with:

- tokenism;
- negative stereotyping;
- unrealistic and simplistic portrayals of their community;
- negative or non-existent images of their countries or areas of origin.

It was important to all participants that the representations of themselves on television (and to a lesser extent, on radio) were authentic; that is, that the characterisations were not perceived as tokenistic or stereotypical. There was a sense, among some, that characters from minority ethnic groups were included in television programmes because it was expected that they should be there. This, in turn, meant that the characters were ill-drawn and unimportant.

The argument for authenticity - made by most of the groups - was that it need not be very detailed. They suggested that portrayals should be drawn in a variety of ways and from different perspectives to reflect reality. This view - that portrayals should reflect the complexity between, and within, groups - was referred to in a number of ways. For example, those participants from the Indian sub-continent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) did not want to be labelled 'Asian' and they called for their distinct cultural identities to be shown. Similarly, those within the mixed race Black groups said their issues were rarely represented.

There was also some comment among groups that certain issues were portrayed stereotypically. For example, groups from the Indian sub-continent talked of the way in which arranged marriages were presented on television. They felt that the treatment of the issue was neither accurate nor did it reflect the way in which the system had changed over time. Many called for a fairer portrayal of such issues.

Allied to this was the more universal concern about the way in which countries and populations were represented. This was a source of complaint for all the minority ethnic groups interviewed.

Many participants from the minority ethnic groups called for greater representation in particular types of output, for example, as presenters in news and documentary programming. These genres were considered to present positive images and provide respected role models, especially for younger audiences. Participants recognised the importance of being within programmes that achieved high audiences such as television soap operas or game shows, because they increased awareness of minority groups among the population as a whole. There was, nevertheless, a resistance to tokenism. Praise was given when characters were seen to be in non-stereotypical roles.

Participants did not feel that, because people on-air were from their own communities, they necessarily represented 'their' perspective. There was a difference based on age and many of the older participants from minority ethnic groups were offended, for example, by television programmes that offered comic reflections on their communities by actors from within that community.

During the research, several participants said that one of the main reasons for inadequate or irrelevant representations of their communities was the fact that individuals from their community were not working within the decision-making hierarchy in broadcasting. Some participants called for an increased access to employment opportunities to be made available to people from minority ethnic groups.

In summary, broadcasting was seen to have a role to play in breaking down certain barriers by offering:

- positive role models, such as figures of respect and authority, especially to younger people
- different and positive images of the countries from which participants originated
- ethnic groups a sense of inclusion within British society, especially when portrayed within mainstream broadcasting
- some access to material in the language of a participant's country of origin

While it was accepted the latter might not be available in mainstream broadcasting, many wished that it could be.

The use of radio and television

Participants generally shared similar listening or viewing habits, regardless of the minority ethnic group from which they were drawn. Certain services within mainstream broadcasting were felt to cater especially well for minority ethnic interests, while many used the specialist services available on radio or via cable and satellite television. Some were seeking programming in the language of their country of origin; many mentioned the greater or more balanced coverage of international news. Older participants, in particular, were especially likely to listen to or watch specialist programming, often because of the fact that they were broadcast in their language of origin or because they provided a link with their cultures. For them, the colloquial English or the cultural references used in mainstream broadcasts were not easily accessible.

There was an underlying feeling throughout the audience research that, as all people paid a licence fee for the BBC, it had a greater obligation to accommodate minority tastes. Equally, many (especially younger participants) accepted that not all minority interests could - or should - be catered for.

Younger White participants tended to feel it was divisive to have programmes aimed at particular communities and that it would be better to concentrate on achieving fairer representation in mainstream broadcasting. Older White participants were less concerned about the way in which minority ethnic groups might be represented, especially in mainstream broadcasting, sometimes arguing that there were specialist services available to meet these groups' needs.

Advertising

Audiences generally felt that the representation of minority ethnic groups within advertising, both on radio and television, was less of a concern than such representation within programmes. They considered that advertisements were less influential in determining attitudes and that advertising was driven by commercial considerations.

There was some concern that advertising agencies should not use stereotypes as a shorthand for particular groups and those television commercials that appeared to be 'colour blind' were particularly welcomed.

1.2 Industry attitudes

Definitions of 'multicultural broadcasting'

Representatives from the radio and television industries were asked how they would define 'multicultural broadcasting'. They found it difficult to provide a single definition, but thought it suggested a range of approaches and offered three strands of thought:

- (i) programming which reflects the multicultural nature of society - reflecting diversity of cultures and communities throughout all programmes;
- (ii) programming with a specific perspective, but with appeal to a wider audience - this was called, by some, 'crosscultural' programming;
- (iii) specialist programming - called, by some, 'monocultural' programming.
Many interviewees argued that, if such programming was not placed within specialist services, it was, in fact, crosscultural, as it could be accessed by an audience wider than its target.

It was argued that multicultural programming should pay heed to:

- relevance for the particular audiences being served;
- the variety of voices and opinions being presented;
- the manner in which portrayals are presented, with an understanding of the cultural and ethnic background of characters, for example;
- the creative input, including the diversity of the production teams;
- on-air representation, including variables such as casting.

The perceived key benefits of a multicultural approach to broadcasting were linked closely in these interviewees' minds with social benefits and included:

- an accurate reflection of society;
- social cohesion and inclusivity;
- an improved service to different parts of the audience.

Interviewees were aware of the commercial imperative to retain audiences, including those from minority communities. Many interviewees thought it was important to measure not just numbers of people from minority ethnic groups on-air, but also the manner in which they were portrayed.

Radio

Interviewees from local radio stations had a greater confidence that they were in touch with the needs and interests of their audiences, and felt that their programming reflected them accordingly.

Levels of representation

Sixty-nine per cent of a sample of 109 representatives from the television industry agreed (in an online survey) that the perspectives of ethnic and racial minorities were not featured sufficiently on terrestrial television in the United Kingdom. Forty five per cent of a radio sample (N=91) agreed this was true of radio.

In general, respondents thought that there had been an increase in the number of people from minority ethnic groups represented on-air (72% agreement among the radio sample and 73% among those working in television).

Although 63% of the radio respondents thought there had been a growth in programming that was relevant to minority ethnic groups, only 32% of the television sample agreed. As this suggests, in many cases, respondents from the radio industry were more likely to say that significant strides had been made within their medium.

When asked if it was possible to make programmes for a wide audience that also reflected specific cultures and perspectives, both the radio and the television samples split more or less equally between those who agreed and those who disagreed. However, when asked if specialist programming would always serve targeted communities better than mainstream broadcasting, the majority (83%) of the television sample disagreed, arguing that representation on mainstream television would be better. The radio sample was also more inclined to disagree (56%), but not as strongly.

The interviewees from the television industry were asked specifically about changes in representation within news and non-fiction and within drama and fiction. In both cases, there was seen to be a significant increase in the number of people from minorities seen on-screen.

Interviewees felt that news and current affairs, in particular, tended to receive more critical attention than other programming. They also saw a positive benefit to bringing a wider range of people into the news process who could present a broader perspective and generate a greater understanding and knowledge of the issues under consideration. Some recognised that, while there had been changes in the numbers of presenters from minority ethnic groups in television news programmes, the news agenda was still largely set for the dominant culture.

There was particular concern, however, about the burden of representation which might fall on journalists or programme-makers from minority ethnic groups. Many wanted to resist this, while acknowledging that their perspective could be valuable. Indeed, there was general resistance among the industry sample to tokenism, either in terms of the programmes made or the inclusion of characters from minority ethnic groups.

Within television drama and other fictional and entertainment programming, interviewees acknowledged that the issue of authenticity was particularly important. There was a strong feeling that representations should not be token. Some interviewees spoke of '*the richness of difference*' that was brought to programming which reflected different perspectives. Some programme genres, such as sport, music or - on television - children's programming, were regarded as being more multicultural in their output than others, but there were some concerns that certain minority ethnic communities were represented to the detriment of others.

Industry interviewees, like participants in the audience research, felt that one of the challenges for the industry was to understand the different ethnic make-up of their listeners and viewers across the country. Those working in mainstream broadcasting thought that the demographic information available to them about their audiences was not always complete, although this was less of an issue for specialist services.

Employment

Most interviewees, especially those working within mainstream broadcasting, thought that achieving diversity in the workplace was the greatest challenge for the employer. When asked to consider employment within the industry, interviewees felt that people from minority ethnic groups were under-represented.

While a number of respondents did not answer this question, of those that did, only 32% of the radio sample and 22% of the television sample agreed that the number of people from minorities in decision-making roles in broadcast organisations had increased in the last five years.

There was general criticism of non-specialist broadcast organisations which were perceived to be White in their outlook. The difficulty of moving into established systems and workforces was mentioned by some, as was the continued importance of being within the right 'network'.

Initiatives such as Channel 4's Cultural Diversity Clause, which requires a diverse workforce in production teams, were praised as a strategy to encourage such employment. Other initiatives, such as recruitment or retention drives, were also commended by many working within both radio and television. Those in the television sample in the online survey were substantially more likely than the radio sample to agree it was 'very important'.

There was some criticism of broadcast output which was felt to reflect the culture of an organisation. Some said that the programming transmitted was such that people from minority ethnic groups would not be encouraged either to enter those organisations or to make diverse programming.

All interviewees - whether from a minority ethnic group or not - insisted that it was most important to choose the right person for the job, regardless of ethnicity. What was being argued for was a system in which all groups within the population felt they could take equal part.

Guidance and regulation

When asked, many interviewees were uncertain if there were any external or internal guidelines or policies in place regarding multicultural broadcasting. Many thought they had an instinctive understanding of the requirements. However, some felt that, without guidelines, initiatives to achieve greater cultural diversity on-air or in the workplace might falter.

Television

Those working for independent television production companies felt that the diversity agenda among television broadcasters was often unclear and so complicated the process of commissioning and production.

When the television sample within the online survey was asked if it were important that programmes should be monitored to ensure they met certain criteria regarding representation of minorities, over half said that it was.

Radio

On the other hand, only 27% of those within the radio sample said it was important that some type of independent monitoring should be undertaken.

Advertising industry views

The small sample of interviewees from the advertising industry suggested that there was not particular attention paid to issues of cultural diversity unless they were pertinent to commercial requirements. They considered the prime role of commercials was to convey an advertising message, often to a national audience. Therefore, it was important not to allow a desire for cultural diversity to distort that message.

2 Background

The broadcasting industry (broadcasters and regulators) has been aware for many years now that the manner and quality of the portrayal of minority ethnic groups in broadcasting need to be considered, as well as the access that minority ethnic communities have to the media. Television research which tracks the levels of representation of minority ethnic groups on-screen has shown slow progress over the years. Other work looking at audience attitudes towards the portrayal of minority ethnic groups on television and the issues the television industry faces were highlighted most recently in research conducted by the Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Independent Television Commission in December 1999, *Include me in*.²

In addition to research which has underlined issues of cultural diversity on-screen and the associated difficulties of achieving such diversity, the broadcasting industry and its regulators have sought to create an environment which encourages positive development. For the past 15 years, radio broadcasters have been able to opt to apply to the Radio Authority for licences for specific audiences or communities and licences may be awarded where the Radio Authority decides this broadens choice within relevant transmission areas. The ITC collates and publishes annual data on minority ethnic employment for Channels 3, 4 and 5.

In 2000, the television industry set up the Cultural Diversity Network (CDN) with the express remit '*to modernise the portrayal of ethnic minorities in mainstream programming so that racial diversity on and behind screen reflects today's multicultural Britain*'. Much of the drive behind the CDN's early work has been within the area of employment. Some television broadcasters have adopted a clause within their commissioning procedures which makes diversity one of the standard criteria against which new programme proposals are judged. Other broadcasters have made commitments regarding both employment and on-screen representation. Mainstream broadcasters such as BBC2 and Channel 4 have recently transmitted seasons of programmes tackling the issues raised by being part of a minority ethnic group within this country.

In response to these many changes, the BSC and ITC held a seminar chaired by Sir Herman Ouseley (October 2001). It was attended by regulators, executives and programme-makers from the broadcasting industry and academics. The call from that seminar was for a move away from simple 'head counting' as a way of monitoring broadcast output to a method which allows for the more qualitative aspects of portrayals, such as authenticity, to be measured. There was also a call for better routes into employment within the industries.

Since then, public debate about the role the media play in promoting perceptions of different cultures within British society has been heightened with coverage of domestic incidents such as the riots in Oldham (2001) and events during and since 11 September 2001. These events also highlighted a relative lack of awareness about these cultures which form a part of our society.

2. *Include me in*; Annabelle Sreberny; Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Independent Television Commission, 1999.

The research presented here has been commissioned jointly by the BBC, the BSC, the ITC and the Radio Authority to expand understanding of the issues raised by 'multiculturalism' for both the audience and the industry. It seeks to explore positive developments and discover what concerns remain. It also looks, briefly, at advertising industry perspectives, which some consider to be at the 'cutting edge' of attitudes within society.

It is an important time to conduct this review as the industry moves forwards post 11 September 2001 and also into a new regulatory framework.

The objectives of the research were defined as follows:

- To understand the perceptions and opinions of audiences regarding current representation of minority ethnic groups on television and radio. This included attitudes towards targeted broadcasting, such as specialist television satellite and cable channels or niche radio stations.
- To understand the way in which audiences think broadcasting in the United Kingdom can and should develop in relation to cultural diversity.
- To examine issues of offence among the audience, especially in relation to the portrayal of race and religion in broadcasting.
- To learn what those working in the broadcasting and advertising industries understand by 'multicultural broadcasting'.
- To understand what both industry players and audiences perceive to be the benefits and challenges of multicultural broadcasting.
- To understand key attitudes within the broadcast (television and radio) and advertising industries on these topics.
- To find out what resources or support those working in the broadcasting and advertising industries think might enable them to integrate multiculturalism more broadly into their output.

The project is divided into two principal parts:³

- Audience research:⁴ Qualitative research among a wide variety of audience groups representing minority ethnic communities within the United Kingdom and some groups among the White population;⁵ and
- Industry research:⁶ Both qualitative and quantitative, asking questions of samples of radio and television programme-makers, television commissioning editors, radio station owners and representatives of the advertising industry. Two hundred people from the broadcasting industry also completed an online survey.

The two parts of the research are reported upon separately within this document with the audience views presented first. In addition, reference is made to a television output analysis conducted in 2001 by the Communications Research Group for the BBC, BSC and ITC. This is presented, in full, in Appendix 1.

3. See Appendix 2 for details of the research methodology and samples.

4. This stage of the research was conducted by BMRB Qualitative in February 2002.

5. Participants were asked to self-define their ethnicity and then recruited to relevant groups.

6. The industry research was conducted by Frank N Magid Associates. The qualitative interviews took place in February 2002 and the online survey was conducted during May 2002.

3 Audience attitudes towards multicultural broadcasting

3.1 The place of mainstream broadcasting

There is no reason to suppose that the role of broadcasting should be any different for minority ethnic groups than for the population as a whole, and indeed this is what the research found. Radio and television each performed different functions in the lives of those interviewed.

Radio

The research groups confirmed that radio was listened to while doing other things, such as driving, cooking or even spending time with friends. It was listened to for music, news, phone-ins (especially those that focused on sport and relationship problems) and also for local information, such as traffic news, especially in the morning and evenings (during 'drive time') and sometimes at work.⁷

The research found greater variance in radio listening and the stations sought by participants than with television. Certainly most participants, especially the younger ones, listened to mainstream national or local stations. Older participants from minority ethnic groups were more likely to say they listened to specialist stations. These are often stations that broadcast in languages other than English or stations that receive short-term licences from the Radio Authority for a particular event, such as the period of Ramadan.⁸ (Indeed, some participants were recruited on the basis that they listened to such services.)

Where there were differences in radio listening, these were driven, for older participants, by the language of transmission or, for younger participants, by the music played. Both younger and older participants also mentioned listening to specialist programming for the coverage of news from other countries.

Participants were asked to list the stations to which they listened. Most mentioned national radio stations such as the BBC stations. Commercial stations, both national and local, such as Virgin Radio and Kiss 100 FM, were also frequently mentioned. Obviously much of the impetus for choice comes from the demographic of the participant, with age being the strongest discriminator. While this will be covered in greater detail below, participants from individual minority ethnic groups mentioned the following stations which they said they particularly listened to:

Black groups⁹

These participants mentioned, in addition to those above:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Choice FM | ■ Heart FM |
| ■ Red Dragon FM (in Wales) | ■ Kiss 100 FM |
| ■ Classic FM | ■ NPOWER (a Nigerian pirate station) |
| ■ Premier Christian Radio (particularly mentioned by Black African participants) | |

7. *Listening 2000*: Andrea Millwood Hargrave; Broadcasting Standards Commission and The Radio Authority, 2000.

8. These are known as Restricted Service Licences. See the Radio Authority's website for further details: www.radioauthority.org.uk.

9. All participants were asked to self-define their ethnicity. Those who are reported here as the 'Black group' were participants from group discussions held with people who were Black African, Black Caribbean or Black British/Black Other/Mixed Race.

Groups from the Indian sub-continent¹⁰ mentioned:

- Galaxy FM
- Talk Radio (now talkSport)
- Heart FM
- Sunrise FM and Sunrise Radio (some Asian language)
- Sabras Radio (some Asian language)
- Kiss 100 FM
- Capital FM
- BBC Radio Leicester
- Radio Ramadan (some Asian language)

Chinese groups mentioned:

- Magic FM
- Jazz FM
- Virgin Radio
- Spectrum International Radio
- (Chinese-language broadcasts for an hour each day)

Arab groups said they listened to:

- BBC World
- Spectrum International Radio (Arab-language broadcasts for a period each day)
- Capital FM
- Heart FM

Greek Cypriot participants listened to:

- Kiss 100 FM
- London Greek Radio (mostly Greek language)
- Choice FM

Turkish Cypriot groups mentioned:

- Jazz FM
- Talk Radio (now talkSport)
- Capital FM
- BBC World Service
- Kiss 100 FM
- London Turkish Radio (mostly Turkish language)

White groups listened to:

- BBC Radio Wales (in Wales)
- Capital FM
- Century FM
- Red Dragon FM (in Wales)
- Real Radio

¹⁰. Those from the Indian sub-continent were Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi.

Television

Television is used differently from radio. Many participants from minority ethnic groups said they watched programmes, particularly in the evenings, to unwind.¹¹ Despite this, many said that television was not only about 'escapism', but also offered them 'a window on the world'. It allowed them to learn not just about the cultures with which they identified, but also about other peoples and cultures. If the television was on during the day, however, it was used far more like radio, as a form of 'background noise' and companionship. Among the Asian groups, younger participants were more likely to say that they had televisions in their bedrooms and that they chose to watch programmes away from their parents (particularly the more 'racy' programmes).

The types of programmes that participants watched were broadly similar across the groups and included:

- soap operas (particularly *EastEnders*, *Coronation Street* and *Hollyoaks*), often described as '*must sees*', especially by younger participants;
- comedies such as *Friends*, *The Office*, *Frasier* and *Cold Feet*;
- dramas such as *Inspector Morse*, *West Wing* and *ER* were also very popular;
- quiz shows and chat shows (both those with 'the public' such as *Rikki Lake* and those with celebrities, such as *Johnny Vaughan*) were frequently mentioned;
- the news was particularly important to older participants, while documentaries (such as *Animal Planet*, *Walking with Dinosaurs* and *Horizon*) were also mentioned by many groups;
- 'real-life' programmes, such as the '*... from hell*' series and DIY programmes.

Participants were asked to describe the five terrestrial channels. Their generalist nature made this difficult, but there were some broad areas of agreement. Many grouped BBC1 and BBC2 together as the more 'serious' channels, while others viewed BBC2, along with Channel 4, as being the channel for documentaries. For these participants, BBC1 and ITV1 was 'easy watching' with a focus on quizzes, chat shows and comedies. Channel 4 was seen as being 'wackier' or 'quirkier' and for a younger audience, while, among those that could receive it, Channel 5 was felt to be '*the budget channel*'.

Those with satellite or cable television were able to describe the nature of these channels more easily than the mixed-schedule terrestrial channels, and associated them with particular programme genres. For example, UK Gold was associated with re-runs of classic British comedies, E4 with American comedies or dramas such as *Friends* and *ER*, and the film, music and sports channels with their particular type of output. Many participants from the Indian sub-continent, or the Arab or Chinese groups, also mentioned specialist channels aimed at their communities, including non-English-language programming.

11. *Soap Box or Soft Soap? Audience Attitudes to the British Soap Opera*; Andrea Millwood Hargrave with Lucy Gatfield; Broadcasting Standards Commission, 2002.

Some of the mainstream channels were felt to cater better for minority tastes than others. Among the Black groups, some participants commented that Channel 4 was the only terrestrial channel - and MTV the only cable/satellite channel - that represents Black people.

'I would rather watch Channel 4 for the main reason that they would show more Black programmes.'

Black African, male, aged 31-55, London

Channel 4 and BBC2 were also mentioned, positively, by participants from the Indian sub-continent for transmitting minority interest programming, but there was a sense that such programmes were always scheduled late at night.

Black participants argued that US television includes many more Black people than UK television, particularly within comedy programmes. Indeed, there was a feeling that a lot of Black representation on British television is, in fact, American in origin. There was a consequent demand from participants for more Black British faces in all programme genres. They felt it was vital that more Black people presented serious programmes in particular the news, documentaries and current affairs. These genres were considered to command respect and present positive role models. However, it was acknowledged that there needs to be greater representation across other genres, such as dramas, soap operas and chat shows, because these have large audiences and can play a crucial part in shaping attitudes towards the Black community.

On the other hand, participants from the Indian sub-continent agreed that Asians were far better represented currently in British comedy (*Goodness Gracious Me* and *The Kumars at Number 42*) than in other genres. These participants were also keen to see more Asian newscasters and documentary presenters on mainstream television, as well as dramas and soap operas which involve authentic Asian characters.

Within the focus groups there was often debate among participants as to the extent to which mainstream television should be attempting to provide specialist broadcasting. Younger participants, and some older people, often agreed that it was unrealistic to expect mainstream channels to provide programming that would be of interest to a very small group.

'I don't think you have enough [...] to do Asians, Muslims and Sikhs, you know, and Black guys and Chinese. Before you know it you won't see no English... If there was one ... just for Asians on mainstream television, then you are going to get every single other race saying we want exactly the same... Because there will always be someone saying we want this and we want that.'

Indian, male, aged 18-30, Leicester

However, some did feel that that the BBC has a greater duty than other channels and stations to cater for minorities, as minority communities pay their licence fee and should be able to benefit from the channels paid for from the fee.

3.2 Specialist broadcasting interests: Radio

When considering the issue of the representation of minority ethnic groups in broadcasting, most groups tended to focus on their own community or on communities with which they felt a link.

This research found that participants considered it more difficult to discuss the issue of 'representation' on radio than on television, partly because of the visual aspect (listeners do not see the radio presenter). Also, many participants were aware that there are specialist non-English-language radio stations catering to distinct communities and so there was considered to be adequate provision for these communities. There was still a sense, however, that minority ethnic groups are not generally well represented on mainstream radio.

The following section considers the attitudes of participants to the way in which minority ethnic communities are represented on radio and the drivers for listening to particular types of output.

Black groups

Black participants were able to identify particular stations as playing 'Black music' or as being 'Black stations' (Galaxy FM, Kiss 100 FM and Choice FM), principally through the music played, the presenters' accents and the language used. Some participants remarked that phone-ins were not noticeably different in content on Black stations from mainstream national stations, but that presenters tended to have African or Caribbean accents.

'It's the twang type thing... and expressions they use.'

Black Caribbean, female, aged 31-55, Leeds

There was more mention of pirate radio stations among these participants than those from other groups. Some of those who listened to pirate radio stations felt that these are generally run by, and for, Black people. An example given was NPOWER, which offers news and comment about Nigeria. Some Black participants said such stations existed because it was made more difficult for Black stations to obtain a Radio Authority licence, although they had no evidence to support this view. In fact, the Radio Authority is required to broaden choice and it is up to applicants to apply to target particular under-served audience groups.

However, despite this discussion of Black radio stations, most participants agreed that it was not always easy to tell the ethnic background of a presenter or band. For some, the issue was totally unimportant or irrelevant. For example, participants mentioned shows such as those presented by Radio One's Trevor Nelson and Richard Blackwood, while some said they had thought that Tim Westwood was Black until they saw pictures of him.

'Half the time you get a DJ talking and he could be Black, but you think he is White anyway. You can't see him, can you? You are not thinking what they are, you are thinking about what they are playing.'

Black British/Black Other/Mixed Race, female, aged 18-30, Cardiff

Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups

The groups from the Indian sub-continent listened to mainstream radio stations for music, chat shows and phone-ins, sport and general news. However, there was a sense among these groups that there is little representation of Asian communities on mainstream radio stations and the programming was felt to be predominately White.

‘There’s no Asian presenters. The music, everything is White.’

Bangladeshi, female, aged 18-30, London

On prompting, some participants recalled an Asian presenter on Radio One, who presents in English, but has an Asian name. Participants in Leicester made comment about Radio Leicester being ‘more multicultural’ than most, with a greater mixture of presenters and music from different backgrounds. This group also said that they sometimes heard text messages read out from people with Asian names.

Specialist Asian stations generally played an important role for these participants, especially older listeners. They were valued because:

- Participants felt that the news coverage of events such as the war in Afghanistan and other international events were more in-depth and less biased.
- Participants could hear news about their countries of origin in greater depth, as well as news of interest to their local community.
- Asian music was played.
- There were broadcasts from temples and mosques, especially during festivals.
- There were programmes and phone-ins about issues of particular interest to the community, often addressed in ways specifically relevant to them.
- They broadcast in participants’ first languages (or their parents’ first languages).
- Some also liked the fact that stations such as Sunrise catered for different religions by having a Qur’an recital for Muslims and Bhajans (devotional songs) for Hindus early in the mornings.

Participants talked about these features as being of value because they allowed participants to keep in touch with their cultures, languages and communities, as well as giving them access to music and relevant information. Younger people, in particular, seemed to ‘dip in’ to these radio stations, to hear a bit of Asian music or news, while older people listened more regularly, perhaps ‘dipping in’ to mainstream stations.

Chinese, Arab, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot groups

Many participants in these groups felt that there was little representation of minority ethnic groups on radio at all and virtually none aimed at their communities (some were aware of specialist Asian language stations). Many accepted that it was difficult to serve small communities and pointed to other countries with larger populations of particular groups (such as the Chinese in Canada), which are well-served.

'I heard from my friend that they don't have to speak English [in Canada]. It's a big Chinese community. It's like ten times Chinatown there. So they have everything Chinese. Chinese radio, TV stations, 24 hours.'

Chinese, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, London

The **Chinese** groups referred to Spectrum International Radio¹² as the only station on which they could hear Chinese people or any real coverage of issues relating to China or the Chinese. They said they would like to hear a greater mix of accents on mainstream radio, particularly when the news was covering issues such as the race riots.

Similarly, for the **Arabs**, Spectrum International Radio - for a limited amount of time each day - provides a range of shows and information that they valued, including features on food and fashion, international news and news of the local community and a range of music to which they relate.

'For me in the UK, apart from playing tennis I go nowhere. I used to go clubbing, but there are fights in every nightclub. The best thing to do is to relax while listening to some Arab music or programmes... They [programmes on Spectrum] talk about lifestyle, the Arab community within the UK, how they are living.'

Arab, male, aged 25-45, London

There was general agreement among these participants that there is little or no representation of Arabs on other radio stations and that the news about Arab countries is particularly limited.

The **Greek Cypriot** and **Turkish Cypriot** groups agreed that there was little representation of their communities on mainstream radio. However, they also pointed out that it could be difficult to tell if somebody was of the same background - within the Turkish Cypriot group there was a discussion about whether one of the Kiss FM presenters is Turkish or not.

Some participants in these groups said they sometimes listened to London Greek Radio or to London Turkish Radio, so that they could maintain a link with their country of origin, their culture and their language.

'So there's a link to home for a lot of people as well.'

Greek Cypriot, mixed gender group, aged 25-45, London

However, others in the groups were more negative. Partly this was a function of language - some of the Greek Cypriot participants who were not fluent in Greek could not understand most of the programmes. Among the Turkish Cypriot participants, some felt that the station was too restricted in its coverage, while others valued its contribution to the Turkish community as a whole.

12. Spectrum International Radio carries Chinese language broadcasts for an hour each day.

The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot participants were aware of Asian and Black stations, and some also said that Asian issues were covered on mainstream radio. They felt that Black stations were accessible to all, while the Asian stations were purely for that community because they do not broadcast in English (although, in fact, they do for some of the time).

White groups

The White groups found it particularly hard to discuss the issue of representation on radio. They either felt that it was not important or that there probably was multi-ethnic representation, but they could not tell. They, too, said it was not always possible to know the ethnic background of a presenter or band. Again, Tim Westwood was cited as an example.

Many of these participants felt that younger people from minority ethnic communities, and those born in the United Kingdom, are just as happy to listen to mainstream stations and that their needs would not be different from similar people from a different ethnic background.

'Some Asian woman's going to have the same problem as some Black woman, some White woman.'

White, mixed gender group, aged 18-30, London

Others went further, particularly the older participants, questioning the need for any specialist broadcasting. They argued that there are a lot of groups who have minority tastes in music, for example, and that they just listen to what they like on mainstream stations or find stations that cater better to their tastes. Nonetheless, many participants were aware that there are specialist Asian language radio stations and some also mentioned an 'Indian section' on BBC Wales at the weekend.

3.3 Levels of representation on 'mainstream' television

As with radio, however, when asked to consider the issue of the representation of minority ethnic people on television, most groups focused primarily on their own community or on related communities.

Participants in all the minority ethnic groups interviewed considered their group was under-represented, although the Black participants and those from the Indian sub-continent acknowledged that the levels of representation of their communities have increased over the last few years. In fact, the latest snapshot of peak time television output, presented in Appendix 1, shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of programmes, including minority ethnic groups, as well as an increase in the numbers of people portrayed. However, the analysis also shows that this increase was, certainly in 2001, almost totally confined to roles played by Black characters.

Participants often said the main reason for this inadequate representation was the lack of individuals from their community working within the decision-making hierarchy of broadcasting.

‘The only way it’s going to get changed right is if you get the Black people at the top of the tree. Not the people that are acting because that’s not the top of the tree, you want whoever’s producing it to say, “Right, this is what we’re going to produce.” If you’ve got a Black person or someone of that typical background they’re going to look at it and say, “Right, we don’t want to produce it and show a Black person as... a coconut.” They will say, “Right, we want it to be real.”’

Black Caribbean, male, aged 18-30, Leeds

It was accepted by some, such as this woman, that some people from minority ethnic groups, such as the Indian sub-continent, may not be willing to play certain roles in television. This, in itself, may lead to certain genres or programme areas that will not include any such representation.

‘I don’t think that you would get an Asian woman doing that, having affairs, having a few scenes in the bed. I don’t think women would do that sort of thing.’

Indian, female, aged 31-55, London

While it was accepted by some that there may be a reluctance among those in their community to work in television, others felt that more should be done to encourage and enable people from minority groups to work in the industry, feeling there is not enough opportunity given to such groups.

‘Some of them aren’t given the chance. There is not as much equal opportunity as the White folks.’

Black African, female, aged 31-55, London

Black groups

These participants generally felt that the representation of Black people on television had improved, especially over the past 10 years.

‘There has been some improvement. You know, 10 years ago you wouldn’t see a Black man... now you see it.’

Black African, male, aged 31-55, London

One specific example given of this improvement was a perception that, in the last few years, Black characters live to the end of films (both on television and in the cinema). Participants attributed this to good Black scriptwriters.

However, there was still a great deal of concern and anger at the perceived lack of representation. This was concentrated, in part, on the sheer numbers of Black characters on-screen - participants felt that there are far too few Black actors and presenters on television.

'You are joking - it's poor, it always has been.'

Black British/Black Other/Mixed Race, male, aged 31-55, Cardiff

There was also a feeling that mainstream news channels and terrestrial news programmes covered mainly European and American issues and there was a lack of programmes that represented their culture or that focused on issues that were important to them.

'Because your children watch television, you know they get a lot from TV. So if you had not just necessarily Black programmes, but [programmes] talking about ethnic minority, I don't like that word, but ethnic minority issues.'

Black Caribbean, female, aged 31-55, Leeds

These groups accepted that their views were affected by the place where they live. Those from London and Leeds felt that the poor representation of Black characters on television was disappointing because they lived in areas with sizeable Black populations. Therefore, television that portrays the world they know should include greater numbers of Black characters. In Cardiff, on the other hand, Black participants accepted that the Black population was not as large as in London. They wanted to see their communities represented on television so that they could identify with other people across the country and not feel isolated.

When thinking about how these different needs could be met, the groups' preference was for mainstream terrestrial and cable/satellite television to increase levels of representation. They felt it was important to *'mix up'* mainstream television so that different groups could be educated about one another.

'It should be mixed... if you start saying, this is for this, and that is for that, then you are segregating... then no one learns anything.'

Black African, male, aged 31-55, London

However, there was a sense of frustration in some groups that led to the proposition that a channel specifically for Black people would ensure that they were properly represented.

'Because not everybody's got an English background, there's different cultures... if you're not getting the feed from any kind of mainstream, in a sense you're restricted to doing things illegal in terms of the radio stations and things like that. All right, you've got publications coming out, newspapers by your own group of people... but there's no television broadcasts.'

Black Caribbean, male, aged 18-30, Leeds

Some said there was more representation on mainstream television of other communities, such as the Indian community. They were aware of specific Asian channels on cable and satellite and some also mentioned Asian programmes and films sometimes shown on the BBC or Channel 4.

When asked to talk about the specialist television channels they viewed, the Black African group mentioned a Nigerian channel (MINAJ) and a channel that used to be on-air (Black Entertainment Television (BET)). Additionally, some of the younger people called MTV Base a '*Black*' channel and frequently mentioned American 'Black comedies' such as *Sister Sister* (now on terrestrial television) and those on the Paramount Comedy Channel.

Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups

These groups felt that the levels of representation of their communities on television were improving. They noted the specialist programming available on mainstream television, mentioning programmes such as *Network East* and the programmes that BBC2 used to show on weekend mornings. They also referred to South Asian films that are shown, generally late at night. Some older participants said that they wanted to see programmes on mainstream television at peak times, arguing that these could educate other people as well as catering to their needs.

'I think they should show it. Children learn a bit. Not only our children, everybody else ... learning and making them aware.'

Indian, female, aged 31-55, London

However, younger participants felt it was unrealistic to expect programmes with such narrowly defined audiences to be shown at peak times and commented that people from outside the community were unlikely to watch them, regardless of when they were broadcast. These participants favoured showing such programmes on specialist cable or satellite channels.

'... It wouldn't make sense for it to be on [mainstream] TV, because I know it wouldn't appeal to everyone. Most people wouldn't even understand where it was coming from. Even if they put subtitles in, or they dubbed it or whatever, it's not the language barrier I'm talking about, it's just the actual, like, they're set in back home and the whole lifestyle and culture.'

Bangladeshi, female, aged 18-30, London

Several such specialist satellite/cable channels were mentioned, including Asia TV, Zee TV and, in Leicester, MATV. This last was felt to play an important role in the community, because it is free and because it combines a focus on the local area with news from 'back home'.

Older participants said they watched these channels to see news, factual and entertainment programmes in their own language that focused on their own culture. Younger people also valued them (although fewer subscribed to them), feeling it was important that they themselves, and their children, keep in touch with their language and culture.

Those participants for whom English was not their first language were particularly dependent on such specialist channels. They watched a wide range of programmes, the type depending on their age. The younger men watched music, discussions of films, interviews, serials and the news. The older women watched dramas, serials, Hindu devotional songs and films.

These participants found it difficult to follow English language programming, but some said they would like to be able to understand more, to learn more about British people. Some also said that they would like to see Hindi programming on terrestrial television, so they could watch it with their children.

‘Terrestrial channels should have a small amount of programming in Hindi... even if they had a programme of an hour or two, we would definitely watch it... There’s nothing in our language on the terrestrial channels so we never switch them on. Our children do and that’s when we watch them by chance, but otherwise you know there’s nothing on those channels for you, so you go to your Asian channels.’

Indian, female, aged 31-55, Leicester

However, many still said there were far too few Asian actors and presenters on television. Indeed, while the groups claim they would be most interested to see somebody from their particular community (Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi), they also viewed the issue in terms of seeing more ‘Asians’ on television. And, in direct contrast to the views expressed by Black participants, they tended to compare their representation with that of the Black community, feeling that the Black community was ‘ahead’ in terms of its inclusion on television.

‘There’s a big gap between the Blacks and Asians. In a way it’s the same story with TV like with football as well, there’s much more Blacks, than Asians.’

Pakistani, male, aged 18-30, Bradford

Certainly the analysis of television output (Appendix 1) shows that the portrayal of Asian people has not improved year-on-year and may even be in decline.

Chinese, Arab, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot groups

The **Chinese** participants felt there was next to no representation of their community on British television and only very limited representation on the mainstream cable/satellite channels. They said that they saw Whites, Blacks and people from the Indian sub-continent on television, but never Chinese and called for greater representation. The younger Chinese complained, particularly, that they never saw positive images of successful Chinese.

'You rarely see successful Chinese people in this country... you very rarely see successful West Indians or Asians for that matter.'

Chinese, mixed gender group, aged 18-30, Oxford

They also felt that the only coverage of China, or Chinese issues, that they see tends to be negative.

'Yeah, very rare, it's very seldom to see China, it's like one month, once - even more rare... There was a documentary [on] infants in China. Always the dark side.'

Chinese, mixed gender group, aged 18-30, Oxford

Older participants, in particular, called for more Chinese films and documentaries about China on mainstream television and to have access to subtitles in English language programmes. They understood there were difficulties not only with the language, but also with understanding cultural references. For example, they expressed particular interest in being able to have subtitles added to programmes such as cookery shows, rather than soap operas, because they felt they might not be able to understand the cultural context of the soap operas.

'How about Naked Chef with Chinese subtitles... then maybe we can understand more.'

Chinese, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, London

There were some specialist cable/satellite channels: PCNE Chinese TV (the European arm of the Hong Kong-based Phoenix Satellite TV) and TVB (also transmitted from Hong Kong). The few participants who did not have cable/satellite television at home watched these channels at their local Chinese community centre.

For the older participants, language was often the main reason for watching specialist broadcasts. Although they could communicate in English, they were often not very comfortable doing so (even during the focus groups) and found the colloquial English used on television hard to understand. They, therefore, relied heavily on these specialist channels and on videos, being interested in the news and enjoying both the language and cultural references of programmes such as dramas, soap operas and films. The younger people also watched these channels, but they tended to 'dip into them' for news and films, rather than using them as their staple or dominant viewing.

The **Arab** participants also felt strongly that they were not represented on television or in the wider context of British society.

'I don't think Arabs are represented at all.'

Arab, female, aged 31-55, London

Some referred to an Arab character in *Coronation Street* who was felt to have been a positive representation, but he had not remained in the programme long. They also mentioned that some Muslim festivals are portrayed on television, but commented that the people used to illustrate them were always South Asian, rather than Arabic.

'When they talk in the BBC or Channel 4 about our celebrations, our religious things, they're talking about Indian people, not Arabic.'

Arab, female, aged 25-45, London

The Arab groups were also very concerned about the image of them in the news and documentaries since 11 September 2001. These were seen to be particularly influential programming genres.¹³

'They call Arabs "fundamentalist Arabs" - everyone classifies you as "fundamentalist".'

Arab, female, aged 25-45, London

Those who only had terrestrial television relied on the radio (particularly Spectrum International Radio) to give them news of the Arab community. They also described going to neighbours' houses in order to watch Arabic-language television channels.

'It's very important to us and we need to have... Arabic programmes. I used to go to my neighbour; you know, across the road, to be able to watch all these programmes.'

Arab, female, aged 25-45, London

The **Greek Cypriot** and **Turkish Cypriot** participants also felt that the main representation of ethnic minorities on television was of Black and Asian people, and could only think of limited examples of representation of their communities. The Greek Cypriot group mentioned the Greek character from *Birds of a Feather* and a Turkish Cypriot character formerly in *EastEnders*. The Turkish Cypriot group referred to Turkish drug dealers in *The Bill*, negative news stories about earthquakes in Turkey and a Turkish family in *EastEnders* that was felt to have provided a negative image as it included a cheater and gambler. These participants accepted a level of stereotyping, acknowledging these characters to have a basis in fact. However, there was a strong feeling that the lack of other types of characters meant that these figures greatly misrepresented their culture and presented a distorted view to the audience at large.

Additionally, both groups pointed out that there was little coverage of the situation in Cyprus, or the talks that had been occurring between the two governments, or even the inclusion of Cyprus as a holiday destination in holiday programmes.

13. *After 11 September 2001: TV News and Transnational Audiences*; British Film Institute, Broadcasting Standards Commission, ESRC Transnational Communities Programme, Independent Television Commission, Open University Pavis Centre, 2002.

Both groups felt that television programmes could provide insights into their way of life by including 'authentic' and varied Turkish Cypriot or Greek Cypriot characters. The Greek Cypriot group acknowledged that it is more difficult to represent them than it might be to represent Black or Asian characters, because it is not immediately obvious if a character is Greek or Turkish. This meant that it was difficult to avoid stereotyping. However, they argued that it would be possible to include indicators such as a character discussing a wedding or festival, having family names that are Greek, having certain kinds of food in the refrigerator and Greek music in the background.

'They'd still have Greek Cypriot names, not necessarily Greek Cypriot accents, because everybody will talk like this and it would be stupid. We don't talk like that, but we do have our beliefs and we do eat certain things. You make sure that there's always olives in your fridge, you know.'

Greek Cypriot, mixed gender group, aged 25-45, London

These participants said that there was no specialist broadcasting catering for their communities on mainstream television, but they were aware of some specialist cable/satellite channels. Those in the Turkish Cypriot group, who also claimed not to listen to much specialist radio, said that they tended only to watch the news on the Turkish Channel.

'In the morning I like to listen to English news, breakfast news, but in the evening I like to listen to Turkish satellite news and then I catch up with the Turkish people.'

Turkish Cypriot, mixed gender group, aged 25-45, London

The parents of some of the Greek Cypriot participants receive Greek-language satellite channels. However, the participants interviewed did not watch these channels themselves - they felt little need for specialist broadcasting, asking instead for more news from their countries and better representation on mainstream television.

'We pay our TV tax, don't we?'

Greek Cypriot, mixed gender group, aged 25-45, London

These participants also thought that separate programmes for different minority groups discouraged integration.

'The thing is, you are living in a society where you are having to interact with lots of different races every single day. I don't think it's particularly helpful to have specific programmes that are aimed at a specific racial group.'

Turkish Cypriot, mixed gender group, aged 25-45, London

White groups

The White groups agreed that there was now far more awareness of ethnic minorities and greater representation of them on television. The groups in Cardiff pointed to the fact that there had been an advance in the representation of many minorities, citing the fact that there is now a Welsh channel which shows programmes in Welsh (S4C).

Many in these groups were aware also of specialist cable and satellite channels, catering to the needs of minority ethnic communities, and some specialist programming on mainstream television (especially the BBC). Some of the older participants also mentioned comedies such as *The Cosby Show*, and more recent 'Black' comedies, which they felt are aimed at a mainly Black audience.

'All these Black shows are just aimed at the Blacks, so you can't sit there and watch.'

White, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, Cardiff

Many, especially younger participants, thought that people in minority ethnic communities who are born in England would not be very interested in specialist programming and that it is only their grandparents who want such material. These younger groups felt it was divisive to have programmes aimed at particular communities and that it would be better to concentrate on achieving a better representation of communities in mainstream television.

'Rather than just have White programmes, just have programmes for Asian minorities, why not kind of mix them all together and see how they get on?'

White, mixed gender group, aged 18-30, Cheshire

However, there was also a view that the BBC should have more of an obligation to cater for minority groups because of the licence fee that people pay.

'At the end of the day, if you want to buy your TV programmes through cable or Sky then that's fine. But at the end of the day we don't get a choice whether we buy the BBC or not. It gets given to us and we have to pay for it. I suppose even if you're in a minority you'd expect them to cater for you as you are forced to pay for it anyway.'

White, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, Cardiff

These participants also felt that exposure to other cultures was a positive benefit of television and that it worked both ways so that minority ethnic groups could learn about British society and culture through the programming available and vice versa.

'We also need programmes about them and their way of life... as long as it's not rammed down your throat. On the news it's pounded into you. When you think, "I've heard this" and you get it three times a night and you are thinking, "I've had just about enough and I'm more interested in what's going on in my own country."'

White, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, Cardiff

Indeed, there does seem to be a difference in the way that younger and older participants in these groups considered the issue of minority ethnic representation. The younger groups felt it was important to see greater diversity on their screens, agreeing that there was still not sufficient representation of minority ethnic groups on television. They spontaneously raised many of the issues that the minority ethnic groups raised, such as the reduction of racism, the need for children to see diverse groups on television and the need for non-stereotypical portrayals. However, the older groups, while they sometimes mentioned these issues, were not always as overtly positive about them as the younger participants.

3.4 Tokenism, stereotyping and other broadcasting issues

When talking about 'representation', participants were not just talking about levels of representation, but also about the way in which these portrayals were presented. In all the minority ethnic groups, there was comment about issues such as:

- tokenism;
- negative stereotyping;
- unrealistic and simplistic portrayals of the community;
- negative or non-existent images of countries and areas of origin.

Tokenism

There was great hostility towards perceived tokenism. There was a perception that some television programmes, such as soap operas, include characters from minority ethnic groups purely because they 'should' and that the characters themselves were unimportant and rarely in the series for long.

'I just believe they put a Black person in just to keep the peace.'

Black British/Black other/Mixed Race, female, aged 18-30, Cardiff

Many, including some White participants, said that representation should be realistic, showing minority ethnic people in areas and situations that occurred in the real world.

'There's no point in having a Black farmer in Emmerdale, is there?'

White, mixed gender group, aged 18-30, Cheshire

There was a feeling among some of the older White participants that the greater awareness of ethnic minorities had led to positive discrimination and tokenism.

'You sometimes think they've picked Black newsreaders not necessarily because they look good, but because they have to get their numbers up. Quotas, like women quotas, or whatever it happens to be.'

White, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, Cardiff

Comment was also made that programme-makers now feel they have to adopt a 'politically correct' view which does not allow them to show a Black or Asian person in a negative context.

'That was... wrong [in former times] to pinpoint them and say every Black person must be a criminal, but now they [broadcasters] don't show it. They won't have a Black person as a criminal. I think they're probably skirting it a little bit in EastEnders with the guy that knows a guy who's a drug dealer - because he's coloured. And the first thing that came to me was, "Mmmm, I wonder if they're pushing their luck there putting him down as somebody who used to be a drug dealer because he's Black?"'

White, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, Cardiff

Stereotyping: Characters

In addition to tokenism, many participants felt strongly about the perceived negative stereotyping of characters from minority ethnic groups. The two issues were sometimes linked in participants' minds, as characters who were simply 'tokens' were often felt to be stereotypical as well.

'Every programme has a token Black man sitting in the corner and he's stereotypical.'

Black Caribbean, male, aged 18-30, Leeds

Black participants commented that Black characters still tend to be cast in roles that either involve low paid work, such as cleaning,

'Why does the Black person always have to be cleaning the toilets?'

Black African, male, aged 31-55, London

... or else they are criminals. Black actors in films and on television were perceived to be associated with drugs and violence. Several Black participants remarked on the stereotyping that they noticed in a clip from *Banzai* that featured a Black boy holding a gun.¹⁴

'It's like Black people don't play any important positions. They are always a gang leader or drug dealer, or something like that. Almost degraded.'

Black Caribbean, female, aged 31-55, Leeds

14. See Appendix 2 for details.

It was argued that the negative images of Black people impact badly on Black children because of the lack of positive role models for them, as well as on the confidence of the Black community and on the attitudes of White people.

'To me it is very important that a Black man [should be] a star in Britain. I don't want to see a Pakistani in a corner shop or, you know, it is just stigmatising - a Black man is selling drugs for 20 quid.'

Black British/Black Other/Mixed Race, male, aged 30-55, Cardiff

Like the Black groups, participants from the Indian sub-continent felt that the images they saw of themselves and their communities were often stereotypical, for example, with Asians being shown as owning corner shops.

'EastEnders, you have to have one Asian person in it. There is one Asian girl in the shop... I think we are known for having corner shops. It would be nice if they had a different story.'

Indian, male, aged 18-30, Leicester

There was also a debate, both between and within these groups, about how 'modern' or 'westernised' Asian characters should be. The Indian groups, and some participants in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups, felt that the images seen on television were old-fashioned and they wanted to see images portraying the way that younger, second-generation British Asians live.

'White or English people, they don't really know. They always have stereotyping. They think ladies like me stay at home to cook. I hate cooking. I never hardly cook anything.'

Indian, female, aged 31-55, London

'Even if they do show ethnic stuff, it's always from the more traditional ways than the modern.'

Bangladeshi, male, 31-55, London

'... an Asian family, they went upstairs and they had typical, like, flowery velvet wallpaper. You look at that and you think, "That doesn't happen anymore." We're not from that age. They portray it as still being there with the velvet flowers.'

Indian, male, aged 18-30, Leicester

On the other hand, some participants, particularly within the Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups, were concerned that Asian people are shown as being far too westernised on television. This meant that some participants felt that they could not relate to the characters being depicted or their lives. Like Black participants, they called for more accurate or authentic representation.

'It's just so much more open and Western, it's not like that with us. The Asian characters that are shown in most of these programmes tend to feel that they have a completely different point of view. They live a Western-style life, or they want to.'

Bangladeshi, female, aged 18-30, London

There was some mention of positive images on television. A few of the participants in the Black groups mentioned *Babyfather*, which was thought to have been filmed from the point of view of a Black man. Additionally, there was mention of the Black doctor in *EastEnders*, although some were quick to point out that he has a criminal brother. Trevor McDonald, the newscaster, was felt to be a positive role model and was somebody all the Black groups said that they respected. Some, particularly the younger men, also mentioned sports personalities such as Ian Wright, Frank Bruno and Daley Thompson as providing them with good role models.

'Trevor McDonald... It's saying, not all Black people are stupid.'

Black British/Black Other/Mixed Race, female, aged 18-30, Cardiff

A number of the Black participants were not calling for all positive role models to be reflections of 'success', but rather they wanted to feel that the characters were carrying forwards a distinctive cultural identity.

'You have got Family Affairs... you know the Black girl, Ebony. She is practically speaking White. I would love to turn on the telly and actually hear an African voice.'

Black African, female, aged 18-30, London

'I will not have Black mothers talking bounty-Black, you don't get that [in real life], but they do on these soaps and all these other programmes.'

Black Caribbean, male, aged 18-30, Leeds

Even some of the non-English language speaking participants argued for more portrayals of people from their community, despite the fact that they generally found it hard to express any view on how well minority ethnic groups are represented on mainstream television. They agreed that they always liked to see an Indian or Pakistani actor in an English film.

'We have a saying that, even if you saw a dog from your village on TV, you would feel so proud because he's from your village. And now we're in England and our homeland is so far away, then you feel that even more.'

Indian, female, aged 31-55, Leicester

Stereotyping: Issues

While the stereotyping of characters from minority ethnic groups certainly was an issue for participants, many also complained about stereotyping in terms of the issues with which their communities seemed to be associated. As most participants saw part of television's role to be a way of introducing people to different cultures, these concerns became acute. Many participants also said that televisual representation was a way of introducing children (including, or especially, those from their own communities) to positive role models and images of a culturally diverse society.

(i) Arranged marriages

An area that was mentioned, particularly by the groups from the Indian sub-continent, was the way in which arranged marriages were discussed and depicted. This was given as an example of how Asian people and their values and lifestyles were stereotyped negatively. There was anger expressed, in several of these groups, about the way in which arranged marriages were portrayed, in factual as well as non-factual programming. They seemed to be synonymous with forced marriage, which was not the experience of many of the participants. Neither was the 'modernisation' of the system well reflected. Many felt that such a bias occurred because programme-makers, and the White community in general, did not understand that arranged marriages could be consensual.

'Like arranged marriages, one might not work, but about 20 others might work so they should show the 20 others that work as well as the one that doesn't work.'

Pakistani, male, aged 18-30, Bradford

'My marriage was arranged but it is different [now]... you've got to start explaining it. My parents met my wife after three months. I actually went out with her sort of thing. People still have the view that arranged marriages is looking at a picture, your dad sorting it out for you. Now it is not just a photo and that is it - you're married the next day or the next week... But a lot of English people think it is still like that.'

Indian, male, aged 18-30, Leicester

(ii) Portrayal of women

The portrayal of women was another issue often raised in the Asian groups. When viewing the clip from the television programme, *Love in Leeds*, participants from the Indian sub-continent argued that such programmes were irrelevant to their lives: Asian women would not generally lead that sort of lifestyle and, if they did, they would not allow themselves to be filmed. Some participants expressed offence at the clip from *Ali G* depicting a row of women wearing bikinis. Even those not personally offended felt they would be uncomfortable watching such programmes with their parents or, in the case of the some of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, with male siblings or relatives. Similar concerns were expressed in the Arab groups, by both men and women.

On the other hand, some participants in the Black groups objected to a clip which they felt was an example of negative stereotyping. They felt that the dialogue chosen to be transmitted by the producers reflected in a stereotypical way on the Black participant, as did the environment in which the conversations were placed.¹⁵

(iii) Religion

For the Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants, mostly Muslim, the portrayal of Islam was an important issue. Although they agreed it had become a particularly sensitive issue since 11 September 2001, they said it was something they had always felt strongly about. Their concern was about negative portrayals, but also that only certain aspects of the Islamic faith were thought to be depicted (such as the views of fundamentalists). At the time of the research, BBC2 had recently transmitted a series, *Islam UK*, which was praised by many participants for its balanced and subtle description of Islam (Channel 4 transmitted a series with a similar emphasis in 2002, after the research had been concluded). However, the series was shown late in the evening and thus would not have attracted a large audience. Participants felt that the more mainstream scheduling of this kind of series was beneficial, as it was interesting for Muslim communities and educational for the White community.

'I thought [the series on Islam] was aimed at society in general, British society, so people know more. So they're not so discriminatory, so they have more understanding of the religion or where it's coming from.'

Bangladeshi, female, aged 18-30, London

Like the participants from minority ethnic groups, White participants agreed that the representation of ethnic minorities should go beyond portrayals that focused on issues such as arranged marriage and religion.

(iv) The representation of countries and populations

All the participants from minority ethnic groups claimed to feel their country of origin either was not represented (for example, the Arab countries) or was negatively represented (such as China).

There was also a sense among some participants that the perceived pro-Europe, pro-American nature of British mainstream television meant that other countries were neglected or unfairly portrayed.

'[If] they go to the Caribbean or to Africa... they tend to show the worst parts.'

Black African, male, aged 31-55, London

Concurrent with this view was a feeling that there was not enough coverage of events in these countries.

¹⁵ The clip referred to is from the programme *Love in Leeds*. It must be remembered that only clips of programmes were shown during the group discussions. These were not set in context, but were used to stimulate debate.

The participants were played a clip from a radio phone-in which discussed a news item about a report on the numbers of foreign prisoners in British prisons and whether they should serve their sentences here or at home.¹⁶ During the clip, the presenter picked up on the part of the story that said Jamaican drug traffickers made up the highest number and suggested that it would be economically better for 'drug mules' to die on their way to Britain from packets of drugs exploding inside them.

All the **Black** groups found this clip offensive. They said that the presenter was emphasising the negative stereotyping of people from minorities and that his comment about drug mules dying was particularly shocking. They pointed out that he had not discussed the number of British people in prison abroad nor why people from Jamaica and elsewhere smuggled drugs, nor the crimes that people from other countries had committed. There was general agreement that if he had been from a Caribbean background he would not have approached the topic in that way. Likewise, participants pointed out that if the caller whose question had promoted the discussion had been from a '*cultural*' background she would have challenged his interpretation of the statistics.

In the same way, the **Chinese, Arab, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot** groups felt that his manner of discussing the issue was offensive, although they did not feel as strongly or as uniformly as the Black groups.

'He was hammering the Jamaicans, wasn't he?'

Chinese, mixed gender group, aged 18-30, Oxford

Some also pointed out that this was the kind of content that people should expect when tuning in to James Whale because he likes to create controversy.

Among the groups from the **Indian sub-continent**, views were mixed. Some felt that James Whale was simply giving information. Others found the discussion racist, pointing out that he had not mentioned the number of White people in jail and feeling that he was implying that people from ethnic minorities should not be in England at all.

'It's like they are just trying to kick you out of the country.'

Indian, female, aged 31-55, London

They also remarked that he had not mentioned the issue of Black and Asian people living in poverty, which was the background to the problem of drug trafficking.

The **White** groups were divided in their response to this piece. Some of the younger participants felt that it was racist and reiterated many of the points raised by other groups. However, the older participants generally said that it had simply been a discussion based on statistics and had been informative rather than racist.

16. From the *James Whale Show*, talkSport.

(v) Racism

Many of the White participants, both young and old, additionally said that portrayals on television over emphasised the issue of racism, suggesting it as a problem for all people from minority ethnic groups. They also expressed some resentment of the feeling that White people were always portrayed as being racist and people from minority ethnic groups were always portrayed as being the victims.

'I think sometimes, like, on programmes, they always show, like, the ethnic minorities having problems with racism, and I always think. "Well, hang on, not everyone in the world who's Black or Asian, or whatever, is going to have racism problems, you know."'
White, mixed gender group, aged 18-30, Cheshire

'I think any ethnic, however small a minority that they are, can in themselves actually be racists depending on their outlook. There's a presumption that the majority against the minority is automatically the bad guys. I think it just depends on the individual - a Black person could be as racist as a White person. I think it's always portrayed that it's one-way traffic on the TV. They pander to a stereotype.'
White, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, Cardiff

Racism was not discussed in similar terms by participants in the minority ethnic groups, although the discussion about the radio clip, above, showed that it was an issue they thought about.

Illustrating complexity

Reference has already been made to the fact that participants called for accurate representations of people from their communities, so that they could relate to those characters.

Some groups, such as those from the Indian sub-continent, accepted that they may need to be classed as 'Asian' to get any adequate representation. However, they did decry this, feeling that such portrayals on television reinforced the tendency of British non-Asian people to 'lump them together' into one group. They felt that portrayals often missed the differences between the main communities (Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian), as well as not acknowledging the variations between castes and religions.

'I mean, we are all different [...] over here. But... to a lot of English people it is, "You're a Paki, you're a Paki, you are all Pakis", but it isn't like that. So a lot of it isn't shown on the TV.'
Indian, male, aged 18-30, Leicester

'Asian is usually like being blocked together and I don't consider myself to be, you know, anything like a Gujerati person.'
Bangladeshi, female, aged 18-30, London

It is less clear whether participants within the Black groups agreed about the extent to which the portrayal of Black people on television acknowledged the differences and complexities of the communities. The mixed race participants in one group highlighted the lack of portrayal of mixed race people, and the issues that they faced, such as racism within the extended family. Some Black African participants felt that most representation on television was of Black Caribbean people, while some Black Caribbean participants considered that information about Africa, the continent, was more readily available than information about the Caribbean. There was a sense that the representations depicted rarely showed any of the nuances that are important within and between the Black communities.

Seen from a minority ethnic view

When groups discussed programming on mainstream television which they regarded as providing a minority ethnic view, they often mentioned comedy, although *Babyfather* was mentioned as an exception to this.

Most of the groups were generally positive about such comedy. Most had seen *Goodness Gracious Me* and thought it well constructed and funny, and said that it showed a community laughing at itself. There was general agreement that comedy based on parodying an ethnic identity could be taken much further by people from that background than is possible for people outside the community. As well as *Goodness Gracious Me*, participants from the Indian sub-continent mentioned the *Kumars at Number 42*. These were agreed to be funny, because the people writing for and performing in them are from the Indian community and have a good understanding of it. However, some older participants in these groups felt the programmes were offensive in their portrayal of the community, and the fact they are produced by Indian people made no difference to the offence they caused.

Younger people in the White groups did not always assume that programmes with strong minority ethnic representation were necessarily aimed only at that community. Again, *Goodness Gracious Me* was cited as an example. Participants commented particularly on the *Going out for an English* sketch, which they felt highlighted, in a funny way, attitudes within the White British community that they would not have otherwise considered.

However, they did accept that certain types of programmes, such as a soap opera that focuses only, or mainly, on people from minority ethnic communities would not appeal to them because of the issues it was expected to cover.

'It was the whole fact that they've done just an Asian soap would, you would think that they just wanted to talk about Asian issues.'

White, mixed gender group, aged 18-30, Cheshire

On the other hand, older White participants felt that programmes focusing on minority groups definitely would be aimed only at that community. Like some of the Black and Asian participants, they felt that some programmes had either all White or all Black casts (such as some of the American comedies) and that it would be better to have casts that included people from different races.

Another clip watched by participants in the focus groups was from the comedy sketch series *Banzai*. Many of the participants were not familiar with it and wondered if it did reflect Japanese television accurately. Others, however, felt it might be offensive to Japanese people and that it reinforced stereotypes about them, regardless of the fact that Japanese actors appeared in it.

The other clip shown that illustrated a minority ethnic viewpoint was from the *Ali G* show. Putting aside his treatment of women in this particular clip, already discussed, many of those participants who knew the character thought him funny. They enjoyed the way in which he is considered to highlight the inconsistencies and ridiculousness of establishment figures, especially in the interviews he conducts. There was also a sense, among some, that he could push at boundaries because he targets a wide range of groups, rather than just focusing on one, and because he is part of a minority himself (most participants were aware that he is Jewish).

'I think it adds to the comedy, that fact that he is Jewish acting Black... and... people wouldn't consider it too much racism, they wouldn't be really offended, because he is from [an] ethnic minority.'

Black African, female, aged 18-30, London

However, there were some, particularly from a Black Caribbean background, who felt that his act was offensive and derogatory to Black people and to women.

Some of the Greek Cypriot participants pointed out, on the other hand, that he was parodying White people who want to be Black, rather than Black culture itself.

Language and offence

For many, the slang terms used by Ali G were not clearly understood. However, a number of participants from the Black groups found the language offensive. Some also considered that his portrayal affected the way in which White people related to them.

'They are not words that we would use. Just like in privacy, there's a time and place for everything. He's saying, like, that it's the way we speak all the time. And it's not.'

Black Caribbean, female, aged 31-55, Leeds

'People come up to you, Europeans come up to you and say, "Me Julie, or whatever."'

Black Caribbean, female, aged 31-55, Leeds

'If you put it in reverse; imagine a Black man going on there and acting like a Jew. There'd be an uproar.'

Black Caribbean, male, aged 18-30, Leeds

The issue of the use of potentially derogatory phrases between friends was raised by a clip shown from the drama *Othello*, in which a White character calls a Black character '*you clever, big, Black bastard*'. Generally, participants (especially younger participants) did not find this kind of language offensive between friends.¹⁷

'It depends on the context. [There] it's almost complimentary as it were, it's not derogatory, no. Not meant to be derogatory.'

Chinese, mixed gender group, aged 18-31, Oxford

However, some older participants did feel that it was offensive, regardless of the context, and should not have been included in the script. Some expressed a concern that it might encourage White people to think this kind of language is acceptable. All participants felt that any swearing of this nature would not be acceptable in pre-Watershed programming, such as *The Bill*.

Another aspect of language that was raised in the groups was prompted by a radio advertisement played to them, the purpose of which was to encourage businesses to locate call centres in Scotland. The Radio Authority had received complaints about it because it used Scottish accents to characterise good customer service and English accents to characterise bad customer service. The moderator of the research groups found the nuance of Scottish = good and English = bad was not well understood by participants and had to be explained. Some participants from the minority ethnic groups then said that they thought English people might be offended. However, others felt this was an overreaction, although they commented that if the 'bad service' accent had been Caribbean or Pakistani it would have caused offence because people tended to 'look out' for racism and offence in the context of Black or Asian people. The White groups did not themselves feel offended.

'We make fun of the Irish, don't we, and I expect the English make fun of us.'

White, mixed gender group, aged 31-55, Cardiff

3.5 The Future of Multicultural Broadcasting: Audience views

Representation on radio

There were mixed views within and between groups as to whether it was important that minority ethnic communities be represented on mainstream radio. Many participants were aware that specialist radio stations exist, addressing specific community needs. Also, many felt it was often impossible to tell the background of a presenter or a band, and that defining cultural identity by sound alone was harder than by using both sound and visual cues. They also felt that it was less important because the radio was often on in the

17. *Delete Expletives?*; Andrea Millwood Hargrave; Advertising Standards Authority, British Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Independent Television Commission; 2000.

background or for local news, traffic and weather and was, therefore, less influential in determining attitudes than television.

'You're saying something more about people on TV than you are on radio.'

Greek Cypriot, mixed gender group, aged 25-45, London

However, for some participants, such as those in the Arab groups, some Black and Asian groups, the non-English speaking participants and the older Chinese participants, representation on radio is particularly important for the following reasons:

- It keeps their languages alive and provides programming that can be understood by those who find English difficult.
- It gives them news from their countries of origin and from their local community.
- It provides them with music, chat shows and features relating to their own culture .

Generally, participants thought it positive that the needs of particular communities could be met through specialist stations and some even felt that this was the preferable option. It offered listeners greater choice, allowing them to access specifically tailored programming most of the time or to 'dip in' whenever they chose.

However, some participants thought that it was important to have more of a mix of presenters, music and spoken content on mainstream radio stations to promote understanding and education, and to help people from minority ethnic communities to feel part of wider society. Some suggested that there should be 'slots' on mainstream stations which focused on particular communities. However, others said that wider audiences would not be interested in this kind of broadcasting, even in English, and that it was unreasonable to expect it from mainstream stations. These listeners felt that it was more important to achieve better representation among mainstream presenters than to increase the amount of specialist broadcasting on mainstream stations.

Representation on television

The minority ethnic groups interviewed for the research wanted to see their community reflected in television in a variety of programme genres and on mainstream channels. They were often specific about the kinds of portrayal or reflections of their communities that are necessary:

- They wanted to see images that they recognised as authentic and realistic. This could lead to conflicting views in the groups as different parts of a community had varying experiences on which they based their expectations of what should be on-screen. A key variable of attitudes was the age of the participant.

- There was an angry reaction to the perceived prevalence of stereotyped images, with participants resenting the feeling that their entire community was represented by them.
- It was crucial for a variety of images to be seen on television so that the complexity of the community can be shown.
- In addition to the importance of seeing themselves reflected in a way that was both recognisable and relevant, there was a feeling that the 'White majority' needed to be educated about other ethnic groups. Participants from each minority community felt that there was little understanding of their lifestyles, values or culture, which in turn created racism and segregation.

'If someone understands you, they're not going to, like, attack you or anything, because most of the problem with the racist is that people don't really understand each other.'
Pakistani, male, aged 18-30, Bradford

Television was seen to have a role to play, therefore, in breaking down these particular barriers.

- Groups wanted to see positive role models of people like themselves on-screen, as figures of respect and authority (such as presenters and newsreaders).¹⁸
- There was a call from participants for greater coverage of their countries of origin in news and other factual programmes.
- Many participants felt that the images they saw of their countries of origin were usually negative and they were keen to see more positive or balanced images.
- Participants often said that they needed to see themselves represented on television in order to feel a sense of belonging in British society. There was particular concern that children should feel that they are growing up in a society in which they are accepted and that children are able to see, on-screen, role models to which they can relate.

'For the kids, so they grow up to see what is up for grabs.'
Black African, male, aged 31-55, London

Communities, especially - but not exclusively - older participants, often wanted to be able to access some programming in their own language. They acknowledged this may not be of interest to people outside their community and accepted, therefore, that such material was unlikely to be shown in significant amounts on mainstream television.

18. *New news, old news*; Ian Hargreaves and James Thomas; Independent Television Commission and Broadcasting Standards Commission, October 2002.

Participants from all the minority groups identified specific cultural needs that they felt their community had in relation to television. These included several types of input:

- programming in participants' language;
- familiar cultural traditions;
- more detailed and regular news from their countries of origin.

Most participants felt that this kind of representation would not be achieved unless there was a greater level of representation of people from their community in the television industry, especially in decision-making positions.

4 Industry attitudes towards multicultural broadcasting

4.1 What is multicultural broadcasting?

The qualitative, initial, stage of the industry project involved 31 interviews with executives in a variety of roles within the broadcasting and advertising industries. From broadcasting, about half were from the BBC, with the other half coming from the independent or commercial sector. Some were concerned with regional output, others with national output, and one was responsible for a local television station. A further 200 online questionnaires were completed by representatives from the radio and television industries.¹⁹

A small number of interviews were conducted with advertising agency staff who had responsibility (either directly or as part of a wider remit) for accounts which use both national radio and television for their campaigns. These are reported on in Chapter 5.

The key question asked of interviewees was how they would define ‘multicultural broadcasting’. In many ways, this question proved to be the one with which most interviewees had the greatest difficulty. Many baulked at defining the term, saying that it was confusing or simply one they would never use. Others described it as outmoded - as a phrase or even as a concept. For a small but nevertheless significant minority, the concept had a number of negative connotations; it conjured up political correctness and box ticking.

The views of all these interviewees are important because they reflect the differences in approach, understanding, attitude and interpretation of the term. This interviewee was cynical about the suggestion (as he interpreted it) that multicultural programming was generally a ‘good thing’.

‘Basically, I have no idea what multicultural programmes are meant to be. If they’re brown bread, in the sense that they are full of roughage and they are intended to tell me, a privileged White male, what it is like to be a poor Asian in Bradford, I don’t think they have much effect because I don’t think that we watch those programmes very much, us privileged White males. I think we are much better off being sold to on the quiet.’²⁰

The genesis of the term in television broadcasting, said one interviewee, lay in the type of programming made for specific minority communities, such as immigrants in the 1960s. He described them as, *“Two White presenters who used to say things like, “This is a calendar; these are the days of the week.”*

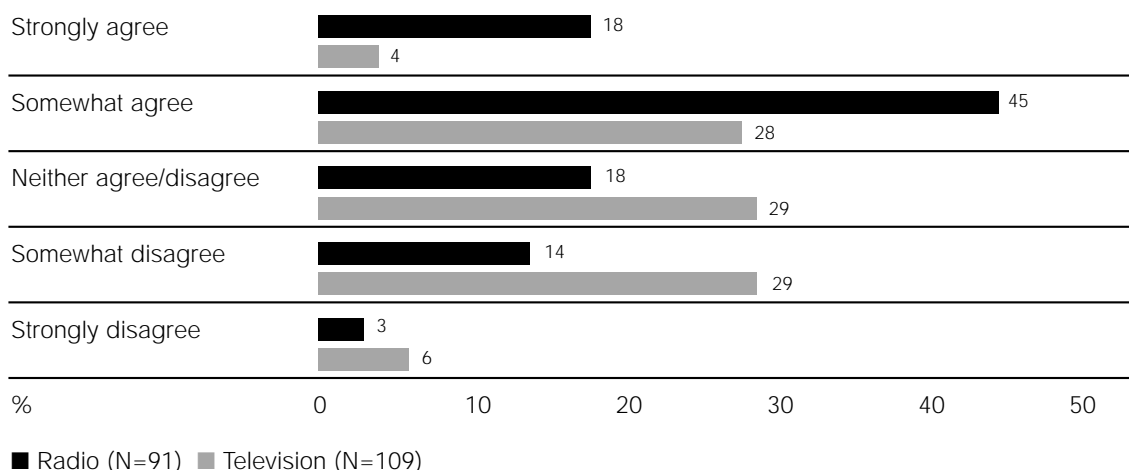
Today, things have moved on:

‘My sense is that, across the board, the media is more sensitive to the question of multiculturalism, to the question of minorities, than they were in the past...’

¹⁹. To differentiate between the qualitative and quantitative stages within the industry research, those interviewed in the first stage are referred to as ‘interviewees’ and those who answered the survey as ‘respondents’. No quotations within this part of the research are attributed by ethnicity, occupation or any other variable, unless relevant, as interviewees were speaking as representatives of their industry.
²⁰. Throughout the report, quotations have not been attributed to individuals nor referenced in terms of their category. Within these restrictions, however, differences and similarities between those in television and radio, or between those working for mainstream or niche broadcasters, are noted, where relevant.

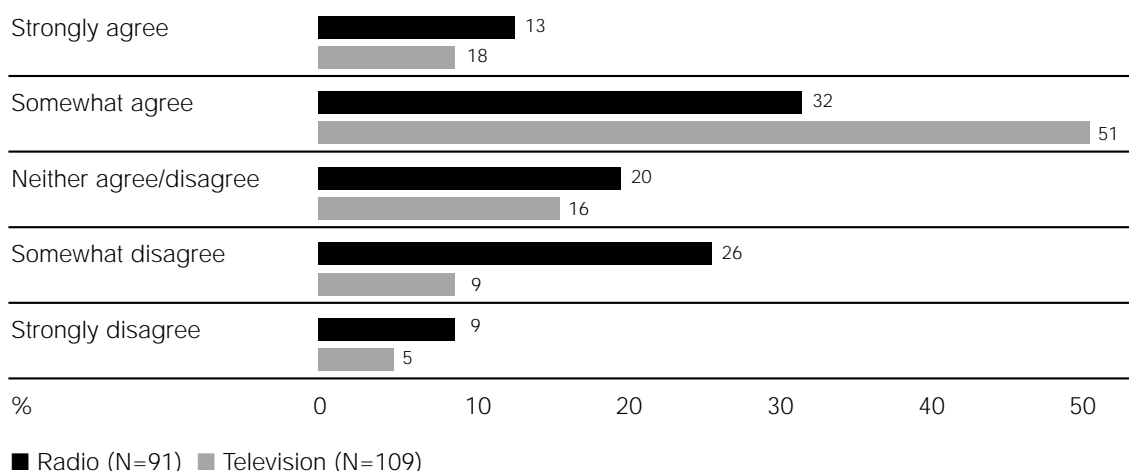
However, when respondents to the online survey were asked if in the past five years, there has been more programming content that is relevant to minority ethnic groups, stark differences between the radio and television sample emerged. The television sample was far less likely (32%) than radio respondents (63%) to agree with this statement.

Table 1: Over the past five years, there has been significantly more relevant programming content²¹



There was no significant difference in response from those with responsibility for ethnic programming in either medium. The complementary question to this, that the perspectives of minorities are not featured enough in the broadcast media, also provided a significant variation. Television respondents were far more likely to agree (69%), compared with 45% of radio respondents.

Table 2: The perspective of ethnic and racial minorities are not featured enough on radio/terrestrial television in the United Kingdom



²¹. It must be remembered that sample sizes are small and the sample is not designed to be representative, but may be self-selecting. However, it is valid to consider the generic views, especially across the two media.

Despite these differences, the qualitative research showed that most interviewees - from both radio and television - considered multicultural broadcasting as embracing several, not mutually exclusive approaches to programming. Most offered more than one explanation of the term, or revised and added to it, as the interview continued.

Aggregating all the views, however, leads to a tripartite description of multicultural broadcasting, which is largely supported by the findings of the online survey:

1. Inclusive programming - programming which reflects the multicultural nature of our society

For the majority, this was the ideal. Although interpreted in different ways, this type of approach described broadcast output which reflects society on-screen or on-air in an unselfconscious and, for some, almost coincidental way:

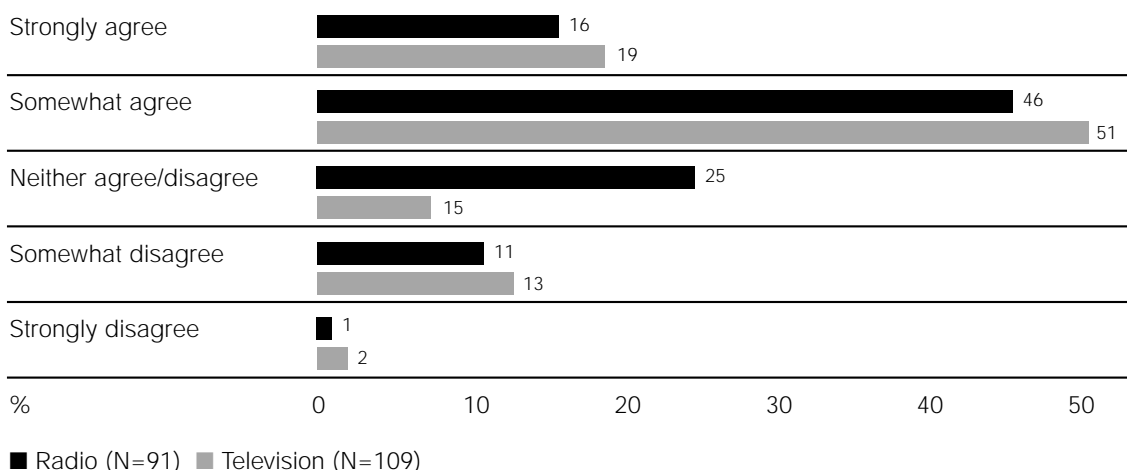
'Just television that looks like modern Britain.'

'I see it as very much part of the day and daily output of all the main stations.'

'There are plenty of Black people in drama and plenty of Black people in documentaries and plenty of Asians in soap operas and actually we don't notice those and say, "How marvellous, they are reflecting the cultural diversity of this country." You just think, "Well, sure, these are the people you meet when you go out into the world."'

The respondents to the online survey agreed, arguing that, over time, the representation of minorities would become a natural reflection of society, without the need for conscious intervention.

Table 3: I believe that representation... will increase over time to become a natural reflection of society



For some interviewees, an inclusive definition of this type needed to go further: an integrated approach meant paying attention to the differences between cultures so that a diverse range of communities and culturally specific issues was broadcast on television and radio. It meant conscious attention to output at every level. This was not simply about providing crosscultural programmes, but about reflecting the diversity of cultures and communities throughout all programming.

'It's about looking at the whole range of output and asking whether you are serving the whole audience.'

'I think we've got a much more grown-up, joined-up way of dealing with multicultural programming now, and, for me, what I'd like it to be is a richness of difference.'

Finally, some niche stations/channels felt that their output was already multicultural in that it appealed to a range of cultures, within a more defined community:

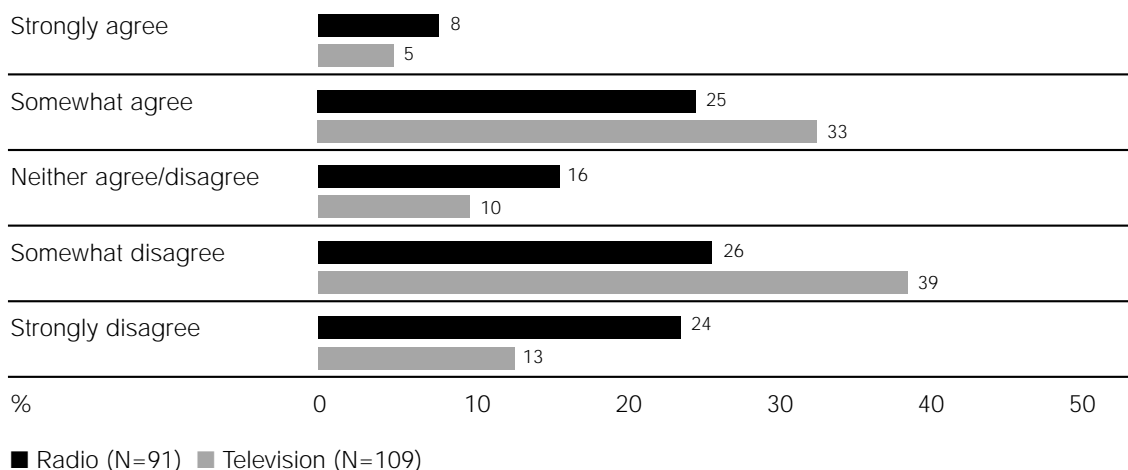
'It's basically multicultural within the Asian community, 'cause we do have different faiths, religions, languages within the Asian community.'

2. Crosscultural programming - programming with a specific perspective on different minorities and their culture, but with appeal to a wider audience

Most interviewees acknowledged that the ideal of fully integrated broadcast output was a long way off and spoke of the importance of retaining and nurturing crosscultural programming within the broadcast mix. Often quoted examples of crosscultural programmes - programmes that cross cultural boundaries - were *Ali G* and *Goodness Gracious Me*. Documentary programmes dealing with subjects from a non-White cultural perspective, or looking at issues treated differently by different cultural groups - whether it be marriage, dating or religion - were also put into this category by some.

Respondents to the online survey, though, were divided as to whether it was possible to make programmes for a wide audience that reflect specific cultures and perspectives. There were no significant differences between the two media samples.

Table 4: It is difficult to make... programmes for a wider audience that reflect the culture and perspectives of minorities



3. Monocultural or niche programming - programmes targeting specific minority cultures

Some interviewees argued that there was no longer a place for any monocultural programmes, particularly on national radio or terrestrial television channels. However, others felt that this was, and would remain for a while, an element of the multicultural programming mix. Programmes which come into this category included the television programmes *Network East* and *Bollywood or Bust*, which serve Asian audiences. Again, there was disagreement as to whether these were actually monocultural; some argued these were crosscultural programmes, with wider appeal than the designated target audience. It was noted that *Goodness Gracious Me* - although not commissioned by one of the BBC's Minority Programmes units - was not expected to have strong crosscultural appeal, and had had to earn its way into a peak-time transmission slot on television.

'I suppose they [broadcasters] have these perceptions of what the Asians need, or what the Blacks need, or what the Irish need, or what the Welsh need, but it is a very difficult act to do, and I think you will find that people will switch off and hence they don't try that hard, because broadcasting is about [audiences].'

A few saw the existence of monocultural programmes as a compensatory measure for services which fail to offer multicultural broadcasting in the rest of their schedules.

'You can't use specific Black, or Asian, or ethnic programmes, to just be the excuse for other bits of the output. It's not good enough.'

In summary, most interviewees did not accept 'multicultural broadcasting' in a simplistic sense, but as a multi-layered concept. For some, it would be better to have a clearer, more precise definition of what is meant. For others, a different phrase or wording - such as 'cultural diversity' - was considered more appropriate.

Despite these differences, there was quite a clear sense of the benefits and difficulties which attach to its meaning. For the majority, the benefits were self-evident and seemed inextricably entwined with the reasons for providing such programming in the first place. The benefits for taking a multicultural approach were:

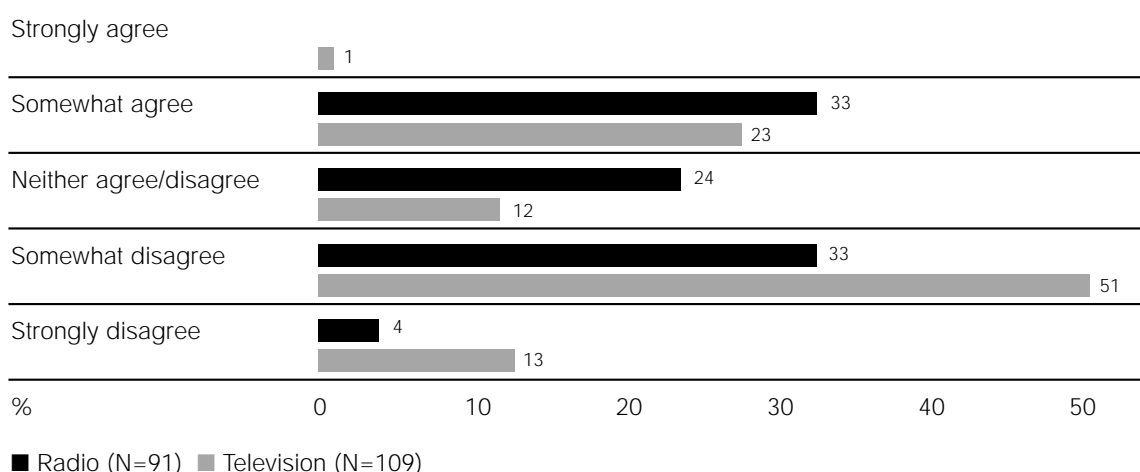
- **As a reflection of society:** This was the most frequently mentioned reason for multicultural broadcasting. Behind this was the belief that the media are influential and so have a responsibility to reflect a pluralistic society. Some took this argument further, pointing out that, if broadcasting fails to do this, it will lose its listeners and viewers, and weaken its own position by becoming irrelevant to its audiences.

‘All our contemporary dramas should reflect contemporary Britain. Not in any sociological way, it just should, because that’s what you’re writing about...’

‘The obvious benefit... is you’re going to have a true reflection of society. I mean if people don’t see themselves, or their opinions, or their lives reflected on television, they’re not going to watch your programmes, they’re not going to tune into your radio shows, they’re going to turn away and they’re going to ask for their own...’

The quantified stage of the research among industry representatives shows that two-thirds of the television sample disagreed that current programming output reflects the multicultural nature of UK society. While the radio sample was more likely to agree, it is still under half of this sample that does so.

Table 5: Programming output in general in the United Kingdom reflects the multicultural nature of UK society...



- **As a socially cohesive force:** Some took these views further. For a sizeable minority, the benefits of multicultural broadcasting went beyond fulfilling an obligation or even self-interest. For these, the broadcast media are an important part of the 'glue' that holds society together. For others, they have an important part to play in '*changing the whole scenario of politics in this country*' by fostering a spirit of understanding through broadcast output. This last was also mentioned by those who serve both rural and urban audiences. The key to this was a desire to help educate and inform audiences about diversity.

'I think the experience that anybody should have from school age upwards should be about living in an ethnically diverse society... I think that if people living in the Lake District, for example, are only going to see mirror images of themselves in their everyday lives, what they should see on-screen is a much broader picture...'

- **To serve audiences:** Offering audiences a more diverse range of content was thought to be inherently more appealing by some, particularly those working for niche stations/channels.

'For listeners, the benefits are that you're broadening your opportunity to entertain because you're going to cover a more diverse range of subjects and people who can present that topic.'

- **Because it is part of the broadcasters' remit:** In addition to these benefits, many interviewees spoke of the 'duty' or obligation which certain broadcasters have with regard to multicultural broadcasting. While not a direct benefit in itself, this was often mentioned as a prime reason for striving for multicultural broadcasting.

Among these views of the benefits of multicultural broadcasting, there was a greater emphasis on the 'social' advantages and less on the commercial than might have been expected. Few echoed the speech made at the launch of the Cultural Diversity Network when the correlation between diversity and financial reward was emphasised:

'I'm a commercial broadcaster. I want bums on sofas watching programmes on Carlton and ITV. "Show me the money" is an ethic I understand, and one that motivates my programme-makers and sales forces.'

'But the diverse population of Britain will only watch Carlton programmes if they are relevant to their lives and they can relate to the stories, actors and presenters we put on ITV screens.'

Clive Jones, Managing Director of Carlton Television, 12 October, 2000.

Indeed, those from radio were more likely than those from television to speak to the fact that taking a multicultural approach was about *serving their audience*. There was a sense that these interviewees felt they were much more in touch with the needs and interests of their audiences and that they reflected them accordingly.

While there was general consensus about the benefits of a multicultural approach to broadcasting, views on the difficulties differed, depending on the part of the industry from which the interviewee came. Those within mainstream broadcasting organisations were more likely to speak about the necessity of addressing the whole audience and of being sensitive to the fact that much of the United Kingdom is White. That is not to say that they were less likely to be in favour of multicultural initiatives, but that they were particularly concerned not to take initiatives which could be perceived as tokenistic in any way.

'I think if it goes too far, then you may alienate other parts of the population... when you specifically target one section, the danger is that other communities in that transmission area are alienated.'

An example given, by one executive, was *Babyfather* (BBC), which he said paid lip service to multiculturalism. To another, it was a fine example of a modern multicultural drama and had been applauded by some participants in the audience research as being 'authentic' in its portrayals.

Similarly, the Channel Four series on the Kumbh Mela was fascinating for one interviewee; for another it was a turn-off. In this respect, television executives are similar to their audiences - diverse in taste and opinion. Most would decry anything which looks contrived or where multicultural issues, or casting, do not appear natural:

'We covered a Holocaust memorial concert which was obviously, by its nature, specifically about the experiences of the Jewish community in the Second World War; but we included in it a section which tried to draw comparisons with lots of different groups, to the experience of the Jews during the Holocaust; so it had a disabled person, it had a Romany gypsy on the stage, it had an Asian bloke who'd been the victim of a racial attack, and it just felt like it was a box-ticking exercise... it felt like the people that had organised the event had gone through that box-ticking exercise. And so we said, "No, we don't need this element of the programme - it might be relevant in other programmes, but not in this one."'

Those who had to cater for the rural/urban divide also described the tension of addressing audiences who are very different:

'Yes, there are [difficulties in taking a multicultural approach] because it doesn't necessarily chime with everybody's feel for it. For instance, Lincolnshire is a county which has a very low percentage of ethnic minority people. So, therefore, they perhaps think that we are skewing our vision of the Britain that we are presenting.'

Beyond geographical differences, some thought that there was resistance to the concept of multiculturalism itself:

'I think we would make a big mistake if we assumed that multiculturalism was universally accepted in this country... if we think that there is a set of railway lines called multiculturalism, and that the train which got going originally in the 1960s is just going to trundle down these lines, and that 70% and then 80% and finally 100% of the British people will consider that multiculturalism is great. It seems to me we are quite simply kidding ourselves. There is constant opposition, and if not opposition, a kind of wariness, a kind of vague unease among part of what I have been calling the mainstream society, that this has been foisted on them.'

By contrast, those working for independent television production companies were more inclined to talk about television broadcasters themselves as part of the problem. For these production companies wanting to get commissions, the television companies seemed too concerned with audience figures, too wary of risk-taking and too easily satisfied with *'putting a couple of brown faces in'*.

'Even a broadcaster like Channel 4 is increasingly concerned with advertising revenue and viewing figures. It has to be a commercial organisation to survive and, therefore, the idea of putting out programmes that aren't going to be mainstream isn't going to happen. And as far as ITV, they have to go to the lowest common denominator at a time like this, where advertising revenue is everything. So the idea that race should be a big worry right now is fantasy land.'

In addition, it was not always made easy for television programme-makers - especially independents - to understand what the diversity agenda actually is.

'I think you have to tackle it at the other end, you have to say what kind of output do you want on television, how diverse should that content be and then regulate that.'

'There's no properly constituted forum at the BBC to think these issues out and how they might impact on the programming that they might provide.'

4.2 Multicultural broadcasting now

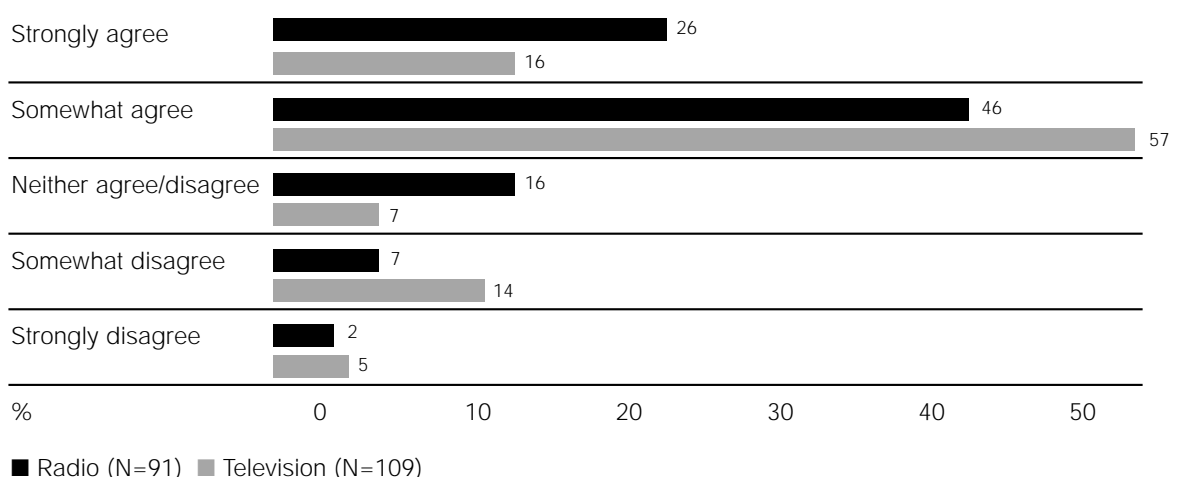
Interviewees in the qualitative research were asked to comment on the current status of multicultural broadcasting in the United Kingdom; to give their views on whether the situation had improved, needed to improve or was, broadly speaking, acceptable now. The researchers allowed them to interpret the question in whichever way they chose, and some spoke about output, others about diversity within organisations. Many of those from radio chose to comment about television output, possibly reflecting the fact that television still provides a more common cultural ground than other media.

Inevitably, the answers to this question also reflect the perceptions of interviewees as media consumers themselves. The areas worked in also impacted on their opinions.

One interviewee was initially unwilling to give a view on this topic because, being ‘*from the dominant culture*’ (White British), he felt that his perspective would not really be valid. Despite the fact that he was alone in expressing this, he did highlight a truism: that views will be influenced by one’s own experiences, background and ethnic origins.

Nevertheless, there was a sense that broadcast output was developing and evolving, and this perception of change was certainly reflected in the findings of the online survey most noticeably among the radio sample.

Table 6: Over the past five years, the number of radio presenters/people on television from ethnic and racial minorities in the United Kingdom has increased significantly



Some interviewees were unsure of what more could be done to make changes, other than pressing on with initiatives that are already in place.

‘In most shows I see Asian faces and Black faces... if I watch the news, there’s a high proportion of Black faces... I watch children’s programmes, there are always Black presenters. I watch pop groups, there are always Black singers in the group. If I watch sport on television, half the team is Black.’

‘My sense is that, across the board, the media is more sensitive to the question of multiculturalism, to the question of minorities, than they were in the past.’

'It is changing slowly. I mean, look at EastEnders. You know, before when they had people from the ethnic minorities, you know they would have them as the owners of a corner shop - though with the Asian, they're still in the corner shop. But they've got a Black doctor, there are Asian doctors.'

The majority of those interviewed, however, felt that, while progress had been made, there was still much to criticise within the industry. Moreover, most shared a sense that it was a more pressing issue at this time, either for social and political reasons, or simply because of the growing articulacy of minority ethnic groups who do not wish to be marginalised. The criticisms fell into two main categories and were aimed mainly at the mainstream national radio stations or television channels:

- 1. Criticism of broadcast organisations:** These were still perceived, particularly at senior levels, as White middle-class organisations. That is not to say that individual channels or stations were not praised, but, in general, many saw all broadcasters as being inadequate in respect of the progress they had made in multiculturalism.

(i) Channel 4

- Most interviewees spontaneously cited Channel 4 as a television broadcaster which has embraced multicultural broadcasting most enthusiastically - several praised the importance of its cultural diversity commissioning clause.
- The channel was felt to have taken early and positive steps in terms of on-screen representation (e.g. in news).
- Overall, Channel 4 was described as being more in touch with its audiences than other television channels and better at reflecting a young, urban culture.

'White kids are into hip hop, White women date Black men, you know, there's a lot going on out there that the BBC is not reflecting at all, and Channel 4 think it's hip to be part of that and, therefore, it's cool to have Black faces on the screen.'

- However, one programme-maker (BBC) thought that Channel 4's multicultural output had become biased in favour of certain minority cultures.

'I think they've gone so far in this desire to make all their programmes have a multicultural element to the extent that... when they are making a multicultural-ish type programme then it's about street culture or entertainment or whatever... I would say that's not multicultural, because there are so many people that you're just missing out on...'

(ii) ITV

- ITV was least often mentioned as a television channel associated with multicultural programming. This was, in part, because its prime remit was seen to be to entertain a mainstream audience, which is still overwhelmingly White:

'There's the mainstream, which is the sort of heart of the television schedule, and that seems to me, apart from Channel 4, exclusively kind of addressing a general audience. It's almost colour blind really, but because of that it delivers programmes that are really of interest to a White audience.'

- To the extent that people were thinking in terms of crosscultural programming, ITV was not associated with multiculturalism:

'If you look at ITV, I don't think that has anything multicultural really.'

'That's why ITV's so odd in some ways, because they haven't recognised [it]. ITV's so White. None of its output addresses multiculturalism.'

- When thinking more broadly about programming, however, a number of interviewees did cite ITV's drama output as exemplifying good multicultural programming and illustrating 'good colour blind casting'. *Coronation Street* and *Crossroads* were both mentioned in this regard. Some other dramas (*Heartbeat*, *Inspector Morse*, *A Touch of Frost*), however, were described as 'entirely White'.
- In contrast, in news, Trevor McDonald was perceived to be an important figurehead for ITV, 'the face of ITV', although there was some uneasiness about how genuinely multicultural the news agenda is, although this last was said about all domestic mainstream news programming.²²

(iii) BBC

- The BBC, which straddles both television and radio, was most often described as having a 'worthy' approach to multicultural broadcasting; however, some said it was 'failing miserably' and did not reflect society, especially young audiences.

'I think I'd be dishonest if I said that daytime Radio One was the best example of multicultural programming for young people, because it isn't...'

- Nevertheless, the BBC was praised for its multicultural approach to some of its drama, in particular series such as *EastEnders* and returning drama such as *Doctors* and *Casualty*. There were mixed feelings among these interviewees about *Babyfather*, a drama series about a group of young Black men, with some praising it and others feeling that it went too far - 'trying to be a multicultural programme rather than a good drama that happened to be about the Black community'.

22. After 11 September 2001: *TV News and Transnational Audiences*; British Film Institute, Broadcasting Standards Commission, ESRC Transnational Communities Programme, Independent Television Commission, the Open University Pavis Centre, 2002.

- The BBC's output was described by some as a mixed bag of monocultural programmes, such as *Network East*, some multicultural ones such as *Goodness Gracious Me* and other programming, which simply has a large number of ethnic minorities in its casts. This was not necessarily intended as a criticism, however, rather as a comment on its varied approach to multicultural programming:

'I'm not saying that the BBC has a clear direction of what multiculturalism means, but what we have is this hotchpotch and I think somebody can find something from one of those things...'

- BBC2 was singled out for praise by some interviewees. Programmes such as *The Road to the Raj* and *Britain's Slave Trade* were mentioned as examples of programmes which are 'accessible' to all groups and 'modern'. The *Islam Season* (BBC2) was praised as a commendable effort to meet head-on criticisms that the BBC neglects or misrepresents the Islamic community.²³
- In general, progress was thought to have been made across the organisation:

'Ten years ago, I'd say the service we were offering just didn't appeal or talk to people who liked Black music, and it wasn't very good at addressing issues or ideas to do with the urban experience... and you can measure that in terms of how many, the style of voices, that you have on the network...'

(iv) Mainstream commercial radio

- One large radio group considered their formats (brands) had a broad range of programming appealing to everyone. Out of their 19 analogue and 20 digital stations, they identified four key brands, each with different targets.

'We think the [brand] ethic is a broadminded and inclusive personality.'

- XFM (owned by the Capital group), which plays a lot of White rock, '*probably by the very nature of its music format doesn't appeal to a lot of Black people*'.
- Choice FM (independent Black ownership), by contrast, was described as being more targeted towards a Black audience and with a lot of Caribbean-type programming.
- Kiss 100 FM (owned by the Emap Performance group) was cited as being a celebration of being in London, being young and being irreverent, regardless of ethnic identity:

'It's not about saying, "Hey, if you're Black or Asian tune in", but the fact is that they almost sound like they cover all bases.'

23. As with the audience research, the timing of this project (February 2002) means that the Channel 4 series on Islam had not been transmitted.

- Within the qualitative sample, an interviewee from a Scottish urban station said that their remit was to ensure there is balanced representation from the religious communities in the region - Catholic and Presbyterian. There was also recognition of the minority ethnic communities, however, and they participated in the life of the station. For example, there is an Asian entrepreneur who sponsors Partick Thistle on-air. Asian voices could also be heard on contests or quizzes.

'They may be on a quiz on the radio, or they win a prize and it's great when you hear it, the voice, 'cause it's got the kind of Glasgow slang, but also with maybe an Indian or Pakistani accent and it's a kind of an amalgam... so that's how it's manifest here, 'cause they are part of us, we are part of them.'

(v) Niche broadcasting

- Many interviewees spoke spontaneously about the role of niche broadcasting and how this 'fitted' with their perceptions of what multicultural broadcasting should be.
- Several felt that there will always be a role for such programming, serving particular community needs, for example in different languages. Those running niche stations or niche channels felt proud of the service they offer. One or two made the point that their station/channel is more '*inclusive*' and '*multicultural*' than many mainstream outlets. Not only do they offer a range of programming for different community groups, but they pull the community together through programming as well. (This is less relevant for a station such as Spectrum International Radio, however, where programming is deliberately created for different target groups.) There was also some resentment about niche programming in more mainstream stations, which was described as tokenistic.

'They should amalgamate that into the mainstream and educate. I mean, how did the Bhangra scene catch on in the UK? We've had to do it ourselves. The mainstream didn't help us. But if you go into the nightclubs now, especially where there is a big Asian population... here are a lot of nightclubs who are playing the Bhangra music, not just for the Asians, but catering for the host community as well.'

- Some felt that the need for non-English-language programming might decline over time, as minority ethnic groups become more integrated with British culture. As one niche channel broadcaster put it:

'I'm saying I'm British because I live in this country. I have a British passport, this is my home. So I'm British, but at the same time I'm a Hindu, so I want to be in a position where I can follow my religion, and my culture, my descent is India, my great-great-grandparents had come from India. So I am an Indian. But maybe two or three decades down the line, I mean if you asked the same question to my son, he'll say, "I'm English."'

- Others said that the need for culturally specific programming was more to do with life stage. For example, the managing director of one radio station targeting the Asian community commented that, although young Asians are more integrated with British culture and less interested in listening to Asian programmes, this tended to change after they married, when there was a desire to re-focus on the community and their culture:

'As soon as they are married off... you will find that they actually come back into the Asian way, so although we lose them for a few years, they do come back.'

- A lesser concern, and one voiced by a few participants in the audience research, was the sense that niche broadcasting could help to fragment society.

'I don't know whether I believe in this idea of coexisting cultures really. I don't know how that works or whether that's true, and I think it might be damaging actually in some ways. I think it's better to say, look, we're all consumers of one sort or another, what we do in our private homes is kind of up to us, and we have areas of interest, we have areas of concern and the broadcasters should be trying to tap into that and reflect that.'

'Because we tend to pander to the ghettoisation of these communities... that maybe would hinder them from a sense of multicultural and all-inclusive and so on... But I think there will always be room for this type of service. We are trying to introduce more English language into our broadcasting. To make it more inclusive. Ideally, what we would like to do in the fullness of time is to broaden out all of our programmes so they are accessible to other people.'

- Finally, one interviewee felt that the problem with leaving minority channels to cater for the needs of minority groups was that poorer quality programmes would be made. This was not thought to be acceptable given the current position held by the mainstream channels because it meant that minority ethnic groups would be served an inferior product.

'If you make a Channel 4 documentary, it costs £150,000 at nine o'clock. If you make something for an Asian channel, it will cost tuppence halfpenny and it won't be that good. That's the problem we're talking about, digital channels that aren't well resourced. If we could move towards a situation where there was a digital channel that was really well funded and perhaps it's a subscription channel, or working on another model, then brilliant. But as long as those other [mainstream] channels have a privileged position in the market, we can't just leave them to get on with it, because they won't.'

2. Criticism of output: Many observations about portrayal, content and representation echoed comments reported by the audience research. Again, there was recognition of, or praise for, individual initiatives, but many said there was room for improvement. For example:

- Mainstream television programmes were thought to appeal primarily to a White audience.

'My own feeling is that the actual performance is extremely patchy, and I don't mind saying that actually, sometimes, when I watch BBC1 in the mid-evening, it's a very White, middle-class agenda, and sometimes that also extends to the sort of approach that ITV takes.'

- Mainstream radio stations still had a mainly White persona - often down to the individual DJs/presenters.
- There was a sense that some organisations are struggling with the concept of multicultural broadcasting - they *'make it look like social work'* or *'ticking boxes'*.
- Racial stereotyping was still found on-screen - one or two interviewees said they thought that negative stereotyping of some groups was more common now than previously, particularly with reference to Muslim or Pakistani communities:

'If you actually see an Asian face on TV, nine out of ten times they will make them speak different, they will have a particular accent to go with that character, they will show them as a corner shop owner or whatever.'

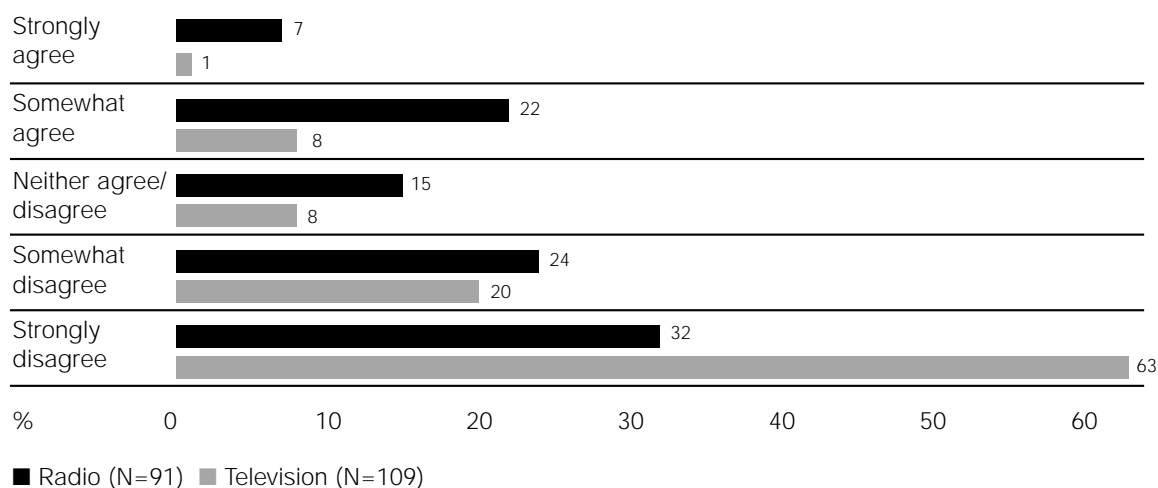
- There was a general belief that, while it has improved in some respects, a diversity of cultural experience is not represented on-screen. This was often to do with the content of programming, which was felt to ignore large areas of interest to minority audiences:

'According to Robin Cook,²⁴ we live in a chicken tikka culture... and yet that has never been reflected in any sense... there's no Indian chef on television... '

It was interesting to note, however, that the television sample in the online survey is nearly twice as likely as the radio sample to 'strongly disagree' that specialist programming will always serve targeted communities better than mainstream.

24. Foreign Secretary at the time of the research.

Table 7: In my opinion, the special interests of ethnic and racial minorities are better served by specialist channels, not by mainstream (radio) services/terrestrial television



- The Asian market was considered not to be catered for by mainstream television, with levels of representation low (see also Appendix 1).

- National radio was felt to be particularly poor at serving the needs of Asian listeners.

'... As far as radio is concerned, there's no multiculturalism in radio. Where is there any Asian music on mainstream radio? Okay, BBC have put up an Asian service as far as the Midlands is concerned, and now it's going countrywide through the satellite, but why do you have to have a separate service for the Asians? Why can it not be included in the mainstream?'

- Others said that it was the Bengali and Pakistani communities who are underserved by comparison with the Indian or Afro-Caribbean communities.

Interviewees were asked in greater detail about their multicultural output - what they thought constituted such programming. They were encouraged to cite examples of multicultural programmes that they had been responsible for and to define the ways in which those programmes were multicultural (see Appendix 3). The result is an interesting and eclectic list of programmes. It was not intended by interviewees to be in any way complete, and the programmes were given by way of examples only. It is, however, a useful point from which to dig deeper into the meaning of multicultural broadcasting.

What emerges is that multicultural programming is not, and could not be, defined by any single dimension - on-screen representation, thematic content or portrayal. For these interviewees, the key dimensions included:

- **Relevance:** This was usually concerned with finding themes or content - or, in the case of radio, music - which resonate with the audience for a particular station or channel.

'Last year we did a series called This London which was a deliberate, a specific diversity project, and what we did was, instead of saying let's look at different communities, like the Turkish community, or the Romanian community, the Caribbean community in London, we looked at themes. So we looked at how Londoners lead their lives in terms of work, love, money and so on.'

'Ten years ago we weren't very good at addressing issues or ideas that were to do with the urban experience... Today in some areas we are more relevant because at least our ears have been open to the fact of what's going on out there. What's going on out there is that more and more Black music is being played.'

- **Variety of opinion:** This could be as simple as making sure that different community representatives are given airtime. In a documentary programme, for example, this would be ensuring that both sides of a story are heard.

'It would be allowing those voices to have something direct to say about particular stories and issues that are of interest to them - allowing those voices to have a direct impact on mainstream middle-of-the-road programming.'

- **Creative input:** Several argued that, by definition, the programmes they worked on were multicultural, either because they themselves were from an ethnic minority or because several members of their team were.
- **Inclusivity:** A term used by several interviewees, referring to the attitudes inherent in the programme. The mark of inclusivity was to do with the way that themes and content issues were dealt with, but also with issues such as the diversity of the televised audience for entertainment shows, for example.
- **Portrayal** - Ensuring that stories about minority ethnic groups are not just stories about racism or crime, and that characters are developed with an understanding of their cultural and ethnic background.
- **Cast/on-screen/on-air representation:** An aspect of multicultural broadcasting which was felt to be important, but which needed to be treated with caution. There is a view that some television broadcasters feel that on-screen representation (in news programmes, for example) is enough to make the programme multicultural; many of these interviewees argued that it is not. Nevertheless, they accepted this remains a key dimension for judging a programme's multicultural credentials.

'It's about casting and how you tell the story and who tells it - for example, if it's a documentary about nannies, not just White people have nannies and so on.'

It is important to note that, while these are the aggregate views of the sample, for a significant minority the key benchmark by which a programme's multicultural credentials can be judged remained levels of on-air representation (the number of people seen on-screen or heard on radio).

The representatives from both niche radio and television services, while, by definition, targeting specific communities, claimed their output was more multicultural than mainstream broadcasters because:

- They made programming aimed at diverse ethnic groups within their target area.
- They offered access to community groups: for niche radio stations, a key issue was about recognising the multiple identities of their audience and that being reflected in output.
- They draw in the host community through English-language programming.

'I would call my station more multicultural than the BBC1 and ITV. In that, okay, the target audience is Asian. But what I'm trying to do is, I'm putting approximately 60% of my output in English, so, having the Asian audience in mind, we have English programming where the host community are tuning in... and we have started engaging the Afro-Caribbeans... we've been approached by some Somali refugees, so we're engaging Somalians as well.'

While at least some of this output was governed by the terms of their licences, this does offer an interesting corrective to the view that niche programming must by definition be monocultural.

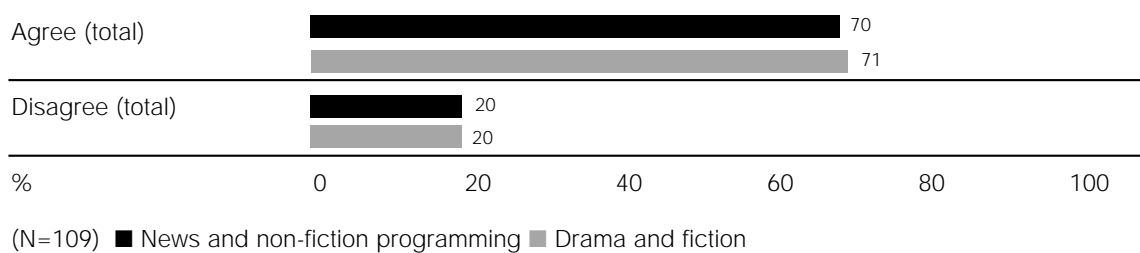
4.3 The issue of programme genre

The differences in the ways in which interviewees interpreted multicultural broadcasting extended to the types of programmes made. For some, it meant programmes which are crosscultural such as music. For others in the television industry, it was about on-screen representation, for example, in news and colour-blind casting in dramas or soap operas. The analysis of television output²⁵ showed that these differences did occur within different programme genres. For example, people from minority ethnic groups were seen to be unlikely to contribute to political programmes or those that covered hobbies such as gardening, while they were more likely to contribute to music and dance programming, as well as topics about sexual activity.

25. See Appendix 1.

The online survey television sample was asked about the changes in on-screen representation within two specific genres: news and non-fiction, and drama and fiction. The data show that significant changes are perceived to have been made, with many more people seen to be included in such programmes over the past five years.

Table 8: Over the last five years, the number of people from minorities on television has increased in...



(i) Music

- Interviewees with an interest in music programming suggested the challenge in music is to find presenters with the right 'attitude'. For example, it is not necessary to find a Black presenter to front a programme about Black music, but someone with an innate understanding of Black music is required. Examples of such presenters were identified in the audience research.

(ii) News and current affairs

- News is often a channel or station's flagship programming and is closely bound up with channel/station identity. Therefore, it was argued, news programming was likely to receive more critical attention than non-news programming. Additionally, news programming exemplifies some of the difficulties people had with the concept of multicultural broadcasting. This was most marked within television where there are several high-profile news presenters from minority ethnic groups on different channels. To some interviewees, this meant progress on the multicultural programming front; to others, it was seen as a cosmetic change.
- Nonetheless, almost all interviewees agreed that bringing a wider range of people into the news process was a good thing. Several people (not all from a news background) referred to the 2001 riots in Oldham as an illustration of what could happen if news organisations are not fully conversant with the issues in particular communities because of an under-representation of the minorities which make up those communities. Several of those who were, or had been, in the position of recruiting reporters and journalists claimed to have made efforts (though often unsuccessfully) to recruit staff from a more diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and this was seen as important.

'Oldham came up and bit them on the arse, nobody saw the riots coming.'

'The Oldham riots and post 11 September 2001 coverage of ethnic minorities - in both those stories you saw snap judgements being made about the dominant feeling of a community and newscasters portraying a community in a certain way... and often news editors aren't really plugged into a particular community... There has to be much more of a questioning attitude, and much less of a desire to come to easy decisions.'

- There were others, however, who pointed to the dangers of thinking that those from ethnic minorities would necessarily be better qualified to comment or report on issues and events within those communities. Journalists were aware that they bring their own personal history with them, but they took pride in the fact that they put their feelings aside in order to report on events.

'It seems to me a huge mistake to think that journalistic coverage of multicultural issues, religious issues, sensitive issues, is somehow qualitatively different from covering the stock market or Russian affairs or any other thing... you don't set out to offend, but equally, you don't set out to whitewash, to gloss over the problems. We are not asked on a day-to-day basis whether we are objective enough to talk about Tony Blair or Iain Duncan Smith. We know that, however, we vote with whatever baggage of personal sympathies and prejudice we come with. If we act professionally then that is the basis on which we will be judged, and it is the only basis on which we should be judged.'

- Indeed, some maintained that it could actually be an advantage to be from outside a community, in order to retain objectivity.
- Attracting or serving the needs of a diverse audience was seen as a major challenge, though to some extent this was a challenge which was only partly to do with ethnicity. Substantial numbers of young people, across all ethnic groups, were described as being not engaged with, or disconnected from, news. The problem then was not unique to audiences within ethnic minorities, but more acute in these categories.²⁵
- Several said that, although on-screen representation in news had changed radically, those changes had not permeated throughout television news departments. This meant that there was a tendency for news agendas to be set by the dominant culture and, more importantly, not to be questioned.

'You inevitably influence the news agenda of a programme; the trouble is that you're a minority so you're easily out-voted and any concerns that you might have, for instance, at the moment about the tone of coverage towards Islam or ethnic minority communities in Britain, can always be shouted down.'

25. *New news, old news*; Ian Hargreaves and James Thomas; Independent Television Commission and Broadcasting Standards Commission, October 2002.

- This was particularly important at times when news events involving specific ethnic or religious groups (such as in Afghanistan, for example) were to the fore.

'The success of Al-Jazeera, you know, during the whole Afghanistan conflict, is the first step towards the Muslim community and Muslim viewer and listener turning away from existing channels of communication; they didn't believe the BBC and CNN, and they all started tuning in to Al-Jazeera... it goes back to what I said about people turning away if they don't feel they are being heard.'

Indeed, alternative news sources and news stories were mentioned by many of those in the audience research as the main reason they listened to, or viewed, specialist programming.

- Portrayal was seen as important, too. Those working in news were concerned to ensure that coverage did not always portray those from ethnic minorities in stereotypical or negative ways. For example, interviewees and experts were sought from all ethnic groups, although they were not always easy to find.

'For instance, we did a piece about the minimum wage after it had been going for a year and went to Leicester, where everybody in the piece was from an ethnic minority. The owner of the factory that paid just slightly above the minimum wage, the workers and the union official, but it was an example where race was not the issue - the minimum wage is the issue.'

- Moreover, there are groups, such as British Muslims, who were thought to be factionalised and fragmented, and from whom it was difficult to find a representative spokesperson.
- Within this consideration of the type of portrayal was the recognition that it was important to audiences to reflect relevant and authentic items.

(iii) Drama on television

- Overall, there was a sense in the qualitative research that things had improved in drama, but not quickly enough. A number of television drama series were still perceived as being *'too White'*. This was felt to be especially true of crime series, such as *A Touch of Frost*, or where the demographic target was assumed to be young, such as *Linda Green*.
- For many, multiculturalism in drama was simply a matter of diversity on-screen. However, there was a variety of opinion as to how that should be achieved. For some, colour-blind casting was the ideal, and several examples were given where this was felt to have worked; for example, in *The Vice*:

'What happened was they were casting and David Harewood is one of the best actors in his late thirties; I mean, we needed an actor in his late thirties so we put David Harewood in, and that's how it should be it seems to me.'

Others, however, pointed out that there had to be more conscious decisions taken over casting - particularly for minor or background roles, where ethnicity is probably not specified by the writer.

'The problem is there is a sort of default setting where people just say, "Get me some background artistes." You don't really specify, and somebody will go off and get background artistes, and if they haven't really thought about it they just tend to get sent White people as the "default setting".'

- More complex than the issue of on-screen representation were questions of portrayal. Though some welcomed the range of Black and Asian characters they saw on many dramas and soap operas, others thought those characters were too often lacking in any depth. There was also the danger that, in always focusing on a character's ethnicity, the audience would become alienated.

'You should just have more Black actors and Asian actors and they should be on the screen playing lawyers, businessmen, where race is not an issue, they just happen to appear.'

'If the audience thought that EastEnders, say, was introducing these characters because it wanted to talk about multiculturalism or racism, it wouldn't watch. It watches these programmes because, you know, people do the same things in Walford, whether they're Black or Asian or Italian or White, they do the same things. So in other words, it's part of the story, there are no particularly multicultural issues that are being talked about - it's not a social affairs programme - the thrust of it is an entertainment soap opera.'

- Others, however, spoke of the '*richness of difference*', a sense in which ethnic minorities should be seen as being the same as everybody else, but also as different, as having their own cultural identity. It is perhaps not surprising that those who were themselves from minority ethnic groups are most aware of the lack of this '*richness of difference*' in characterisations on-screen.

'To have a Black face in a drama doesn't necessarily mean cultural inclusion. Real multicultural inclusion, you know - do you give that character depth? Do you give it a cultural identity and a racial identity, and do you allow that character to act out a real life? Or do you simply want a cardboard cut-out which simply has a Black or Asian face?'

Ultimately, there was a belief that a drama stands or falls by the quality of the writing, acting and production. For those working in this genre, these dimensions come first.

(iv) Light entertainment on television

- Light entertainment was not a genre which was at the top of interviewees' mind when talking about multicultural broadcasting, even though the audiences for many television light entertainment programmes are far larger than for other programmes and, therefore, might be said to have more impact on society generally. (Indeed this was an element picked up by participants in the audience research.)
- There was some perception, however, that many entertainment and quiz shows are 'too White'.

Inclusivity was particularly important for certain audience-based shows and this was mentioned by some of the television programme-makers interviewed.

'We've got old people, we've got young people, Black people, White people, gay people, straight people, and we've got lots of mad people. And that's true. And I think that's Britain as I know it.'

'The show was created to be inclusive rather than exclusive... The point is, it's a show for everyone.'

(v) Children's programming on television

- Few comments were made about children's programming, and these were usually positive. Children's programming was described as displaying 'effortless diversity' of the sort that many found missing in adult drama and entertainment.

(vi) Sport on television

- Sport was thought by many to be more multicultural than several other genres, in the sense that many competitors and successful sportsmen and women come from ethnic minorities. Sports coverage reflected this, it was thought, and, therefore, has a multicultural flavour.
- Those within the sports departments of mainstream television broadcasters recognised the challenge to appeal to a wider audience, including women and those ethnic minorities not well represented on the sports field or in certain sports.
- Those working in sport said they sought out talent from all ethnic groups, with varying degrees of success. Some sports, such as football, have a higher representation among particular minority groups overall and, therefore, it was easier to recruit on-screen talent in these areas.

- The manner and style of presentation were felt to be important. Certain sports, such as golf, were thought to be presented in a somewhat exclusive and old-fashioned way. The challenge was how to reflect coverage so as to acknowledge that, for many young urban dwellers from ethnic minorities, golf is extremely popular.

(vii) Factual television programmes

- Many of those interviewees working in factual or documentary features had produced a range of programming, not all of which they would define as multicultural. Those programmes which were thus defined often examined issues from a number of different ethnic or cultural viewpoints. In this case, the key challenge was to tell the story in a way which respects the individual or community's unique experience, while drawing out themes which have a wider resonance with audiences. This might simply be a matter of emphasis:

'If they'd thought of watching a programme which involved a substantial amount of it talking about Asian minicab drivers being attacked, I don't think they will have watched it. 'Cause it doesn't mean anything to them. No, what they can relate to is a programme about minicab drivers being attacked, 'cause they've all sat in a minicab.'

- The documentary feature makers interviewed were passionate that their films were about revealing insights into other cultures or other views of life. There was strong criticism, however, of some factual output. This independent producer commented:

'Trading Places, for example, which the BBC is flagging at the moment... it's a factual programme dealing with race. It's a concept that they have come back to, time after time, and whenever the BBC does something this direct in the mainstream, it is almost invariably to do with the identity of race and its expression... this programme uses prosthetics and make-up to change the physical appearance of a White and a Black young man and so-called changes their race. But it's a very superficial exercise. And it's great for entertainment. It's great entertainment for all the mainstream White population because there's a certain novelty about looking at the possibility of changing someone's physical racial appearance. But... he doesn't do that much. He doesn't test anything. He doesn't actually tell us anything meaningful about the day-to-day genuine experiences of Black people in this country in terms of employment, division of resources, allocation of resources. Those fundamental things, it doesn't deal with that.'

4.4 Multiculturalism: Guidelines and policies

'It's about getting back to the business of do you want to provide a much more attractive product? And if you want this place to be a more interesting place and a more relevant place to work, then we are actually having a multicultural conversation.'

When asked, nearly everyone interviewed found it almost impossible to say how multiculturalism could, in itself, be used as a measure of a programme's quality. This was not to understate the importance of a programme being multicultural. It is that, given the complex nature of multiculturalism, which, for many, embraced attitudes rather than quantifiable programme elements, it would not be possible to achieve. Moreover, for some, it harks back to a time when multicultural programmes were poorly funded, but broadcast because it was the right thing to do:

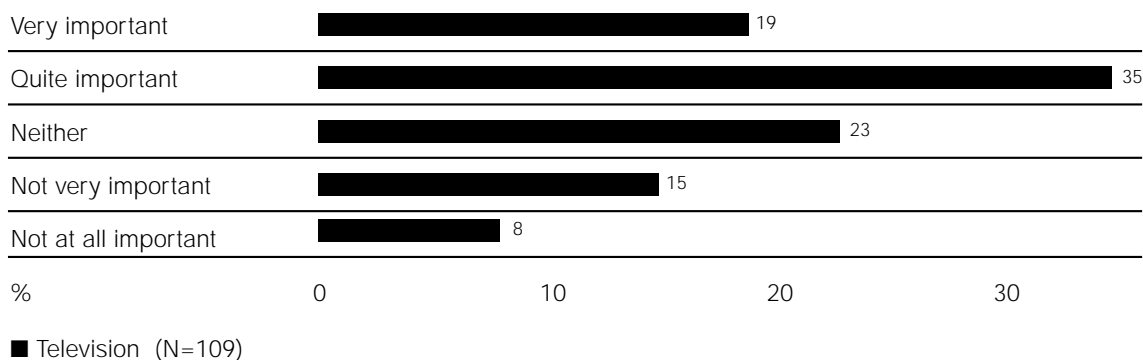
"I thought that was rather a poor drama, but excellent multicultural casting" - no, I don't think so. If you're a comedy producer, you want to make a funny show. You don't get any points for making an unfunny show with brown people in it, any more than you do with White people; you know it's not funny. Full stop.'

This being the case, one of the stated objectives of the research was to explore the extent to which interviewees felt that their output was shaped or influenced by internal or external factors. How important were externally or internally set guidelines, compared with a personal vision of what 'should' be done?

Those people working within television organisations and, to a lesser extent, the radio industry were more aware of official policies and guidelines than were programme-makers. This was particularly true within the BBC and Channel 4. At the BBC, for example, the sports department had - not long before this research was conducted - held its own one-day seminar devoted to issues of diversity within sport.

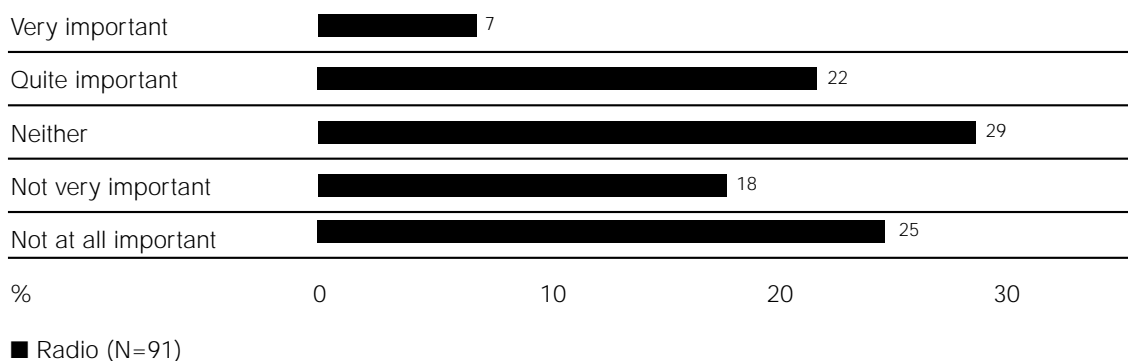
Outside the BBC and Channel 4, guidelines and policies pertaining to multiculturalism were not nearly so clear. When pressed, interviewees said they had a general understanding of what such guidelines were, and they considered that they had internalised them. There was a sense that following guidelines was instinctive, *'what you do anyway'*, and there was a tendency to trust their own judgement in this respect. However, the majority of television respondents (54%) in the online survey felt it was important that the representation of minority groups was monitored against certain (unspecified) criteria. It is interesting to note, however, that the few independent programme-makers interviewed (seven, so a small sample) were significantly less likely to agree that such guidelines should exist (29%).

Table 9: It is important that programmes are monitored to ensure they meet certain criteria regarding the representation of ethnic and racial minorities (on television)



Equally, while the representatives from the radio industry interviewed were clearly aware of the regulations governing their output, there was little sense that they felt either constrained by these regulations or that they used them to guide their output in terms of multiculturalism. Indeed, the radio sample's greater rejection (than the television sample) of the importance of independent monitoring of representation underlines this. Those who had particular responsibility for ethnic/racial programming were, not surprisingly, even less likely to agree that such monitoring was necessary.

Table 10: It is important that programmes are monitored to ensure they meet certain criteria regarding the representation of ethnic and racial minorities (on radio)



Most interviewees accepted, or at least conceded, that having a set of external guidelines was useful. For some, the proof that guidelines work lay in Channel 4. Without such guidelines, they wondered if Channel 4 would be producing the multicultural output it does.

'I think the only reason why Channel 4 does this [multicultural broadcasting] is because of the regulation... I mean, the industry's really converging. The people who run Channel 4 at the top are the same people who run the BBC. I think it's nothing to do with the people that run Channel 4 because they're the same people who run other organisations, so it has to be something else, and it's because there's a regulation there.'

For those in the commercial television sector, the commercial imperative - *'bums on seats'* - was ever present and was possibly the dominant factor in determining output (though that is not to deny the importance of the personal vision/expression within that). This was particularly important for those within the independent sector at this time:

'It's not as though somebody is handing down tablets of stone saying you must change your policy and do this; it is audience-driven and what are we going to do about re-engaging that audience?'

Those from radio and niche television channels were most likely to feel that their output was governed by audience demand and less by an outside commercial imperative. One managing director of a niche television channel explained:

'Originally, when I started, my perception of this channel was that it's going to be an Asian service for the Asians, but, as we got into broadcast, I saw that the wider community wanted to be involved, especially in the news and current affairs, because we've filled a void which was left behind by the BBC and ITV.'

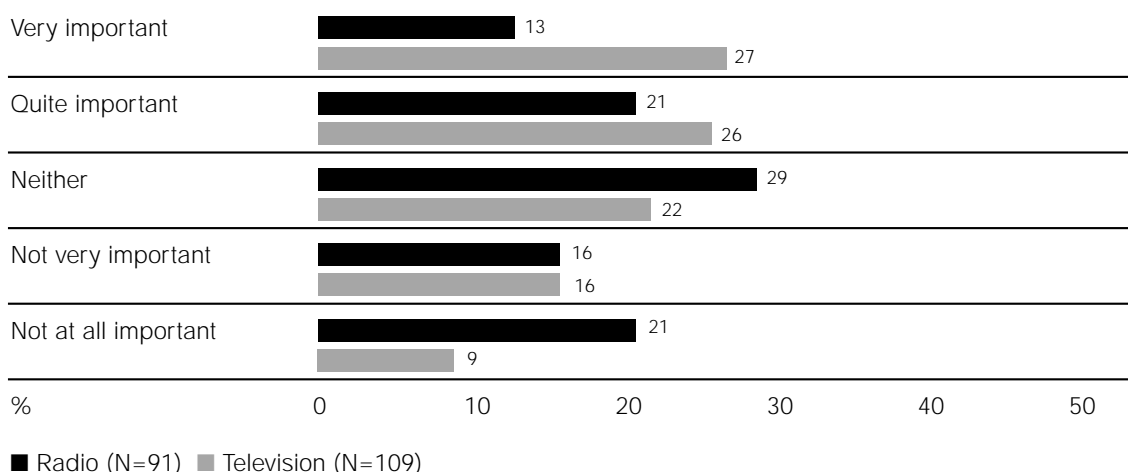
Clear guidelines were important, too, for independent producers, although those interviewed argued that they are motivated by personal beliefs rather than external guidance.

By and large, however, having guidelines or formal policies was felt to be a good thing, if only because without them, initiatives (particularly within organisations) could be left to the goodwill or vision of individuals who might later leave. Regulatory bodies were also thought to provide a 'watching eye' or 'ear' on what broadcasters were doing, and this was thought to be helpful:

'I wouldn't like to solely self-police and not have anybody else tapping us on our shoulder, pointing out our failings, 'cause I think that's really important. Not just about multiculturalism, about every aspect of our output.'

Monitoring for output

Table 11: It is important that there should be guidelines/initiatives on the level (the number) of on-air representation of people from ethnic and racial minorities



When asked about the importance of having guidelines or monitoring initiatives in place with regard to the representation of ethnic or racial minority groups, the television sample was more likely (53%) than the radio sample (34%) to agree that such initiatives were important. A substantial minority, however, did not offer a comment, while nearly two in five of the radio sample said such initiatives were unimportant.

Monitoring was seen, particularly by the representatives from the radio and television industries, as onerous and time consuming, more so if done in a mechanical way. Equally, it was not always thought to deliver pertinent results.

‘We have gone through processes before, within BBC news, of formal monitoring structures in terms of trying to monitor numbers of people that we are putting on the screen or the radio from ethnic minorities, but in fact we have drawn back on it a little bit because it is quite onerous on production teams to keep these statistics apart from everything else.’

Simple head counts or numbers of appearances could also be misleading. One producer cited an example where someone from ITV came to represent 40% of the Asian people on ITV that week.

Those in radio generally felt that they have a direct and dynamic relationship with their listeners, who give them instant feedback if they broadcast anything which is seen to ‘overstep the mark’. One commercial radio executive pointed out that monitoring their output was fundamental to their work:

'We do quite a bit of internal monitoring for quality, and I think any of the isms will get attention as being negative. Whether that's sexism, racism or people who blaspheme.'

There was a lack of consensus as to which, if any, minority ethnic groups were most excluded or underserved by current broadcast output. For many, this was a difficult question to answer. Despite advances in audience research which have given rise to a number of models for understanding and segmenting viewing or listening audiences, the interviewees in this research viewed their audiences in a much broader way.

'We're a mainstream middle-aged channel and, therefore, our target is mainstream Britain... Daily Mail Britain if you like - but a show like Pop Idols or Coronation Street - shows that get 12, 13 million, and is jolly popular - you appeal to all groups. We do get 20-year-olds and we do get young urban Black males, probably because it's such a huge audience that it does touch all these people.'

'The essential profile of BBC2 is essentially old-ish, south east-ish and middle brow-ish.'

Where there was a sense that groups or communities were excluded, it was rarely underpinned by research:

'I think there's some interesting research to be done here, because I suspect that even though the Indians and Pakistanis may argue that they're not particularly well served, I suspect the proportion of them who actually watch television news is higher than the ordinary White community.'

This is not to say that audience research is not conducted in this area, but, by and large, it does not reflect ethnicity. Interviewees appeared to rely on broad demographic information to tell them who is watching or listening to their programmes.

'You tend to sit down and say, "I know we've got 14 million people listening a week, but who is our ideal?" If we had to draw a picture of an ideal Radio One listener, who would it be - and that's useful in getting the big picture idea, but it doesn't take in the complexity and the texture. 'Cause it's not going to be a Black person.'

Even without research, however, a few interviewees did feel there were obvious examples of communities being underserved, or simply not understood, by the broadcast media. For example, several interviewees felt Asians to be the largest minority group underserved on mainstream radio and television, while Black or Afro-Caribbean culture has better representation, in part because of the emphasis given to music.

'If you're an Asian, and definitely if you're a Muslim, then the multicultural programmes that Channel 4 are making - what have they got to do with you?'

'No one's really managed to integrate the Muslim experience into terrestrial television. [Why?] I don't know. I think because the experience is so particular and the world, in some ways, is so closed, or can be. People think if you had a Muslim family in Coronation Street they certainly wouldn't go down to the pub. They probably wouldn't shop in the corner shop... they might buy the odd newspaper. You know, so where do they fit into the traditional locales, of, you know, of our television?'

'I still get excited when I see a Sikh on television.'

Others pointed to a lack of understanding among national broadcasters of the different ethnic make-up of audiences in differing parts of the country. This led to certain groups being excluded, as was suggested by participants in the audience research:

'Where are the Arabs, Chinese and Pakistanis? Can we have a better understanding of the make-up of this society?'

'The Chinese community in Manchester is one of the biggest communities in the centre of town, brings a huge kind of wealth of money, tourism, everything else into the city. Granada is the biggest television producer in Manchester, and yet those two communities on our doorsteps seldom come together.'

A local radio licensee - such as Spectrum International Radio - has limited airtime to apportion to the different communities it serves. One executive objected to the description 'Asian', for example.

'But they have lumped all these different communities all under the Asian umbrella... if you say somebody from Sri Lanka is the same as somebody from Pakistan, or whatever, then I think that's it not the right way to go.'

The audience research also showed a desire for the complexity of groups to be represented, for different communities to be identified individually. However, this interviewee expressed a concern that, with increasing numbers of diverse groups, the larger of the minority groups will be impacted negatively:

'The fact is that Black minorities, visible minorities, have a tougher experience as a result of their difference, their physical difference and the danger is that broadcasters say, to be very liberal, "Oh, multicultural means everybody that isn't White Anglo-Saxon". And we've got a pie. Where it was 90% reserved for Black and Asians, now we'll reduce their quota to about 30 or 40%, because all the other groups will share the rest of that pie. That's a dangerous position. You don't say, well, let's reduce that provision to make space for other people. What you do is you say, well, let's increase the pie.'

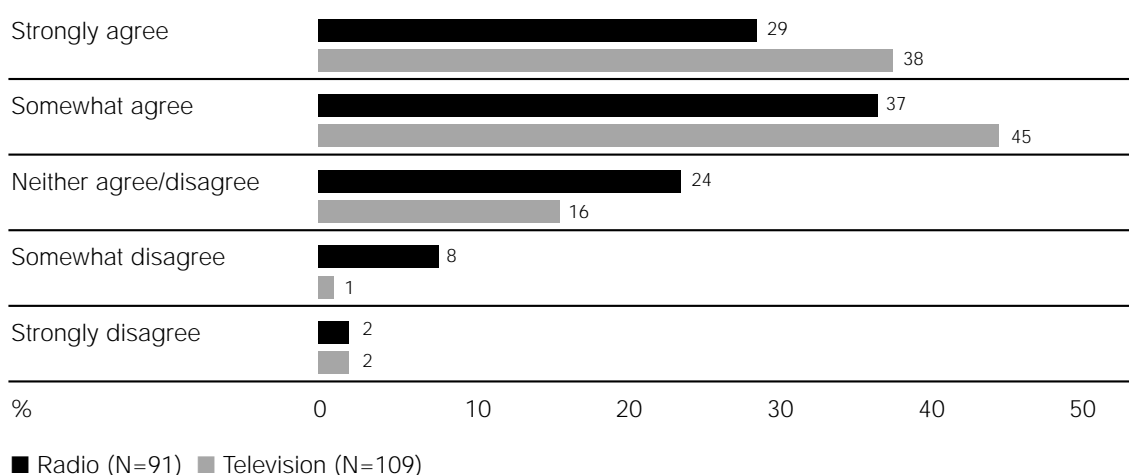
For interviewees from Wales and Scotland, there were different issues. In both countries, it has always been important to ensure that their national identity is recognised and catered to within the UK-wide broadcast industry. Even here, there appeared to be a growing sense that a voice must now be given to the minority ethnic groups within their region.

4.5 Employment and multiculturalism

The commissioning process

The majority of respondents in both media samples agreed that they tried to include people from minority ethnic groups in their programming, with those from television agreeing most strongly (over a third agree ‘strongly’).

Table 12: I always try to ensure that I take positive steps to ensure that ethnic and racial minorities are represented in the programmes I am involved in



Interviewees said that getting ideas commissioned was a challenge, both for those working within broadcast organisations, as well as those on the outside. Why some ideas were accepted for development, or were commissioned to be made, was not always clear to them. There was also the question of timing. One programme-maker who had suggested a series about racial tensions in the north of England found a ready acceptance of his idea post-Oldham.

It was clear, however, that putting forward multicultural programme ideas is not enough, many other factors were at work:

'I could give you a list of 60 series titles that we have looked into over the past three years, from millionaires' children to millionaires' toys, Asian millionaires. We thought a lot about a series about Ugandan Asians, but at the same time we thought a lot about taking a railway man from Hull and sending him to work in the Calcutta railways, or a steel worker from Cardiff and sending him to the steel works in America. None of these things ever happened; they don't happen for all sorts of reasons, but they are things we have considered. You have 26 ideas, you talk to the controller and they go, "I like that one a lot."'

The trend towards television production companies merging and becoming larger was not an issue much explored in this research.²⁶ Nevertheless, two companies did speak of the difficulties of survival in a market where a small number of commissions come their way. This was, in part, down to the overall trend for fewer larger companies. There was also mention, in this context, of Channel 4's Cultural Diversity Clause, which, they said, effectively makes mainstream companies able to compete for multicultural projects once they have demonstrated their adherence to the clause.

'Because multicultural departments and commissioners are trying to incorporate the mainstream White production community, they are shrinking the pie, so only a minor portion of the commissions will go to a Black-led production company. The result of which is that talented and skilled individuals have been forced out of broadcasting. So the clause at Channel 4 which says that there must be diversity within production companies may well mean that those voices are coming through White perspectives.'

Interviewees also said that networking and personal contacts remain powerful forces in the commissioning process.

'And, if you're Black, you're not likely to be in those closed inner circles. So one of the other solutions must be for the broadcasters to make it their duty to find out who's out there and find mechanisms and means of bringing them in and getting them to the table. You've got to do more, you've actually got to target it more, in order to raise the game.'

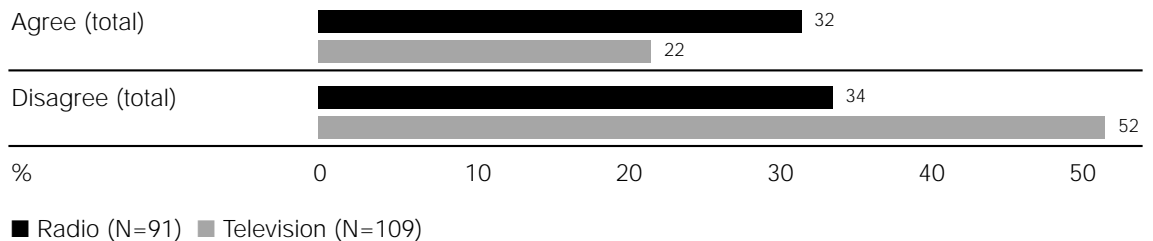
Diversity within organisations

The results of the online survey show that, within the radio sample, there was a fairly even split between those who did, and did not, think that minority groups have been able to move into decision-making roles in broadcasting organisations. However, the shift towards more multicultural ownership in commercial radio began over 10 years ago, so it is not surprising that those in the radio sample do not perceive a significant shift in commercial radio over the past five years. Over half the television sample said that they see there is some way to go.

26. *Include me in*; Annabelle Sreberny; Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Independent Television Commission, 1999.

Table 13: Over the past five years, the number of people from minorities has increased in...

Decision-making roles in broadcasting organisations



Likewise, for the majority of interviewees, achieving diversity in the workplace was the greater challenge facing the broadcast industry. There were a number of reasons why they wanted to see a more diverse workforce.

- There was a general feeling that such a workforce (which more accurately reflects the make-up of society) would inevitably produce richer and more relevant output. This, in turn, would make broadcasting more compelling and attract a wider audience:

'If we don't have a multicultural workforce, how are we going to truly reflect society? Surely it's too much to ask for people of a different culture to fully understand what another person, another culture is feeling? Also, if you don't have people, if you don't look around your office, or your department, and see Black or Asian faces, then you're not going to come into contact with those people, so you're not going to put them in your programmes.'

'You don't do really crappy ethnic minority accents to get a cheap laugh because you've got someone sitting in front of you.'

When asked in the online survey about the importance of employing a diverse workforce either to increase the relevance or to enrich the quality of output, both the radio and television samples tended to say this would be an important benefit.

Table 14: I believe it is important to employ people from different ethnic and racial groups

... to increase the relevance of my programming output



... to enrich the quality of the output



% 0 20 40 60 80 100

Widely held as this view was, it was by no means universal. Some interviewees said they were not opposed to diversity within the workforce, but objected to a theory which suggested that cultural richness within an organisation would necessarily change what is coming out of it:

'I don't detect an Asian perspective, you know, Pakistani and Indian, a Sri Lankan perspective... I see "Jane Smith" from Hertfordshire and I see her perspective as equally valuable. I don't say, "How fantastic to get the Hertfordshire perspective on this, and I don't say how fantastic to get the Sri Lankan perspective on this." I think everyone is different; it is a very rich and varied bunch of people that we work with and that's terrific.'

'The idea that suddenly because you increase the number of people inside to 25%, that your output changes, is complete bollocks. It depends on who's making decisions and what is the culture and ethos of that place.'

Those working in niche channels and local radio stations, certainly in the qualitative interviews, were least likely to feel there was an issue to be raised and spoke of the wide variety of cultures and ethnic groups from which their workforce was recruited. A local radio MD said:

'We had a character on our football programme who sponsored Partick Thistle, and he has a very successful chain of Indian restaurants - he would poke fun at everybody, including the Asian community, but it was done in a great way, it was a bridge. When you have someone like that who's a leader in the Asian community and he could have a laugh about Protestants, Catholics, Asians, I think that's a great thing because it doesn't demonise anybody.'

A number of reasons were put forward to explain why there are not greater numbers of ethnic minorities within the workplace.

- **Perceptions of exclusivity:** the tendency that those from ethnic minorities do not apply because they do not think the broadcast organisations are ‘for them’. This perception was repeated by many of the interviewees, working in both radio and television:

‘I think a lot of people from a Black or Asian background probably look upon it as a White industry. They feel as if they’re going to be outsiders. So I think when people from a multicultural background come into our business, they probably still see a largely White culture and it may be that they’re put off by that... We’re actually doing quite a lot of work to try and find out why they feel this way and why they don’t stick...’

‘If you believe [the organisation] to be White and middle-class, and it doesn’t make programmes for ethnic minorities, then people won’t feel that that is a place where they want to be.’

- **Accidental exclusiveness:** the tendency to recruit people ‘in their own image’ or, in certain production areas, through recommendations or friends.

‘... if you have a homogenous group of people who were all White males from the south east of England then the kind of programme that they would produce would be pretty homogenous.’

- **Lack of interest:** While many of those who have tried to recruit a more diverse mix of staff spoke of the problems of attracting people to institutions which might be perceived as ‘White middle class’, others concluded that broadcasting was not a preferred career choice for certain ethnic groups.

‘Of 20 people who responded to an advert, often we were lucky to get one who was Black or Asian.’

‘But maybe among Indian or Asian Muslim communities, maybe being a journalist wasn’t a valued thing. Maybe it was self-employment. Maybe it was more professional careers. But even if you look at the national newspapers, there aren’t that many Asians writing for our national newspapers.’

- **Lack of will to change the status quo:** This was primarily a belief held by programme-makers in mainstream radio and television. For the most part, those executives from the industries were conscious of the efforts made to encourage applicants from a broader range of backgrounds. Programme-makers, especially those working for independent television production companies, were possibly

unaware of these efforts and, therefore, ascribed a lack of progress to a lack of will at the top. Moreover, there was a sense that those in the industry would not make the extra effort to recruit people who perhaps have less experience or different credentials from their White counterparts. Those working for niche television channels or radio stations sometimes echoed this belief, fostered by anecdotal evidence about the difficulties some of their staff had had in being considered for positions with mainstream broadcasters (although these same staff were often able to migrate to the mainstream after working for them).

'What broadcasters do is just sit back, and they can sit back because so many people come to them. The attitude in the sector is, "Well, there's nobody out there, we don't know them, so there must be nobody out there. And anyway, even if you do, who are you, what have you done, where have you been? Thank you, but no thank you. Don't call us, we'll call you." And that is the attitude.'

'I approached BBC and ITV and said, "Look, I'd like to get into television because I definitely see that there is a void which you guys need to fill." And they said, "Look, what experience have you got?" And I said, "None, but if you take me on then I'll get the experience" and they said, "No, go away, get some experience and then come back to us." Now this answer was being given to most of the ethnic people who were approaching the mainstream television, and they did not have a platform. I mean they would get a week's placement, but a week's placement would not give them the necessary experience, so I decided to open up a station to give those people a platform.'

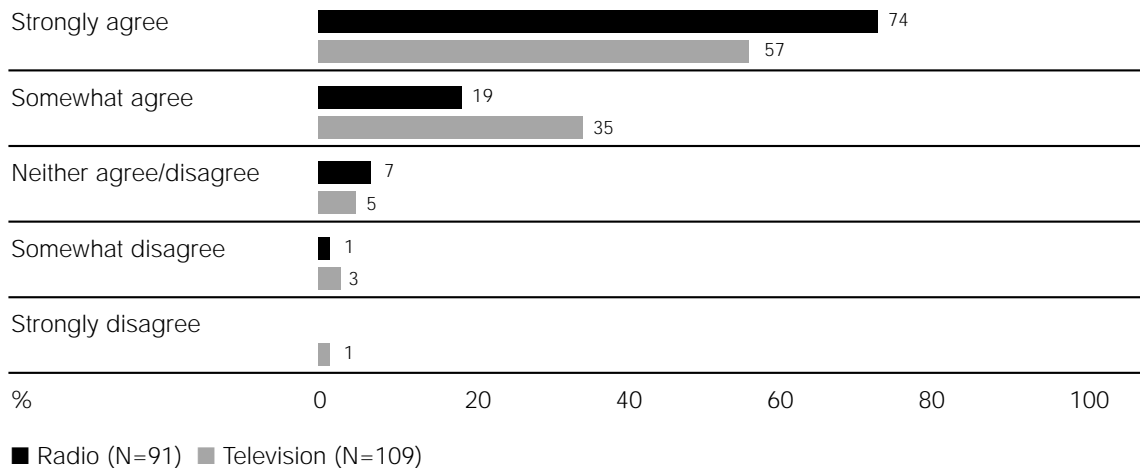
Finally, one independent television programme-maker pointed to a dearth of programmes being made which would offer specific training/learning opportunities to those from minority groups:

'Skin was a programme that LWT produced in the early eighties, and it was one of the first programmes which targeted issues of concern to Black audiences, Black and Asian audiences. And it created a wealth of talent as a result... they went on to do Black on Black and other things. But my point is that those programmes provided training opportunities and they haven't been replaced.'

Quotas and targets

While respondents to the online survey, and interviewees in the qualitative research talked about the value of a diverse workforce - either for the workplace and/or for broadcast output - most insisted that it was important to employ the best person for the job, regardless of their ethnic or racial identity.

Table 15: I believe it is important to employ the best people for the job, regardless of their ethnic or racial identity



As a consequence, there were mixed feelings about the virtues of having different initiatives aimed at creating a diverse workforce, be they quotas set externally or internally, targets to be met, or special initiatives for recruitment. Many interviewees pointed out that several high-profile and talented broadcasters had entered the profession through special initiatives or training schemes. Those who endorsed such opportunities - a sizeable minority - said that the key to making them work was to ensure that those coming in on such schemes are valued by the organisation as much as any other entrant. The danger, by contrast, was that they will be seen as coming in on a 'special ticket', and this could affect how others perceive them and, equally importantly, how they perceived themselves. One interviewee commented, having turned down a place on a fast-track scheme:

'What's better? Do you want somebody who you feel has put the hours in and has worked their way up and you've chosen on ability, as opposed to somebody who is there because they've been forced upon you or because you've got to meet a certain quota - are you going to have the same kind of respect for them, for their judgement?'

Workplace initiatives

Not all of those interviewed were in recruitment roles or knew specifically about recruitment initiatives, but many were mentioned. It is understood by those who refer to these schemes that many are tools for searching for talent/staff who would not otherwise apply to the organisation. In practice, this often meant those from minority ethnic groups. The schemes mentioned included:

- career and personal development programmes to help employees from ethnic minorities to increase their personal effectiveness;

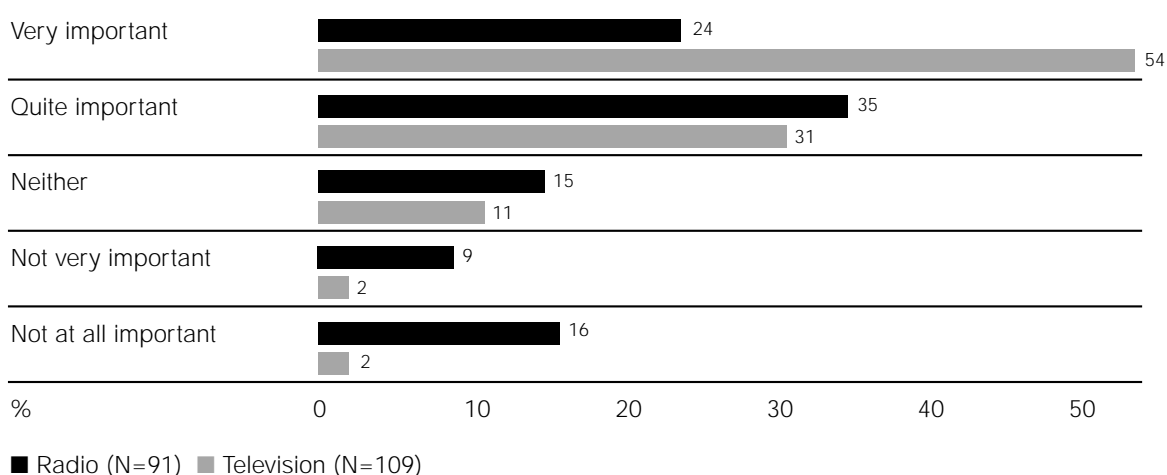
- a scheme within a sports department of a major broadcasting organisation which is run in conjunction with a university, whereby postgraduate students spend some time in the department;
- recruitment roadshows to reach communities who might not otherwise think of applying to broadcast organisations and the increasing use of the internet to publicise vacancies;
- support from regional training bodies, used to help train youngsters, where possible from ethnic minorities.

Among those with some experience of, or responsibility for, recruitment, there was agreement that it was not sufficient to ‘*simply put an ad in The Guardian*’ and hope a more diverse workforce would materialise. It was regarded as a labour-intensive (and, therefore, expensive) activity and was, therefore, inevitably associated with larger organisations.

‘Whereas historically we’ve gone for reporters and taught them telly, maybe we’ll have to go for attitude and then teach them how to report as well as teach them telly, but that’s, one, very labour-intensive and, two, very high risk.’

Certainly respondents to the online survey felt it was important to have initiatives in place to recruit a diverse workforce, especially among those within television who saw the need to attract more people into the industry.

Table 16: It is important that there are initiatives to promote the recruitment of people from ethnic and racial minorities to work in United Kingdom radio/terrestrial television



Not only was recruitment seen as a major challenge, so, too, was retaining staff.

'It's the creating the culture and the environment because, you know, if they come and the culture is still pretty White, alpha male and all their ideas get shouted down, they won't stay. So it's partly trying to change the culture so that when we do get someone like that [i.e. from an ethnic minority] we can hang on to them.'

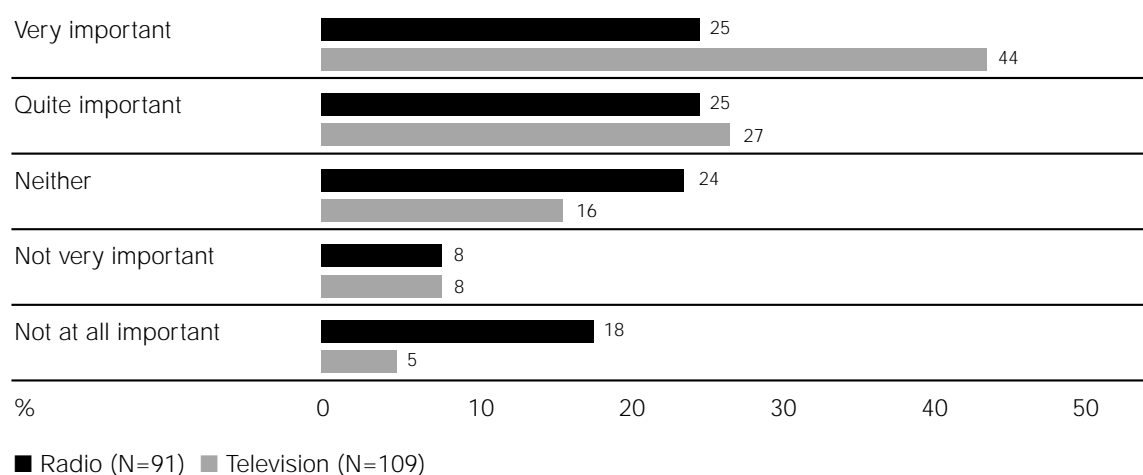
'I think, sometimes, people have had very good ideas with making efforts to recruit and find interesting and a varied range of people, but then it stops, they get into a formal building and... they are expected to behave like everybody else. So I think your induction has to be part of that fresh new look as well - you're not just opening a door and then there's a big massive hole for them to fall through.'

In one commercial television organisation, the issue of retention was being addressed by conducting exit interviews. In mentioning this, this interviewee also made an observation about the role of trade unions:

'We're doing exit interviews so we can get much more of a handle on just why they don't feel comfortable, why they don't feel at home. I think to be honest the craft unions... have never been very progressive in my view when it comes to multicultural issues... you'll find that you don't see an awful lot of non-White technicians. And I think a lot of unions are now facing up to this one, too. Why are they only getting candidates from one section of the community?'

Again, in the quantified study, those in television were more likely than the radio sample to agree that it is important that there are initiatives in place to retain staff from minority groups within the industry.

Table 17: It is important that guidelines or initiatives are put in place to retain people from ethnic and racial minorities already working in UK radio/terrestrial television



Independent television production companies

Unlike the mainstream broadcasters, independent television production companies were far less likely to feel there was a problem in recruiting a diverse workforce:

'We hired good people who we like and we have a real ethnic mix in the company, and these people are just people that we like and it's a real positive example of how the community works.'

One former employee of a medium-sized independent felt that the diversity compliance clause introduced by Channel 4 had had a beneficial effect in terms of recruitment, however:

'It was only when the multicultural commitment came in at Channel 4, and you actually had to say what your mix of staff was, that as a head of development I was able to say, "We don't know enough people, I am now going to make sure that the only people that I see on spec are people who are Black or Asian, because I have very little time to see anybody on spec." It allowed me to increase the circle of contacts, the potential people we could employ and help stop that thing of everybody just recommending their friend who was probably White.'

Burden of representation

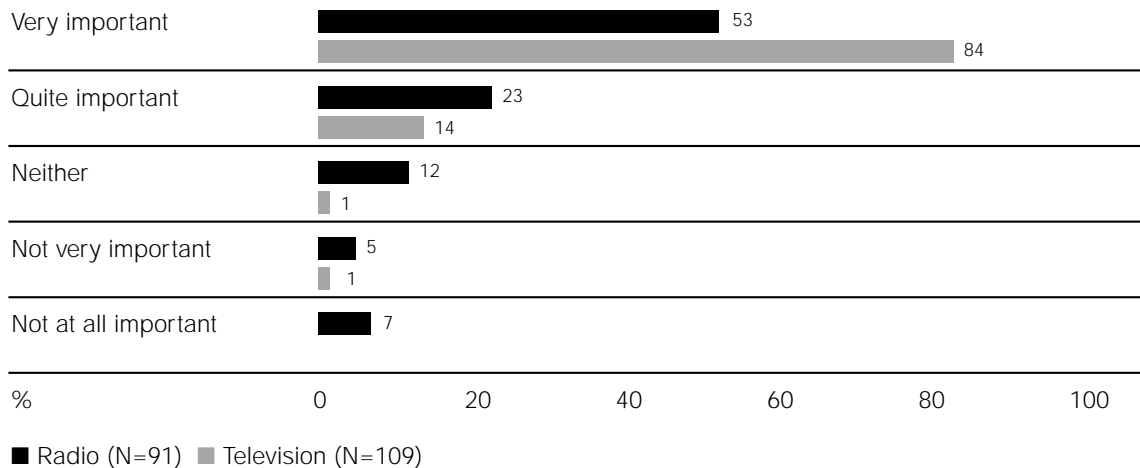
One issue raised several times in the qualitative research was that of the 'burden of representation'. Those from ethnic minorities still felt an expectation that they would address minority issues or be an expert on multicultural topics:

'That's the other strange correlation going on, if you're a Black person, you'll make multicultural programmes. Why? A White person can do it, it's not a function of who you are really, it's about an attitude. Otherwise Black people shouldn't be working on Newsnight.'

'I absolutely did not want to be pigeon-holed as the bloke who does the crosscultural comedy.'

Certainly, those from the online survey agreed that the burden of representation should not be foisted upon their colleagues:

Table 18: it is important that people from ethnic and racial minorities hold positions that are not specifically related to ethnic or racial responsibilities



Notwithstanding those caveats, those interviewees from ethnic minorities working in the industry pointed out that they were able to bring a specific perspective to their work, most obviously when the topic being treated related in some way to their own community.

‘It is clear that certain opportunities only arise because of your ethnicity; for example, the fact of being from certain communities gives you an insight into certain situations that others don’t have - therefore, you need more people in those sorts of positions.’

Apart from the burden placed on individuals by the broadcast organisation for which they worked, there was genuine concern that their own communities might place burdens of representation on individuals. This was particularly pertinent in certain situations - for example, in a local radio or television station, where there was a closer relationship between broadcaster and audience. This was remarked upon by one broadcaster, who spoke of the advantages of having a White news editor working for her local radio station, primarily targeted at an Asian audience. A programme-maker expressed a similar view:

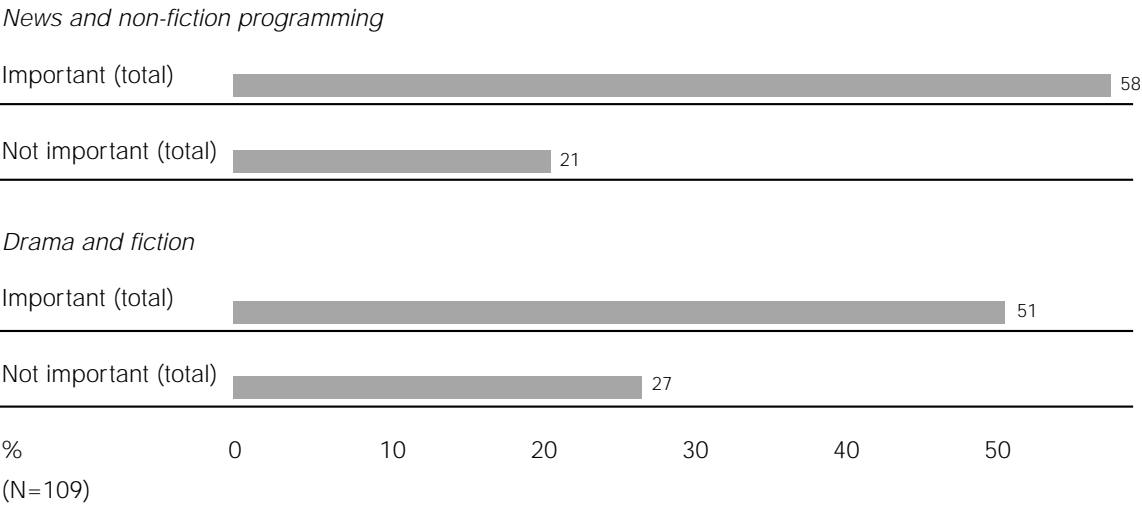
‘If we can get six people into the BBC into different areas, then we will phone them up and encourage them to do this, or not do this, and they will almost be like our agents in the heart of the BBC. Clearly this is not on. And in some cases this is to impose on the individuals concerned a kind of collective role which they themselves are deeply uncomfortable with... I think it is quite common. They feel that friends in the community are watching them and saying, you know, “You only said that because the BBC wanted you to say it” or, if it is the other way around, the BBC may suspect you only said that because your community wants it... We would be naïve not to acknowledge that these problems exist or that they certainly potentially exist.’

Although this fear was expressed, it is not clear what evidence there is for it. In fact, those who were from ethnic minorities were as concerned to be objective when making programmes as anyone else. One programme-maker who was producing a series about tensions between White and Asian communities said:

‘So, just because I was an Asian doesn’t mean that I just accepted everything that was going on from the Asian community and disregarded everything that was going on for the White community. The opposite, I think. ‘Cause I was an Asian I probably had a more responsible attitude to actually look at things, ‘cause I’m a journalist, and a film-maker, and I want to make the best film possible.’

The online survey asked the television sample if it was important that there should be guidance on the ‘quality and nature’ of the roles played by people from minority ethnic groups in news and non-fiction programming and also in drama and fiction. The data show that respondents felt such guidance would be important in both areas.

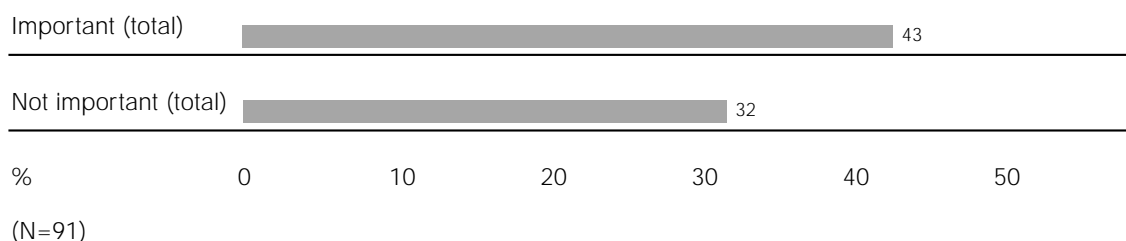
Table 19: I think it is important that there is guidance on the quality and nature of the roles played by people from ethnic or racial minorities on television in...



A similar question was asked about the importance of guidelines, or initiatives, covering representation on radio in drama and fictional programming. While two-fifths of the radio sample agreed such guidelines were important, views were not expressed as strongly as among the television respondents.

Table 20: I think it is important that there should be guidance on the quality and nature of the roles played by people from ethnic or racial minorities in drama and fictional programming on radio

Drama and fiction



The Cultural Diversity Network (Television)

The Cultural Diversity Network (CDN) was launched in October 2000, with a manifesto which aimed initially to improve the representation of ethnic minorities in television. The scope of the CDN has since widened and the signatories have pledged to look at everything from content creation and development, casting and portrayal, programme production, distribution, promotion and financing. Individual broadcasters have drawn up action plans with specific and quantifiable objectives.

Few television broadcasters in this sample were aware of the CDN or were familiar with their organisation's action plan. Among those aware of it and its initiatives, some felt extremely positive about it, while others felt it was too removed from actuality or that it was too long-term in its aims to have any effect on their work.

'The Cultural Diversity Network... is not just about executives talking to each other about the issue. It's trying to encourage younger programme-makers to think about diversity and multiculturalism when they approach scripting, whether it's a current affairs programme or whether it's a soap opera. Therefore, there's a massive educational process which is necessary.'

'They all signed up to a set of principles and said, "Judge us by this", but nobody is doing anything, and all the targets are quite long-term targets of staff recruitment and things like that, so there's no real impetus, so you can't have a cultural diversity index or anything like that, you just have to take a channel, or take a part of the day and say, you know, use your commonsense - are we reflecting diversity or not?'

4.6 The Future of Multicultural Broadcasting: Industry views

One of the key findings of the research among industry players is that there is no clear or single definition of 'multicultural broadcasting'. The consequence of this is that it is difficult to judge when it is achieved. It currently means different things to different people. For example, the interviews suggested that those who were more satisfied with the current status of multicultural broadcasting were, in general, more inclined to judge it by quantitative means and were less likely to be mindful of considerations acknowledged by others to reflect diverse cultures.

This research shows that, in addition to issues immediately around broadcast output, many saw that changing the composition of the broadcasting workplace was a main factor in achieving more diverse and multicultural output. They acknowledged, however, that this may not be easy, especially within large organisations with entrenched systems and as the environment in which broadcasters work becomes increasingly competitive.

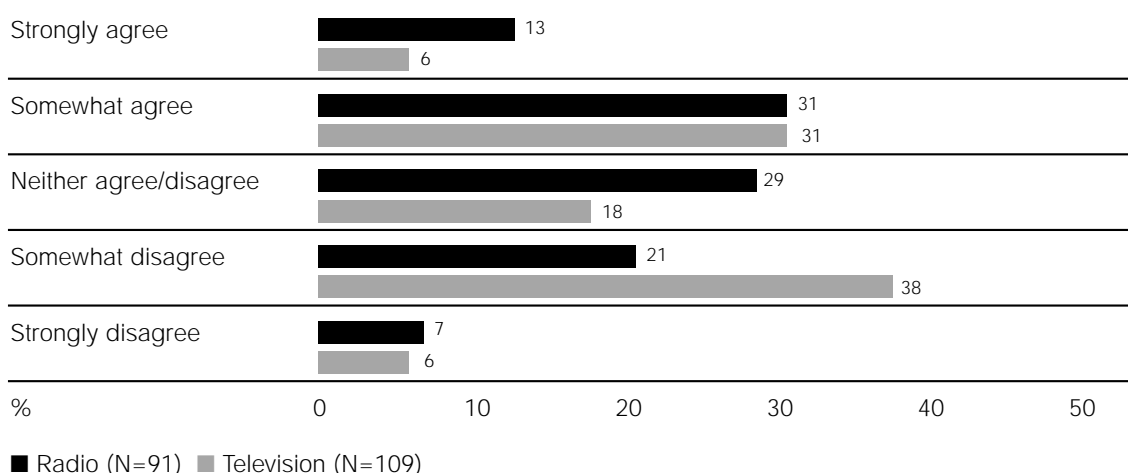
Nonetheless, there are many initiatives being undertaken which individuals were positive about. Online services, community services, local radio were all felt to contribute, and these steps were appreciated as being vital for the industry. Many also said that it was important for such experience and knowledge to be shared as this could shortcut the process for other organisations. Television broadcasters who were part of the Cultural Diversity Network already have a forum for the exchange of ideas, and, it was suggested, this could be better used for dissemination of information.

In radio, suggestions included workshops or seminars, and the ability to share the knowledge that already exists of making programmes for diverse communities.

One widely held view - also raised by the audiences researched - was that not enough applicants from minority cultures are applying to get into the broadcast industries. Whether that is true or not, there was a view that many may be dissuaded from applying at all. Organisations which do internal research should be prepared, it was suggested by some interviewees, to share data about applications and recruitment levels as part of the overall debate about diversity in the workplace.

Within the online survey, respondents, regardless of the medium in which they worked, were divided as to whether or not specific guidelines about representation should be in place. However, more of the radio sample than the television sample said that they thought these would become less necessary in the future.

Table 21: I think in the future there will be less of a need for any special emphasis or guidelines on issues relating to representation of ethnic and racial minorities on UK radio/terrestrial television



5 Advertising and multiculturalism

5.1 Audience attitudes towards representation in advertising

There was a sense among participants in the audience research that representation in advertising is not as important as representation in programmes as it is less influential in determining attitudes. Participants mentioned advertising as being driven solely by commercial considerations and that advertisers are more likely, therefore, to use characters with whom the majority of the population relates. Programming, on the other hand, especially on television, was seen to have a broader social 'duty' and responsibility to reflect society.

When asked to consider the current representation of minority ethnic groups in advertising, the **Black** groups mentioned a television advertisement for a building society, which features a Black member of staff. Some felt it was positive because the man was '*real*', while a few others thought the execution of the commercial made the man look stupid.

Some participants also mentioned a television advertisement for a clothes washing powder which included a Black woman, highlighting this as being a good example of a 'normal' situation where there is no particular reason to use somebody who is Black.

'That [...] advert with the Black woman. With the child waiting for the bottle... the washing-up liquid. They've got a Black woman doing that now and a Black child. When I saw that I thought, "Go for it girl."'

Black Caribbean, female, aged 31-55, Leeds

The **Asian** groups mentioned advertisements for restaurants or curries, which they cited as another example of stereotyping. They also said that Asians on television always appear to have to look '*very Indian*' and that television advertisers seemed to feel the need to use somebody with a turban or a similar visual.

The **Chinese, Arab, Greek Cypriot** and **Turkish Cypriot** groups agreed that there was little, or no, representation of them in television advertising. In common with the other groups, they felt this was less important than their lack of representation in programming. However, they and the other minority ethnic groups said that they would like to see people from a greater mixture of ethnic backgrounds reflected in advertising.

The **White** groups also agreed there was little representation of minority ethnic groups in advertising. Like other participants, they felt that advertisers simply target advertisements at large sections of society and so do not include other groups unless there is a commercial reason to do so. Younger White participants felt that advertisements should reflect more ethnic minorities and a wider range of backgrounds (such as mixed race as well as Black and White). Older participants, however, often remarked that this focus on the White majority is simply commercial reality.

The only television commercial shown to the groups was one for tea (*Tommy Typhoo*), written by comedienne and writer Meera Syal (who is of South Asian origin). It was intended to be humorous and showed stylised 1950s pastiches of workers on a tea plantation in India. Some participants in the Black and Asian groups felt that the portrayals of the Indian workers were an offensive stereotype, '*pandering*' to the prejudices of the White people who had commissioned the commercial and to the stereotypes that they feel White audiences want to see. However, generally, the groups found the advertisement funny. They felt that it did not portray the Indian workers as stupid (a charge that had been levied by some participants against the advertisement) and commented that it was '*only an advert*'.

'The reason you can't really take offence to that is it's not making Indian people look stupid. Whereas Stavros made Greek people look stupid.'

Greek Cypriot, mixed gender group, aged 25-45, London

'I wouldn't find that offensive, but if I made it I wouldn't have them smiling so much. They look like idiots.'

Indian, male, aged 18-30, Leicester

For those who found the advertisement offensive, the fact that Meera Syal had written it did not lessen the offence. Other participants, who were not offended, suggested that the fact it was written by someone from the Indian sub-continent might mean that it was less likely to offend others.

'If it was written by a White person, then you would think they are taking the mick out of them, but because it is written by an Asian person, then they would see the humour in it.'

Black African, female, aged 18-30, London

5.2 The view from the advertising agencies

For many of the (albeit small) sample of representatives from the advertising industry, 'multicultural broadcasting' was not a concept they had considered. In contrast to those from the broadcasting industries, advertising agencies most easily interpreted this phrase in its widest, integrationist sense: it suggested broadcasting or advertising appealing to many different cultures or with crosscultural appeal. One or two speculated that it might mean targeted or niche advertising, but for the most part it was thought to be a term which did not apply to the advertising industry.

Current status on television

Given the difficulty that most had with the phrase, interviewees were encouraged to comment on on-screen diversity. Several said that it had almost become '*de rigueur*' for television broadcasters. Channel 4 and the BBC were seen as leaders in this respect. While this was seen as positive by some, others saw it as overdone.

'On my news screens, all you see is a lot of Black and Asian kids. Whereas where my dad lives in Surrey, or where I grew up in Bristol, it's all White. So it's not as reflective.'

Most of these interviewees conceded that much national advertising was White by definition, with the exception of certain youth-orientated brands. They felt there were strong commercial reasons for this, most of which were to do with the numbers of ethnic minorities available and their spending power. For advertisers, the United Kingdom was still seen as largely a White market, despite the greater proportion of ethnic minorities in London and other urban centres. As a result, the 'Black pound' was not perceived to be a significant factor as far as national advertisers were concerned.

'It isn't that often you decide that the primary audience is going to be the Black pound - you might decide that the primary audience is the young pound, and, within that, Black is an important element, but that's second tier - it does happen, but not that often.'

There was also a sense that advertising is about putting over a particular message and a core belief that communicating this message is more critical than race or ethnicity:

'Advertising is a commercial activity and, therefore, a good ad is an ad that meets its commercial objectives and a bad ad is one that doesn't... the reality is that the culture of the people who are going to buy the product is often not really the point, so there's no particular point in referencing it in the advertising.'

Niche stations and channels offer advertisers the opportunity to target specific segments of the market in a particular way, and most agencies used these as a part of the media mix for particular campaigns. Their value to advertisers was that it gave them another way of reaching the target market:

'You can target your message directly to the audience you're talking to and you identify them by commonalities. And in some instances the commonality may be ethnic background, e.g. a Gujarati-speaking background.'

Though few regarded multicultural inclusiveness as an objective when making or planning advertisements, the majority thought there was some benefit in taking this approach. Some took a more reductionist view, pointing out that all their output had to conform to regulations, which ensured they were not racist or offensive. The argument here was that, if the advertisements do not offend anyone, they would appeal to everyone.

'At the heart of every successful advertisement lies an accurate consumer insight, something that reflects what people believe to be true, so that they can recognise themselves in it and recognise a situation they can relate to. Multiculturalism is part of that, part of being accurate, and if you tune in to what people know to be real and right, then your advertising becomes much more effective, more people watch it and you make more money.'

For the most part, however, national campaigns were thought to be about reaching broad audiences, rather than tightly targeted groups:

'National advertisers are trying to get as broad a coverage as possible, introduce the brand-as-a-reminder frequency - so they have to use a shotgun rather than a rifle in the way they approach these communications.'

'You look for key elements and communicate those generically across the board.'

Interviewees also expressed strong concern about anything that looked like tokenism. The difficulty, these interviewees said, was that casting would get in the way of the message.

'One example... a campaign featuring an arguing couple. Now the arguing couple happened to be Asian, and it's very visible advertising. Some people really, really hate it, and it's not uncommon to have people refer to it as that Asian couple who are arguing, not that couple who are arguing. If you put Asian people in there, you run the risk that people will notice and comment on it because it's Asian - and that was never the point. The point was these people are arguing because she's got a good insurance deal and he hasn't, so at best there's a question mark there about whether that helped them or not.'

This was a major theme among these interviewees - that casting could get in the way of the message. Interestingly, though, there were completely opposing views about certain casting - the television advertisement for the building society, featuring a Black manager, was thought to be tokenistic and self-conscious by one agency and a good piece of colour-blind casting by another. These echo the opposing sentiments expressed within both the audience research and the study among broadcasting industry players.

How is your output multicultural?

For the majority of agencies, in particular those with commercial clients, the need to demonstrate a multicultural approach was not very high up on their agenda. Advertising is a commercial activity, and commercial objectives take priority:

'If I was to talk about our clients, I'd be very surprised if the desire to be multicultural was in the top 10 objectives of any work that they went into. It might be 25th in terms of priority, but it's unlikely to be higher than that, for the simple reason that they've got much more pressure to get across the message, to meet sales targets etc., and you're never going to want a desire to be seen as multicultural to be a key objective, because I can't think of how I could show to them that was in some way commercially valuable to them.'

Nevertheless, many interviewees were able to cite instances of advertisements or campaigns which they perceived as multicultural:

- Advertisements for official bodies such as government organisations, the armed forces or police, where inclusivity and diversity is part of the brief.
Examples: A campaign against racism in football; recruitment campaign for the police; literacy campaign for the COI
- Youth-orientated brands, where in order to give the product/brand a contemporary feel, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, but especially Black-Caribbeans, are cast. (Black culture = cool, urban, contemporary, credible)
Example: Budweiser's *Whassup?* campaign
- National campaigns for major brands such as McDonalds, featuring stores with employees. Because the workforce is diverse, this needs to be reflected in the advertisements.
- National campaigns for brands such as BT, where on-screen diversity is a key part of demonstrating the inclusivity of the brand:
'We recently featured a mixed-race marriage, not as a point of any particular significance, but just because we thought it was an interesting, not very often seen thing to do in an ad, which reflected what things were happening around us. We weren't trying to make a particular point, but in the context of the point we were making, which was that BT had got lots of different ways of bringing people together, it provided a useful background.'
- National campaigns for major brands, such as Kellogg's Special K, where there is no particular rationale for casting, but where on-screen diversity was achieved through 'colour-blind' casting.

Few of these interviewees thought it was their role to push at the boundaries, unless that would be appropriate to the brand they are selling.

'You might - if you're working for a brand that wants to be seen as forward-thinking, there's an element of that - for example, you might cast ugly people in certain roles to prove a point that this company acknowledges that the world isn't made up of beautiful people.'

Some, such as this creative director, did admit that particular groups could suffer from negative stereotyping:

'I feel sorry for the Chinese and oriental people as well, because even now it's acceptable for Sainsbury's to have an ad which still has, like, flying kung fu kicks saying, "Hi ya!" It still seems perfectly acceptable to do that in 2002, where you couldn't have the Black or Asian jokes you had in the seventies now.'

Equally, it was felt that there were some issues of portrayal which were simply intractable:

'If you show an Asian person in a sari acting very Indian or Asian, you will get Asian people complaining that they speak perfectly good English, like myself, and wear jeans and T-shirts. We do the opposite and put them in jeans and T-shirts, and they'll say, "Hey, you know, have some more respect for culture." And I've been in that situation and you cannot win.'

Current status on radio

For radio, there are different issues.

'There are only two acceptable accents to the whole of this country and that's West Country and Scotland... if you have a Manchester accent, people from Liverpool will hate it. If you have a north east accent, if you have a Welsh accent, everyone will hate it. If you have a Birmingham accent, everyone will hate it. So you're in this weird matrix. If you have a London accent, people say, "Oh, that's too London-centric," and you end up going round the houses. There's a lot going on, but I don't think it's a race issue.'

On the surface, this suggests that, rather than being 'cutting edge', advertising agencies often have a rather less progressive outlook than many of those interviewed from the broadcasting industry. With such a small number of interviewees, however, it is difficult to draw conclusions from this.

Diversity within organisations

Besides the view that not enough actors or models were coming through from ethnic minorities, interviewees remarked that the make-up of the workforce within advertising agencies was no different. One or two agencies claimed to be multicultural environments with a diverse intake of staff, but most said that there was nothing like proportional representation of minorities within their organisations.

While few of those interviewed were directly involved with recruitment, there was a sense here, as within the broadcast industry, that they *'probably get less applications from ethnic groups'*, but there was no single view about why this might be. Some thought it simply reflected the fact that the industry as a whole is very competitive. There was also an acceptance that, historically, the industry has had a White middle-class image, although many claimed this was changing.

'We actively want people who have lived real lives, not just come from a rarefied public school environment - and particularly if you're an international agency, you don't want everyone to be too parochially British. The people who write and direct and make the best ads now are very much from the cutting edge, which is much more street culture and, therefore, will be from really diverse backgrounds.'

One of the interviewees (himself from an minority ethnic group) talked about his experiences in the business, about moving from account planning to the creative side and about his own views on employment. He also pointed out that, despite working in one of the more progressive and liberal agencies, the only other staff from ethnic minorities were the tea lady and an assistant:

'Creative is purely on what you can do... also there are lots of mavericks here... Until my generation, and even now I think with my younger cousins, there is a feeling that a doctor, lawyer - that sort of profession - seems far more of a sensible job to do. So I think there's that pressure, and you also need the interpersonal skills. It's a meritocracy in advertising, but you are up against the best as well.'

Unlike most of those from the broadcasting industries, interviewees from advertising agencies did not seem to feel that they should be more proactive in seeking out a diverse range of staff. Neither did they find the argument that their output would be more compelling for the audience persuasive. There were a number of reasons for this: first, the industry's competitiveness gave these interviewees a sense that they already had access to a talented workforce; secondly, there was a strong belief in conducting research, including seeking out the views and opinions of minority groups:

'Because of the nature of the people in the business, there will be some sort of built-in bias, and that's where one needs to use research carefully and that's one of the reasons why you have market research... but one of the things we believe is that you don't have to be the same person writing the ad as receives the ads, so ads for women don't have to be written by women and ads for young people don't have to be written by young people.'

Indeed, these advertising agency interviewees did not appear to feel the commercial imperative to have a more inclusive approach, whether within their creative output or among their workforces.

Appendix 1: Minority ethnic group representation on terrestrial television

Summary

Since 1997, the representation and portrayal of minority ethnic groups in peak-time programmes of the five terrestrial channels has been captured in a snapshot of television output. This annual two-week sample (from 1730 hours to midnight) typically captures around 800 programmes, and the analysis notes the role played by each speaking person in the sample.

Since 2000, these snapshots of peak-time television have revealed a steady increase in the proportion of programmes containing minority ethnic representation, as well as a detectable rise in the numbers of people portrayed.

- In 2001, the proportion of programmes containing people from minority ethnic groups had increased to 48%.
- However, the increases have been confined to Black African-Caribbean representation.
- The portrayal of people from the Indian sub-continent - the next most visible group - has not improved and may even be in decline.
- The pattern of minority ethnic participation shows less contribution to heavyweight roles and subjects of a serious nature, while minority ethnic contributions cluster around vox pop interviews or stereotypical topics of minority group issues, sport, music and sex.

While minority ethnic representation was rarely linked with crime, this occurred with twice the frequency as expected from the non-minority ethnic profiles and in most cases the ethnic group identified was Black.

- In one in eleven cases (9%), minority ethnic participants were considered to raise issues of discrimination, stereotyping or prejudice.

Minority ethnic people

The data presented here provide an opportunity to consider, quantitatively, the levels and type of on-screen representation of minority ethnic groups in terrestrial television. Further, they offer an insight into the way these portrayals have changed over time. It must be recognised that the view they offer forms a snapshot in time, and the nature of the findings cannot address all the qualitative aspects of such portrayals. Those issues have been covered more fully elsewhere in the report.

This analysis focuses on the representation and portrayal of minority ethnic groups across a two-week sample of peak-time output (from 1730 hours to midnight) which, since 1997, has covered all five terrestrial channels and typically captures around 800 programmes. The monitoring exercise was carried out by the Communications Research Group in Birmingham, as were previous content analyses.

Total sample

The role played by each speaking person within the sample is noted. In the first three years, the proportion of programmes containing people from minority ethnic groups remained generally stable at just over four out of ten (40% to 42%) programmes. Since then, the proportion has increased to 46% in 2000 and 48% in 2001, as shown in Table 1 below.

In a few programmes, a considerable number of **character appearances** may be generated by a small number of **participants** in the same programme - for example, in comedy sketch shows such as *Goodness Gracious Me* and *Uncut Funk*. In the 2001 sample, this occurred rarely, and five actors, each in a separate programme, were also shown in their film roles. Where a proportion of the overall population has been calculated, the higher number (i.e. character appearances) has been used, while the lower figure (participants) has been applied for the demographic analysis where appropriate.

As with programming, the level of representation of minority ethnic people changed little in the first three years, rising in the year 2000 and again in 2001 where the highest ever proportion was generated.

Table 1: On-screen representation of minority ethnic participants within programmes and of the television population

Year	% of programmes	% of TV population	Number of character appearances
1997	42	6.2	873 (873 participants)
1998	42	6.6	910 (889 participants)
1999	41	6.4	866 (835 participants)
2000	46	7.6	1050 (1030 participants)
2001	48	8.4	1121 (1116 participants)

Base: All minority ethnic character appearances

Examining the various ethnic groups, Table 2 shows that some are far more widely represented (both in terms of their proportion of the speaking population and in actual numbers) than others. Asians,²⁷ for example, accounted for less than one-sixth (16%) of all minority ethnic participants within the sample, the lowest proportion ever. In contrast, those identified as Black²⁸ contributed nearly seven out of ten (69%) participants to the minority ethnic total.

Table 2: Ethnicity of participants

Year	Black		Asian		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1997	573	66	189	22	111	13
1998	524	59	225	25	140	16
1999	480	57	193	23	162	19
2000	665	65	200	19	165	16
2001	771	69	179	16	166	15

Base: All minority ethnic participants

27. Throughout this analysis, 'Asians' refers to people from the Indian sub-continent.

28. Including African-Caribbean people as well as African Americans and those from the African sub-continent.

When considered as part of the total television population (i.e. all those with speaking roles), the findings note that, in the 2001 sample, Asian representation declined to the lowest recorded, comprising just 1.3% of the overall television population compared with 5.8% Black and 1.2% Other (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Ethnicity of participants x total sample

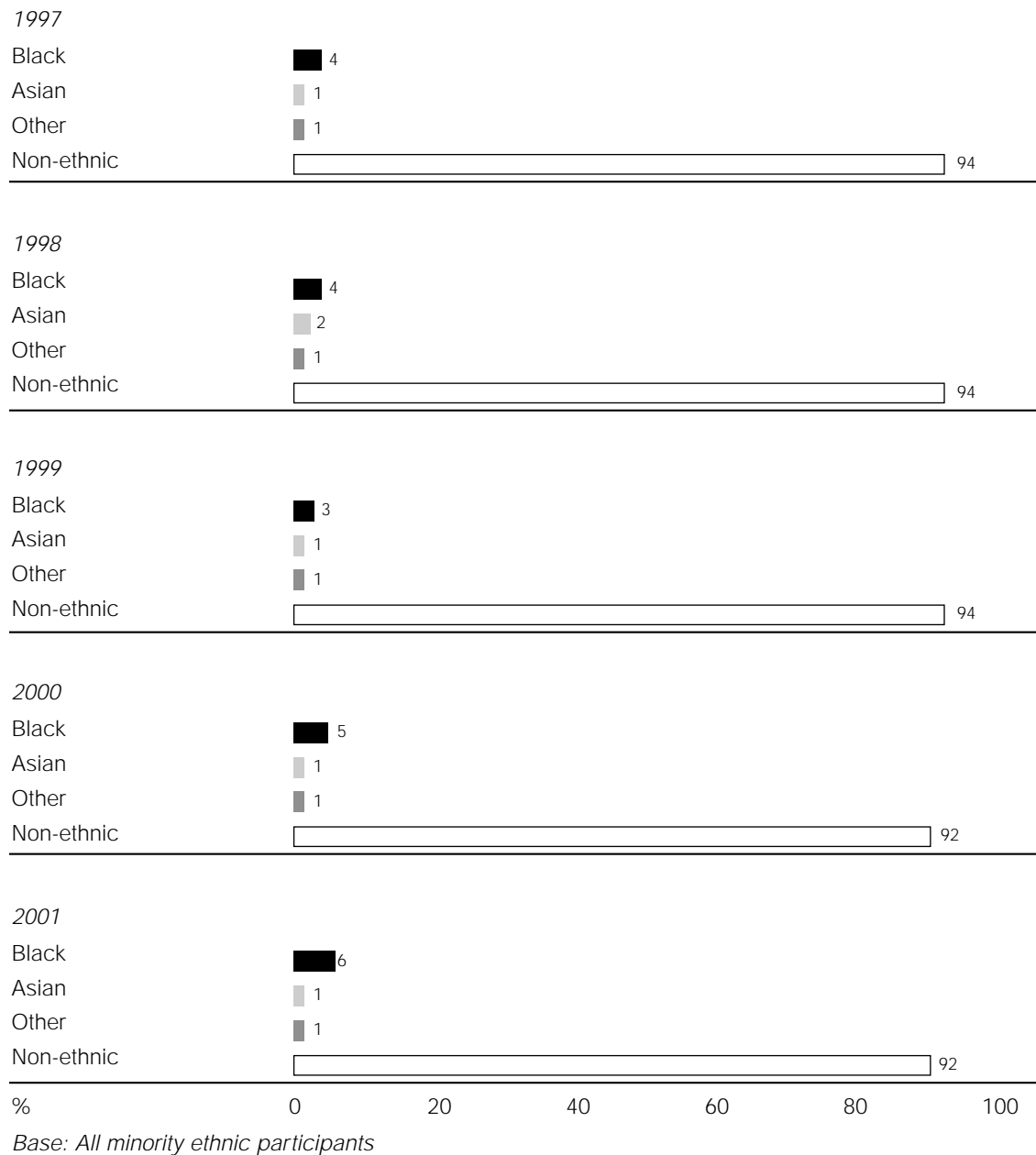


Table 3 shows the minority ethnic data excluding repeat appearances of the same person, such as soap characters or a Black anchor featuring daily in a news programme. This has little impact on the figures except to slightly reduce the Black and Asian share in favour of 'Other' ethnicity participants.

Table 3: Ethnicity of participants in non-repeat performances

Year	Black		Asian		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1997	476	66	149	21	92	13
1998	440	60	172	23	125	17
1999	389	59	135	20	136	21
2000	524	64	143	17	155	19
2001	625	68	139	15	149	16

Base: All minority ethnic participants

Programmes

Table 4 presents the programme genres which make up each of the annual samples. TS (total sample) shows the contribution each programme type makes to the total output, while TME (total minority ethnic) is the percentage of programmes containing ethnic minorities. The former provides a gauge by which to judge the performance of the latter.

Over the years, national and regional news, fiction, factual and light entertainment have contributed the most programming, both to the total sample and those including minority ethnic representation. However, there are important patterns and shifts over time. Films and fiction consistently offer more programmes containing ethnic minorities than expected (largely due to USA programming, especially in the case of films), while factual programmes and sport provide consistently fewer. Examining year-on-year trends, news has modestly increased the number of programmes containing ethnic minorities, while an overall downward trend appears to be in evidence for light entertainment.

Table 4: Programme types: total sample and programmes with minority ethnic appearances

Programme type	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	TS %	TME %	TS %	TME %	TS %	TME %	TS %	TME %	TS %	TME %
National & Regional News	23	20	24	25	26	26	27	29	25	30
Factual	25	19	28	23	26	19	23	19	27	19
Light Entertainment	15	17	15	15	14	14	17	16	14	13
Sport	4	1	3	2	4	2	5	2	4	2
Religion	*	1	1	*	1	1	*	1	*	-
Children's Programmes	2	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	2
Fiction	24	32	22	24	21	26	21	23	23	26
Films	6	9	6	9	5	9	5	9	6	9
Total	99	100	100	100	99	100	99	101	100	101

Base: All programmes

TS: Total sample of programmes TME: Total sample of programmes containing minority ethnic people

Looking in more detail at the numbers of people portrayed in each programme type, Table 5 again shows that fiction, factual and news programming have generated most of the portrayals, followed by films and light entertainment. Further, the decline in the presence of ethnic minorities within light entertainment programmes is underlined in this sample, which is the lowest of any year.

Table 5: People from minority ethnic groups by programme type

<i>Programme type</i>	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
National & Regional News	138	16	186	21	181	22	255	25	251	22
Factual	172	20	229	26	131	16	174	17	263	24
Light Entertainment	147	17	127	14	136	16	145	14	108	10
Sport	5	1	9	1	9	1	13	1	8	1
Religion	2	*	1	*	2	*	3	*	-	-
Children's Programmes	3	*	9	1	22	3	17	2	20	2
Fiction	292	33	194	22	229	27	243	24	321	29
Films	114	13	134	15	125	15	180	17	147	13
Total	873	100	889	100	835	100	1030	100	1118	101

Base: All minority ethnic participants

Level of appearance

In addition to counting the number of participants from minority ethnic groups and analysing them as a proportion of the total speaking population within the sample, the content analyses offered by the Communications Research Group look in more detail at the nature of the portrayals so that a more qualitative judgement about on-screen representations might be made.

First, each role is examined to see what level of contribution the participant made. For example, was the part they played a major role (such as the main anchor in a news programme) or a minor role (such as a journalist reporting on a specific news item)? Or was their role to be an interviewee or a brief (incidental) appearance in a light entertainment show? Table 6 shows an overall decline in the proportions of Black participants playing a major role year-on-year (although the actual number of participants has increased). This population is equivalent, however, to the population of people playing major roles in the speaking population within the sample as a whole.

Conversely, both the proportion and numbers of Asian participants in a major role show an overall increase, but from a much lower base.

Table 6: Level of appearance by ethnicity

	<i>Black</i>		<i>Asian</i>		<i>Other</i>		<i>Total TV population</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>1997</i>								
Major	128	22	21	11	45	41	2505	18
Minor	109	19	37	20	16	14	2222	16
Interviewee/incidental	336	59	131	69	50	45	9401	67
Total	573	100	189	100	111	100	14128	101
<i>1998</i>								
Major	105	20	38	17	34	24	2562	18
Minor	61	12	33	15	18	13	2168	16
Interviewee/incidental	358	68	154	68	88	63	9139	66
Total	524	100	225	100	140	100	13869	100
<i>1999</i>								
Major	88	18	51	26	33	20	2203	16
Minor	97	20	34	18	34	21	2551	19
Interviewee/incidental	295	61	108	56	95	59	8807	65
Total	480	99	193	100	162	100	13561	100
<i>2000</i>								
Major	112	17	49	25	30	18	2284	17
Minor	101	15	40	20	30	18	2330	17
Interviewee/incidental	452	68	111	56	105	64	9118	66
Total	665	100	200	101	165	100	13732	100
<i>2001</i>								
Major	134	17	40	22	9	5	2247	17
Minor	156	20	30	17	25	15	2584	19
Interviewee/incidental	481	62	109	61	132	80	8521	64
Total	771	99	179	100	166	100	13352	100

Base: All minority ethnic participants

In the year 2001

The following section looks more closely at the data from the sample in 2001.

The total television population by ethnic group across all programmes is given in Table 7. It shows that Black participants exceed other ethnicities at all levels of appearance - this is to be expected given the larger numbers involved.

Table 7: Level of appearance by ethnicity (all programmes): 2001

<i>Ethnic grouping</i>	<i>Major</i>		<i>Minor</i>		<i>Incidental</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not ethnic minority	2064	91.9	2373	91.8	7794	91.5	12231	91.6
Black	134	6.0	156	6.0	486	5.7	776	5.8
Asian	40	1.8	30	1.2	109	1.3	179	1.3
Other	9	0.4	25	1.0	132	1.5	166	1.2
Total	2247	100.1	2584	100	8521	100	13352	99.9

Base: All minority ethnic character appearances

Table 8 shows the same analysis applied to UK programmes only. Here, Asian participants are slightly better represented in major roles (2.4% UK only, against 1.8%). Black people, on the other hand, fared less well, both in general (4.2 % UK only versus 6.0% all programmes) and in minor roles (4.2% versus 6.0%).

Table 8: Level of appearance by ethnicity (UK programmes only): 2001

<i>Ethnic grouping</i>	<i>Major</i>		<i>Minor</i>		<i>Incidental</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not ethnic minority	1492	91.6	1898	93.9	6703	92.7	10093	92.7
Black	95	5.8	85	4.2	348	4.8	528	4.9
Asian	39	2.4	30	1.5	104	1.4	173	1.6
Other	2	0.1	8	0.4	78	1.1	88	0.8
Total	1628	99.9	2021	100	7233	100	10882	100

Base: All minority ethnic character appearances in UK productions

Overall the effect of removing USA programming is to reduce minority ethnic representation from 8.4% to 7.3%.

Gender and age

Table 9 shows that around six out of ten minority ethnic participants were male and four out of ten female, which compares favourably with the overall television population, where around two-thirds are male (68%) and one-third (32%) female. Across the different ethnic groups, the gender difference was less marked among Asian (56% versus 44%) than either the Black (62% versus 38%) or Other group participants (64% versus 36%).

In order to compare the individual characteristics of ethnic minorities, a sample of White participants was taken. In this, the first male and the first female who appeared five minutes into each programme was profiled. This is described as the 'base sample'. As shown below, minority ethnic participants were younger than their base sample counterparts. Thus 40% of minority ethnic males were under 30 years old (against 22% base males), as were 52% of minority ethnic females (against 34% base females).

Table 9: Gender and age of participants: 2001

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>Asian</i>		<i>Other</i>		<i>Total ethnic minority</i>		<i>Base</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
0-15	6	8	2	3	14	24	7	9	2	3
16-21	9	12	5	5	4	2	8	9	4	5
22-29	28	34	25	36	17	31	25	34	16	26
30-39	32	26	29	46	34	29	32	30	26	35
40-49	15	15	22	5	13	12	16	13	28	16
50-59	7	3	14	4	15	2	9	3	18	9
60+	4	2	4	1	4	2	4	2	7	5
Total	101	100	101	100	101	102*	101	100	101	99

Base: All minority ethnic character appearances and base sample

** Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding*

A total of 13 minority ethnic people were disabled (1% of ethnic minorities), appearing in factual programmes and films, while a further four were portrayed as gay/lesbian or bisexual (0.4%). These participants were featured in drama and factual programming.

Occupation

As well as the individual characteristics of participants, a note is made of their occupation, where possible. Table 10 below also presents the occupations of the White base sample for comparison. Here the sample is very small to be used to break down occupation reliably, but the pattern may be indicative. Given the high incidence of presenters within the base sample, all major or minor presenters were excluded to highlight similarities and differences.

Despite this exclusion, jobs relating to arts, media and entertainment remained the highest occupational groupings across all groups, except for Asian participants who were most likely to be involved in the health and caring professions. Black participants generated the highest proportion of sports people, producing 45 (of which 41 were players) out of the 52 such portrayals amongst ethnic minorities. On the other hand, Asian people were no more likely to be shopkeepers than their Black or Other counterparts, suggesting that occupational stereotyping may be less prevalent than sometimes assumed.

Table 10: Occupation of participant: 2001

	Black		Asian		Other		Total		Base	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Arts, media/entertainment	78	11	13	10	15	9	106	10	130	13
White-collar office	25	4	6	4	7	4	38	4	49	5
Educationalist, academic	9	1	6	4	11	7	26	3	56	6
Travel and leisure	20	3	4	3	9	5	33	3	47	5
Health and caring	39	5	17	13	8	5	64	6	45	5
Legal	5	1	1	1	3	2	9	1	11	1
Police incl. private detectives	38	5	6	4	2	1	46	5	50	5
Armed forces	17	2	-	-	4	2	21	2	23	2
Other uniformed services	12	2	2	1	1	1	15	1	15	2
Domestic staff	8	1	-	-	1	1	9	1	7	1
Blue-collar worker	8	1	-	-	2	1	10	1	12	1
Sportsperson	45	6	1	1	6	4	52	5	19	2
Clergy, religious leader	6	1	-	-	-	-	6	1	6	1
Politician/spokesperson	22	3	7	5	4	2	33	3	51	5
Shop owner/assistant	25	4	5	4	7	4	37	4	14	1
Student	9	1	7	5	4	2	20	2	28	3
Under 16 years	42	6	3	2	22	13	67	7	27	3
Other non-work	14	2	-	-	2	1	16	2	26	3
Prostitute	2	*	-	-	-	-	2	*	1	*
Professional criminal	10	1	2	1	4	2	16	2	3	*
Others	9	1	1	1	3	2	13	1	21	2
Cannot code	267	37	53	40	50	30	370	36	329	34
Not applicable	4	1	-	-	1	1	5	*	5	1
Total	714	99	134	99	166	99	1014	100	975	101

Base: All minority ethnic character appearances and base sample

** Denotes a value of less than 0.5%*

This table of occupations also shows that 'professional criminals' (that is, people who earn their living by crime), while small in number, nevertheless occur in the minority ethnic sample at more than twice the frequency of the White base sample. Of these 41 minority ethnic people, 78% were Black (32 people), 15% were from Other minority ethnic groups (6 people) and 7% were Asian (3 people).

The majority of crimes committed by Black participants involved murder, drugs and gang membership (41% of all Black crime), while the three Asian crimes comprised drug use, pimping and corrupt arms dealing. Those committed by people from Other ethnic categories comprised murder, drug dealing, theft, gang membership and illegal immigration.

Subjects of contribution

When participants appeared in factual programmes, a note was made of the subject of their contribution. In 2001, over sixty topics were identified. However, the pattern suggests a clustering of issues that discriminate between minority ethnic contributors and the White base sample. The following percentages refer to the proportions of contributions.

Minority ethnic participants were relatively **unlikely** to contribute to:

- Politics (both domestic and non-UK): 2.2% versus 3.6% White base (base 50% more likely to contribute).
- Hobbies, gardening or motoring: 1.8% versus 5.6% base (base three times more likely to contribute).

However, minority ethnic participants were **more likely** to contribute to:

- Music, dance and religion: 4.8% versus 2.5% base (minority ethnic people almost twice as likely to contribute)
- Sex: 2.4% versus 0.9% base (minority ethnic participants more than two and a half times as likely to contribute).
- Minority group issues (not surprisingly): 5.6% versus 1.4% base (minority ethnic people four times more likely to contribute)

But cookery was a leveller (1.4% ethnic minority versus 1.4% base).

Role in programme

Factual participants were also coded for their role in the programme - for example, were they speaking as a politician, expert, vox pop, contestant and so forth. The findings show that ethnic minorities were:

- Almost half as likely as their base counterparts to be in a 'heavyweight' role such as national or local politician, expert and so forth (8% versus 14%).
- Five times more likely to be in the role of musician/singer/entertainer (2% versus 0.4%), where 15 out of these 18 minority ethnic people were Black.
- Six times more likely to be in the role of sportsperson (2% versus 0.3%), where all of these participants were Black.
- Three times more likely to be 'vox pops' or make very brief anonymous appearances (15% versus 5%).

Finally, one in eleven (9%) minority ethnic participants were considered to have been included to highlight issues of stereotyping, discrimination or prejudice. These 104 individuals appeared in 35 different programmes (9% of all programmes containing minority ethnic representation).

Channel comparisons

As Figure 2 shows, of the five terrestrial channels, people from minority ethnic groups gained highest representation on Channel 4, BBC2 and Channel 5, with 10% each. While the performances of BBC1 and ITV were less good by comparison, these two channels (along with Channel 4) had the highest proportion of programmes containing minority ethnic participants.

Figure 2: Channel comparison, 2001

BBC1



BBC2



ITV



C4



C5



% 0 20 40 60 80 100

Base: All minority ethnic character appearances

Table 11 shows in greater detail the breakdown of each group represented by each channel.

Table 11: Channel comparison, 2001

<i>Ethnic grouping</i>	<i>BBC1</i>		<i>BBC2</i>		<i>ITV</i>		<i>C4</i>		<i>C5</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Not ethnic min.	3066	93	1772	90	2959	93	2407	90	2027	90	12231	92
Black	153	5	144	7	136	4	182	7	161	7	776	6
Asian	41	1	23	1	62	2	43	2	10	0.4	179	1
Other	31	1	30	1.5	15	0.5	41	1.5	49	2	166	1
Total	3291	100	1969	100	3172	100	2673	100	2247	99	13352	100

Base: All minority ethnic character appearances

Country of production

Table 12 shows that seven out of ten (70%) minority ethnic participants were featured in UK programming, with nearly three in ten (28%) in productions from the United States. Minority ethnic participants were portrayed twice as frequently in USA(14%) as in UK productions (7%). The handful of productions from all other countries produced a representation level of 8%.

Table 12: Country of production, 2001

	<i>No. of programmes containing minority ethnic people</i>	<i>% of all programmes with minority ethnic people</i>	<i>No. of minority ethnic people</i>	<i>Total TV population</i>	<i>% of total speaking population in the sample</i>
United Kingdom	308	47	789	10882	7
United States	72	62	308	2158	14
Australia	2	12	3	243	1
Other	2	100	21	69	30

Base: All minority ethnic character appearances

Appendix 2: Research methodology and sample

Audience research

This part of the research used a qualitative methodology, consisting of 22 focus groups and two paired, depth interviews. All the interviews were conducted in February 2002 by representatives of BMRB Qualitative, the qualitative division of BMRB International Ltd. The groups lasted for between one and a half and two hours. The interviews lasted for approximately one hour. The sample is described below:

Ethnicity ²⁹	Gender	Age	Location	Media Consumption
Pakistani	Female	31 - 55	Bradford	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users At least two listened to either Radio Ramadan (was on-air between 16/11/01 and 16/12/01) or Radio Hajj (on-air between 10/02/02 and 24/02/02)
Pakistani	Male	18-31	Bradford	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users At least two listened to either Radio Ramadan (was on-air between 16/11/01 and 16/12/01) or Radio Hajj (on-air between 10/02/02 and 24/02/02)
Indian	Male	18-31	Leicester	Satellite or cable users At least three listen to radio phone-ins Three watch MATV (Channel 6)
Indian	Female	31 - 55	London	Satellite or cable users
Bangladeshi	Female	18-31	London	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users At least three listen to radio phone-ins
Bangladeshi	Male	31 - 55	London	Terrestrial only At least two listened to the Muslim Community Radio - Ramadan Special (on-air between 16/11/01 and 16/12/01, mainly in the Whitechapel area)
Black-Caribbean	Female	31 - 55	Leeds	Terrestrial only
Black-Caribbean	Male	18-31	Leeds	Satellite or cable users At least three listen to radio phone-ins
Black British/ Black Other/ Mixed Race	Male	31 - 55	Cardiff	Terrestrial only
Black British/ Black Other/ Mixed Race	Female	18-31	Cardiff	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users

²⁹ The sample was recruited on the basis of a self-definition of ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Location	Media consumption
Black-African	Female	18-31	London	Terrestrial only At least three listen to radio phone-ins
Black-African	Male	31 - 55	London	Satellite or cable users
White	Mixed	31 - 55	Cardiff	Satellite or cable users
White	Mixed	31 - 55	Cardiff	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users
White	Mixed	18-31	Cheshire	Satellite or cable users At least three listen to radio phone-ins
White	Mixed	18-31	Cheshire	Terrestrial only
Turkish Cypriot	Mixed	25-45	London	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users At least three listen to radio phone-ins
Greek Cypriot	Mixed	25-45	London	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users
Chinese	Mixed	18-31	Oxford	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users
Chinese	Mixed	31 - 55	London	Satellite or cable users At least three listen to radio phone-ins
Arab	Male	18-31	London	Terrestrial only
Arab	Female	31 - 55	London	Mix of terrestrial only and satellite or cable users

In addition, two paired depth interviews were conducted with non-English speaking Asian participants - one with Indian women and one with Pakistani men. These were held in Keighley and Leicester.

During the groups, a wide range of issues was discussed in relation to multicultural broadcasting. Some clips of television and radio output were also used during the groups to stimulate discussion. These were:

- *Ali G* (Channel 4): A section of Ali G speaking on stage, including an exchange with his DJ and the introduction of Anita Roddick. Also a clip of a *Borat's Guide* focusing on the Henley Regatta.
- *GMTV* (ITV1): An introduction from the anchorwoman, then a section of a report on a gospel singing competition.
- *Banzai* (Channel 4): An introduction from the host, then a 'game' involving the audience guessing which gun a young Black boy would pick from a choice of five, each held by a woman in a bikini.
- *Othello* (ITV1): A clip in which the main character meets the prime minister, is offered and accepts the Commissionership, then tells his friend, Iago, about it.
- *Love in Leeds* (Channel 4): The title credits, a clip of each of three women (one White, one Black and one Asian) discussing their dream dates and a clip of both the White and the Black woman on nights out.
- Part of a phone-in from *The James Whale Show* (talkSPORT): The clip was very long, with Whale and a caller discussing a news item about the publication of a report giving the numbers of foreigners in UK jails, mentioning at least four/five countries, including Jamaica, two Asian countries and a European country, with a reference to smuggling and 'drug mules'.
- An advertisement for *Locate in Scotland* call centres (Classic FM): The whole advertisement was included. In mock calls to two advice lines, the woman with the Scottish accent described the benefits of locating companies in Scotland.

Industry research

The industry research was comprised of two stages.

1. A qualitative stage in which 31 representatives of the radio, television and advertising industries and programme-makers were interviewed in February 2002 by representatives of Frank N Magid Associates; and
2. A quantitative stage in which a sample of 200 people from the broadcasting industry responded to an online survey in May 2002, conducted by Frank N Magid Associates.
 - Of this sample, 91 were drawn from the radio sector.
 - Radio respondents were asked to specify whether or not they had responsibility for ethnic or racial programming.

Responsibility for ethnic/racial programming	Radio (N=91)
	%
Yes	33
No	58
N/A	9

- The remaining 109 respondents were from the television sector, with 5% saying that they had responsibility for ethnic/racial programming.

- That sample split into the following jobs:

Job description	Television (N=109)
	%
Programme commissioner	38
Programme-maker in broadcast organisation	34
Independent programme-maker	5
Other	9
N/A	5

Appendix IIIa

How multicultural is your output? Can you give any examples?

■ Sport: (radio/television)

Presenter line-up isn't as diverse as it should be

We have: Ian Wright, Mark Bright, Garth Crooks, Jeremy Guscott, John Regis

Part of it is talent spotting

Team is becoming more diverse - some at all levels

■ Regional ITV

Have used Chris Bison on a number of programmes

Careful attention to ensure do not make negative statements, e.g. on *Mean Streets* and *Crimefile* - crime programmes

■ Regional ITV

This London - a deliberate, a specific diversity project - looked at themes, how Londoners lead their lives in terms of work, love, money and so on

■ Regional ITV

The London Programme - editions looking at drug problem in Tower Hamlets; another looking at living conditions of immigrants where they are living in appalling poverty alongside the City of London - one of the richest pieces of real estate in the world

■ Regional ITV

Art Works - reflecting thriving artistic subculture in London involving thousands of young people

■ Regional ITV

Music series about active jazz and Black music in London

■ National speech-based radio

Pakistan Daily - five 10 minute films about Pakistan as it faces up to the consequences of 11 September 2001 - of interest to Pakistanis living in Britain, as well as general population

■ Drama

The Jury, *Footballers' Wives*, *Bad Girls*, *Coronation Street*, *Loves Strangers*, *The Vice*

■ Feature strands

The Gospel Challenge - ' Looking at a particular genre - it didn't exclude White people and White people participated in the competition - but it was nevertheless an area of cultural life that was primarily concentrated in a particular community- an example of how you could take experiences and find the universality of it and make it appealing, and of interest

■ Business

Your Money or Your Life? *Alvin Hall* series - but that would have been good whether or not he was Black - he was just a great character who came over well

■ Factual

Trouble Up North, *The Islam Season*

■ Factual

Back to Basics - issues surrounding education of young Black kids who went back to the Caribbean to get a better education - universal themes about education - interlapping themes which make it relevant to a mainstream audience and a multicultural audience

■ Factual

Body Snippers - looking at questions of race and identity through plastic surgery

■ Factual

Love in Leeds - different cultures have different strategies in the pursuit of love

■ Factual

Skin Deep - White girls who seek out Black boyfriends - a very good story

■ Comedy/Entertainment

So Graham Norton: The show has been created out of, I hope, a multicultural position - created very deliberately to reflect the diversity of the country and I'm talking multicultural in its wider sense - a diversity in not just ethnic mix. Also in gender, sexuality, age...

■ Comedy

Goodness Gracious Me - about the kind of crosscultural experience - jokes based on the kind of clash of cultures between immigrant generation and the host nation culture and the kind of confusion that causes within the parents, us and the host community

■ News

I think news is very poor as a genre - even on a programme like Channel 4 news which is better than the rest I think because we do more stories about race than any other channel. It is still by and large the stories about racism and the stories about crime on which you will see ethnic minorities represented.

■ Children's

Newsround - makes an effort to reflect diversity of audience - talking about different religious festivals etc. also in terms of presenters - seeking presenters from variety of backgrounds

■ Local television

Programmes relevant to people of Leicester

■ Local television

Punjabi programme which is presented in English and includes English classical music and Bhangra music, classical artistes from Pakistan

■ Local television

Programme about Scottish children who are learning Sanskrit

■ National music-based radio station

Fabio & Groove Rider - world leaders in their genre of music called drum and bass

The Tim Westwood Rap Show - talking to a Black mixed ethnic audience as well as a non ethnic audience *Dream Team* - programming 'much more relevant to a 19-year-old from Peckham' - through presenters and through what music they present

■ **National radio**

Multi-faith input on *Thought for the Day*

■ **Commercial radio station**

Choice FM especially aimed at Black and Afro-Caribbean community - other formats generally appeal right across the board

■ **Local radio**

Programmes for all the community - e.g. series on arranged marriages, violence within home - different community perspectives, brought in the police, conducted in English so all could understand

■ **Local radio**

Music programmes which mix English music with Bhangra

■ **Local radio**

Programmes which reflect interests of community - open access to different community groups

■ **Local radio**

Programmes which are inclusive - go out to the community - e.g. *Sighthill* - and follow up - visit the community again - not just when there is a problem

■ **Local radio**

Flagging religious events

■ **Ethnically diverse radio station**

100% multicultural - programmes made by and for different communities - reflecting concerns of them

Programmes also reflect their multiple identities - issues that affect them as living in London or being British, as well as being part of another ethnic group or community

■ **Radio factual/current affairs**

Programmes that 'tell it like it is' without fear or favour - do proper research and then put forward the facts

Appendix IIIb: Industry citations

Can you give any examples of multicultural television programming - that you weren't involved with producing - that you think are good (or poor) examples?

BBC

Positive citation

- *Babyfather*
'A good example of multicultural programming.'
- *Kumars at 42*
'The main people are Asian but it's got pretty good appeal.'
- *The Islam Season*
'I am not an uncritical fan of all of them, but the idea behind them seemed to me excellent and a very head-on, very explicit upfront attempt to meet some of these criticisms, that we are either neglecting or misrepresenting this whole bundle of issues that surround Muslims... I find it hard to believe that a private sector broadcaster and a commercial broadcaster would produce a package of programmes like that, which was an expensive package of programmes and a package of programmes with a public purpose.'
- *EastEnders*
'Is multicultural in the sense that it shows Walford as being what most urban centres in Britain are, which is a complete mix of people from different cultural ethnic backgrounds...'
- *Panorama* - edition covering topic of arranged marriage
'The way it was actually covered would raise awareness within the non-Asian community as well, but within the Asian community as well...'
- *Home Front*
'In *Home Front* you're now as likely to get a Black or an Asian family starting to get their garden made over...'

BBC

Negative citation

- *Babyfather*
'It was trying to be a multicultural programme rather than a good drama that happened to be about the Black community.'
- *Linda Green*
'very White.'
- *Changing Rooms, Ground Force*
'Don't see non-White faces'

ITV

Positive citation

■ *Othello*

'An inspired piece of programme-making and commissioning. Real people, taking a mainstream story and setting and putting it in a contemporary setting which, of course, in a metropolitan city like London, you would have to see Black folk represented.'

■ *Coronation Street*

'I watched *Coronation Street* the other night and it was entirely dominated by Vik and Dev, two Asian guys. Vikram is ending his relationship with Bobby, who's an Afro-Caribbean, and virtually the whole half hour was spent on that.'

ITV

Negative citation

■ *A Touch of Frost*

'Very White'

■ *Inspector Morse*

'Very White'

Channel 4

Positive citation

■ *Big Brother, Big Brother 2*

'There was a pretty good, but not a planned, mix of colour and gender backgrounds, and I'm not sure if that was the aim, I doubt if it was, but I think it was a pretty good example of multiculturalism at work and so deep-rooted that you didn't notice it in a programme.'

■ *Channel 4 news*

Multiculturalism is 'an agenda they might have pushed earlier than others, certainly they have had established, particularly Asian faces for a longer period of time.'

■ *Children's programming*

'Because they import more programmes from the US, and they are more integrated.'

Appendix IV:

The British Broadcasting Corporation

The British Broadcasting Corporation is the world's largest public service broadcaster providing programmes and content through digital, analogue, cable and satellite services, as well as online. It aims to be the world's most creative and trusted broadcaster, seeking to satisfy all of its audiences with services that inform, educate, entertain and enrich their lives in ways that the market alone will not. The BBC also aims to be guided by its public purposes, to encourage the United Kingdom's most innovative talent, to act independently of all interests and to aspire to the highest ethical standards. The BBC has a global reputation for setting standards, and the corporation's Editorial Policy team advises programme makers across the BBC on the most difficult editorial issues and helps them to achieve the highest editorial and ethical standards as set out in its public statement of standards and values, the BBC Producers' Guidelines. Editorial Policy also acts as the point of contact for outside bodies on editorial matters and, as with this report, undertakes research to enable the BBC to stay in touch with the views of its audiences on a wide range of broadcasting issues.

Viewers and listeners with serious complaints about what is broadcast by BBC licence fee funded services on television, radio and online may write to the Programme Complaints Unit, Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA. The Unit, which reports to the Director-General, is commissioned to investigate complaints impartially and independently of the interests of the programme-makers. Appeals against its findings are considered by the BBC Governors' Programme Complaints Appeals Committee. BBC e-mail addresses are listed on www.bbc.co.uk/talk. Other comments about BBC programmes and policies can be addressed to BBC Information, PO Box 1922, Glasgow, G2 3WT phone 0870 00 0222 (calls may be recorded). Minicom 0780 00 022.

British Broadcasting Corporation
Broadcasting House
Portland Place
London W1A 1AA
Telephone: 020 7580 4468
Website: www.bbc.co.uk

Appendix V:

Broadcasting Standards Commission

The Broadcasting Standards Commission is the statutory body for both standards and fairness in broadcasting. It is the only organisation within the regulatory framework of UK broadcasting to cover all television and radio. This includes the BBC and commercial broadcasters, as well as text, cable, satellite and digital services.

As an independent organisation, the Broadcasting Standards Commission considers the portrayal of violence, sexual conduct and matters of taste and decency. It also provides redress for people who believe they have been unfairly treated or subjected to unwarranted infringement of privacy. The Commission has three main tasks set out in the 1996 Broadcasting Act:

- Produce codes of practice relating to standards and fairness;
- Consider and adjudicate on complaints;
- Monitor, research and report on standards and fairness in broadcasting.

This research working paper is published as part of a programme into attitudes towards standards and fairness in broadcasting. This research, which was carried out by independent experts, is not a statement of Commission policy. Its role is to offer guidance and practical information to Commissioners and broadcasters in their work.

Broadcasting Standards Commission
7 The Sanctuary
London SW1P 3JS
Tel: 020 7808 1000
Fax: 020 7233 0397
Email: bsc@bsc.org.uk
Website: www.bsc.org.uk

Appendix VI:

the Independent Television Commission

Operating in the interests of viewers, The Independent Television Commission is the public body which licenses and regulates all television services broadcasting in or from the UK, other than BBC licence fee funded services and S4C in Wales.

The Broadcasting Acts of 1990 and 1996 charge the ITC with tasks that include:

- setting standards for programme content, advertising, sponsorship and technical quality;
- monitoring broadcasters' output to ensure that it meets those standards and applying a range of penalties if it doesn't;
- ensuring that broadcasters operate in an environment which encourages innovation and widens viewer choice;
- ensuring that viewers can receive television services on fair and competitive terms;
- investigating complaints and regularly publishing its findings.

Each year the ITC undertakes an extensive audience research programme to help identify areas where viewer attitudes or behaviour may be changing. It liaises regularly with stakeholders, including consumer groups, and takes advice from its own advertising, schools, medical and religious advisory committees.

The Independent Television Commission
33 Foley Street
London W1W 7TL
Tel: 020 7255 3000
Fax: 020 7306 7800
Minicom: 020 7306 7753
Email: publicaffairs@itc.org.uk
Website www.itc.org.uk

Appendix VII: The Radio Authority

The Radio Authority is the statutory body set up under the Broadcasting Act 1990 to license and regulate Independent Radio within the UK. It is responsible for monitoring the obligations on its licensees required by the Broadcasting Acts 1990 and 1996.

The Authority has three main tasks:

- to plan frequencies;
- to appoint licensees with a view to broadening listener choice; and
- to regulate programming and advertising.

It is required, after wide consultation, to draw up, review and enforce Codes which set standards and practices on programming, and advertising and sponsorship. The Authority is also required to draw up and enforce rules on engineering and ownership.

The Radio Authority considers complaints concerning programming, advertising and sponsorship, and transmissions for all non-BBC radio services. If a station is found to be in breach of the Authority's rules, the Authority has a number of sanctions it can impose. It can admonish the station concerned; it can require a broadcast apology or correction; it can impose a financial penalty; or it can, ultimately, shorten or revoke a station's licence.

The Radio Authority
Holbrook House
14 Great Queen Street
London WC2B 5DG

Tel: 020 7430 2724
Fax: 020 7405 7062
Email: info@radioauthority.org.uk
Website: <http://www.radioauthority.org.uk>