Ethnic Variation in the impact of child-birth on women's employment & occpational attainment

Dr Clare Holdsworth & Professor Angela Dale

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Introduction

Recent decades in Britain have witnessed an increase in women's paid employment, particularly amongst married women. It is well established that most of this increase has been in part-time rather than full-time employment (Joshi, 1989; Dale and Joshi, 1992; Hakim, 1993). Despite a recent rise in the numbers of women retaining a full-time job after child-bearing (McRae, 1993), the majority of women still leave the workforce at the birth of their first child, usually returning to part-time work a few years later. Only 15 per cent of women with a youngest child under 5 were employed full-time in 1992-4, whilst 35 per cent worked part-time (Bennett et al, 1996).

The initial growth in part-time employment can be related to the labour shortages of post-war Britain during the 1950s and 60s and the growing reluctance of government to recruit immigrant labour (Dale, 1991). Married women with children were identified as a 'reserve army' of labour (CBI, 1967; Fabian Society, 1966) and part-time work seen as a way of enabling them to take paid employment whilst still meeting domestic and childcare responsibilities. Women, too, were eager to find jobs that could be combined with family commitments and thus demand and supply side factors came together to produce a major expansion in part-time employment. However, this growth in part-time employment was based on a 'white' model of gender roles and, at least initially, was a response to increasing restrictions on immigration. The expansion of the service sector through the 1970s and 1980s continued this growth in part-time work, but reinforced the construction of part-time jobs as low-level, requiring little formal training and offering few promotion prospects.

This growth of part-time work has, therefore, done little to challenge socially constructed gender roles, in particular married women's financial dependence on a male bread-winner (Joshi et al,

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1995). It is well established that a break in employment at child-birth and a return to part-time work lead to downward occupational mobility and that part-time employees are less likely to belong to occupational pension schemes and forgo earnings and promotion prospects (Martin and Roberts, 1984; Dex, 1987; Joshi and Newell, 1987; Ginn and Arber, forthcoming; Joshi 1991; Joshi et al, 1995).

However, international comparative work shows that women's employment patterns in Britain differ from many other countries in Europe and North America. Rubery et al (1995) distinguish three distinct typologies: the continuous pattern, where women remain in paid employment exemplified by Denmark, France and the US; the interrupted pattern found in Britain and also the Netherlands and Germany; and the curtailed employment pattern of women in Ireland and Southern Europe. Explanations for these differences are sought in the different public policy regimes of the various countries (eg differences in child-care provision; differences in employment legislation); differences in gender equality in domestic and paid work; and, historical and ideological differences (Hantrais and Letablier, 1996). However such differences may also be found between ethnic groups within Britain. Recent research has shown that the 'British' pattern of women's employment is, in fact, a white pattern and cannot be generalised to other ethnic groups (Bhavnani, 1994; Stone, 1983). Not only are there marked differences in levels of economic activity between ethnic groups, but it is only White women who record high levels of part-time working.

Research based on the 1991 Census has shown that women's economic activity rates range from 76 per cent for Black-Caribbean, 71 per cent for White women; 61 per cent amongst Indian women; 29 per cent for Pakistani and 22 per cent for Bangladeshi women (Owen, 1994). These figures correspond with a study of ethnic minorities based on the Labour Force Survey for 1989-1990 (Jones, 1993) and with earlier studies undertaken in the 1970s (Stone, 1983), although more recent figures from the Labour Force Survey (Sly, 1996) suggest an increase in economic activity rates amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. Levels of part-time working are consistently

higher amongst White women than minority groups: 37.1 per cent for employed White women compared to 21.7 per cent for minority ethnic groups in the 1991 Census (Owen, 1994).

So far there has been no detailed research using national level data on the differences in employment patterns between ethnic groups in relation to domestic and family circumstances. Neither do we know how these factors are mediated by educational qualifications and the timing of migration, as indicated by country of birth. The analysis reported here provides a first step towards improving our understanding of women who, despite sharing the same public policy regime, make very different employment decisions in the context of family formation. It also provides a framework within which we can locate the findings from a number of qualitative studies of black and Asian women's employment. In the second part of the paper we go on to compare differences in continuity of employment between ethnic groups over a 10-year time period and the effect that retaining a full-time employment profile has for occupational attainment.

Whilst survey data alone cannot provide an explanation for the observed differences in employment patterns between White and minority ethnic groups, it can supply evidence against which to assess the value of alternative theoretical perspectives and, in particular, indicates that processes which have been shown to operate for White women cannot be generalised to other ethnic groups.

Before moving on to present this empirical evidence we review the various perspectives and explanations offered for differences in women's employment patterns between ethnic groups.

Explanations of ethnic differences in employment patterns

Differences in cultural norms between ethnic groups may either facilitate or restrict women's employment (Jones, 1993; Brown, 1984 and Stone, 1983). At one end of this spectrum are

Muslim women, exemplified by the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups, whose communities espouse gender roles which firmly locate women within the domestic sphere. These roles may be reinforced by adherence to the conventions of Purdah (Gardner and Shukur, 1994). In contrast, Black-Caribbean women's high levels of employment may be related to a strong historical precedent of combining financial independence with maternal duties in the home (Stone, 1983). Mirza (1992) also argues that Black-Caribbean communities espouse an egalitarian approach to sharing household finances and resources. Black feminists have criticised these traditional explanations, arguing that cultural values should not be treated as entities separate from social, economic and spatial factors, nor from the actions of women themselves (Bhachu, 1993). Brah, for example, argues that 'culture' does not, of itself, explain ethnic variation, but is a process which interacts with social and economic factors (Brah, 1992a). This argument is supported by qualitative interviews which show that, while ethnic minority women do ascribe to distinctive culturally defined gender roles, the manifestation of those roles may not be straight-forward (Brah and Shaw, 1992; Afshar, 1989). Thus women's employment patterns may be contingent upon social and economic factors, such as the structure of the local labour market, timing of immigration and knowledge of English, all of which mediate culturally ascribed gender roles (Brah, 1992b).

Both Black-Caribbean and Asian women frequently cite financial necessity as the most important reason for undertaking paid work outside of the home (Westwood, 1988; Stone, 1983). The failure of Black-Caribbean men to provide financial support, exemplified by the high proportion of Black Caribbean women heading one-parent families, is suggested by Brown (1984) as an explanation for higher rates of employment. Bruegel (1989) argues that racial exclusion from higher status jobs and the class position of ethnic communities is a key determinant of the hours which ethnic minority women work. Racist practices locate both men and women from minority ethnic groups in low status and poorly paid jobs, or discriminate against them obtaining employment (Jones, 1993; Ohri and Faruqi, 1988). Where minority ethnic women have employment, their earnings may provide a more important source of income than for many White

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households (Phizacklea and Wolkowitz, 1993). However, economic reasons are not, of themselves, a sufficient explanation of economic activity, evidenced by Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who record the lowest levels of economic activity despite the fact that, as a group, they live in the most disadvantaged households (Blackburn et al, 1996).

West and Pilgrim (1995), in a survey of South Asian women in the Bristol labour market, provide evidence of the complex set of factors that influence employment. Bangladeshi women's low level of economic activity was affected by the timing of their migration - a majority had arrived in Britain in the last ten years - which often coincided with starting a family. The Bangladeshi women in their study had relatively large family sizes, low educational levels and no ready access to employment. Whilst their husband's found work in the restaurant trade, this was not seen as an appropriate source of employment for wives. It is, perhaps, significant that Bristol has no ready link to the textiles industry, which might, as in other areas, have provided some homeworking. Similar factors influenced Pakistani women's low economic activity rates, although among women who had experienced a British educational system, levels of employment were considerably higher.

Although national-level census data cannot address the range of issues discussed above, it can, nonetheless, provide a basis for systematic comparisons between ethnic groups to complement smaller scale, local studies. In next section we use data from the Samples of Anonymised Records from the 1991 Census to ask: how does the effect of partnership and children on women's employment vary between ethnic groups? How do women from different ethnic groups respond to a partner's unemployment? It is well established that White women with unemployed partners are considerably less likely to be in paid employment than women with working partners. Does this model hold for other ethnic groups? This analysis will also take into account the importance of educational qualifications and being UK-born.

We then go on to use linked census data from the ONS Longitudinal Study for 1981-1991 to examine the role of full-time employment in the occupational attainment of women from different ethnic groups. In particular we ask whether the assumption that full-time continuous employment is beneficial to maintaining a career, particularly when children are young, is valid across ethnic groups.

Ethnicity and employment data in the 1991 Census

The census is a high profile data collection exercise conducted under official statute. By comparison with other national data sources, eg the Labour Force Survey, it has very high levels of completion (about 96 per cent by comparison with 82 per cent in the LFS) and is therefore likely to provide the best available coverage on minority ethnic groups. Nonetheless it is these groups that were subject to greatest under-enumeration in the 1991 Census (OPCS, 1994; Simpson 1996). In addition, there are systematic differences in the levels of unemployment and part-time working recorded between the 1991 Census and the 1991 Labour Force Survey. Higher levels of part-time working are recorded in the LFS whilst unemployment is higher in the census (Sly, 1994). This is likely to be a function of the differences in the structure and filtering of questions between the two surveys, as well as a differences between self-completion and interview methods.

Whilst the 1991 Census records those who work at or from home, there is very little difference in reported levels between women from different ethnic groups. However, qualitative work (Phizacklea and Wolkowitz, 1993) suggests that surveys in general under-estimate homeworking amongst minority ethnic women. It is possible that, particularly amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi, the figures reported here underestimate levels of employment.

The 1991 Census was the first to ask a question on ethnic group. Although there were ten different ethnic group categories, the majority of the population, 94.6 per cent, were coded White.

The Black-Other, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups, in particular, have very small numbers and therefore Black-Other and Black-Caribbean women have been combined into one group;¹ Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have also been combined as their patterns of employment are similar. The Other-Asian group includes a variety of different ethnic origins, mainly identified by geographical or national origin, such as Japanese, Vietnamese or Filipino. Where necessary this group has been combined with the Chinese group. The Census also coded an Other-Other group comprising an ethnically diverse group, some of whom indicated that they were British (eg answering Scottish, Welsh) but others indicated a Black/White or Asian/White mixture, or North African, Arab or Iranian origin. This group has no ethnic coherence and has therefore been omitted from analyses.

Cross-sectional analyses

i. Data and classifications used in the cross-sectional analyses

Cross-sectional analysis of employment patterns is based on the 1 per cent Household Sample of Anonymised Records (SARs) from the 1991 Census for Great Britain. The data file is hierarchically organised with information on 215,761 households and 541,894 individuals in these households (CMU, 1994).

The hierarchial structure of the 1 per cent SAR allows information about other household members to be used to define a lifestage variable (Holdsworth and Dale, 1995) based on: women's age; presence of a partner; and, for women with dependent children, age of youngest dependent child². A dependent child is defined as a child aged less than 16, or 16 to 18 years old, single and in full-time education. The distribution of this lifestage variable for women in all ten ethnic groups is given in appendix 1. All analyses are restricted to women aged 18 - 60 who are usual household residents and not in full-time education.

ii. Employment Patterns by Lifestage

Figures 1a to 1g and 2a to 2b illustrate variation in women's employment patterns by lifestage and ethnic group. Moving down from the top, each line of the graphs shows the percentage of women:

(i) economically active (in paid employment, unemployed or on a government scheme)

- (ii) in paid employment and
- (iii) in full-time employment.

The difference between (i) and (ii) represents the percentage of women unemployed; the difference between (ii) and (iii) the percentage in part-time work. The six lifestages represented in Figure 1 are:

- 1. No partner, less than 35, no dependent children
- 2. With partner, less than 35, no dependent children
- 3. With partner, youngest dependent child aged less than 5
- 4. With partner, youngest dependent child aged 5 to 9
- 5. With partner, youngest dependent child age 10 or over
- 6. With partner, aged 35 and over, no dependent children

Figure 1 Percentage of women economically active/in work/employed full-time at different lifestages by ethnic group



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Figure 1 Percentage of women economically active/in work/employed full-time at different lifestages by ethnic group



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These categories represent, in a stylised way, significant lifestages from: young single women; partnered with no children; partnered with children; to the empty nest of older partnered women with no children.

There are two additional categories which are displayed in Figure 2:

- 7. No partner, dependent child less than 5
- 8. No partner, dependent child aged 5 or over

For presentational purposes Figure 1 omits these two categories; however, this does not imply that all women (or even a majority) move through these stages in sequential fashion.

The graphs presented conflate age/life-cycle and cohort effects as they are based on crosssectional data. Different cohorts of women will record rather different levels of employment at each lifestage. Women in younger cohorts may be expected to have a slightly higher rate of employment when they have children under five and to return to employment rather sooner than earlier cohorts (Martin and Roberts 1984; McRae, 1993).

Six of the seven ethnic groups identified in Figure 1 show a common pattern of economic activity, with almost all women economically active in the first two lifestages - non-partnered and partnered aged less than 35, with no dependent children - and falling dramatically where a child below school age is present and rising again when the youngest child is school-aged. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women differ from this pattern in that economic activity falls sharply amongst young partnered women without dependent children and drops to 14 per cent for women with a child under five. Black-Caribbean women have the highest economic activity levels at all lifestages where children are present, whilst (apart from Pakistani and Bangladeshi and Other

Figure 2 Percentage of women heading one-parent families economically active/in work/employed full-time by ethnic group



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Asian women) the White group records the lowest rates when a pre-school child is present. These data therefore show considerable variation between ethnic groups in relationship to the presence of a partner and to a pre-school child.

Levels of unemployment (the difference between economic activity and women in employment) are lower for White women than other ethnic groups at all lifestages.³ The difference is greatest at the youngest lifestage where all minority ethnic women (except for the Chinese) have very high levels of unemployment - 35 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women and 33 per cent Black-African women in this lifestage are unemployed. Generally the percentage of women recorded as unemployed is lower amongst older women and women with children. This may in part be explained by older, partnered women not reporting themselves as unemployed, particularly if they are not eligible for income support or unemployment benefit.

Levels of full-time and part-time employment show striking differences between the seven ethnic groups in Figure 1. It is only amongst White and Pakistani/ Bangladeshi women that levels of full-time employment fall below 20 per cent for partnered women with a child under 10. Partnered White women with dependent children of all ages differ from other ethnic groups in their high levels of part-time working. Levels run at least ten percentage points higher where the youngest child is pre-school and over 20 percentage points higher where the child is 5-9. White women with a partner and a dependent child are unique in having levels of part-time working higher than full-time working.⁴

Amongst women heading one-parent families with a pre-school child (Figures 2a and 2b) levels of part-time working are generally lower than for partnered women and the distinctive White pattern is absent. Where children are 5 or over, levels of part-time working rise again, but are much lower than amongst partnered women. Black Caribbean and Black African women who head one-parent families where the youngest child is under five are distinctive in their high levels

of economic activity (47 per cent and 53 per cent respectively) by comparison with 28 per cent of White mothers.

iii Continuation Ratio Model of women's employment status

It is evident from these data that there are considerable differences between ethnic groups in the employment response to a dependent child. This argues against any straightforward explanation based on public policy towards maternity rights or childcare but suggests that the institutional context mediates or facilitates employment choices, rather than determining them. The major differences between the *ethnic minority* groups relate to levels of economic activity, rather than differences in part-time working. However, Figure 2 suggests that White lone mothers with a preschool child are much less likely to work part-time than their married counterparts. This suggests a relationship between part-time working and presence of a partner that is much stronger for White than for other ethnic groups.

This analysis therefore demonstrates ethnic variation in the percentage of women in employment and in the proportion who are working part-time, which cannot be explained by differences in either stage of life-cycle or occupation. To formalise these differences we have modelled women's employment status controlling for individual and lifestage effects, using a continuation ratio model (Berridge, 1992). The response variable for this model is women's employment status, which has three categories: not-working, working part-time or working-full-time.⁵ It is evident from Figure 1 that, across all ethnic groups, full-time employment is the norm for women with no domestic constraints - exemplified by the 'non-partnered, under 35' category. We have therefore set up our model to focus on the factors that predict *departure* from this norm, and ask under what circumstances do women work and, if working, why do some women opt for parttime rather than full-time employment? To simplify discussion we refer to women who are not in paid work as 'domestic workers'. The continuation ratio model divides the response variable into two parts. The first compares the likelihood of women being in domestic work versus paid work, while the second is restricted to women who are in paid work, and compares the relative chances of being in part-time versus full-time employment. The model is therefore comparable to fitting two logit models, each with a binary dependent variable. In addition to the lifestage variable and ethnic group, two additional explanatory variables have been fitted: Partner's social class (with a category for partner unemployed), level of highest qualification and whether UK-born. These variables are coded as follows:

Partner's Class, Goldthorpe Schema

- 1. Higher service
- 2. Lower service
- 3. Routine non-manual & personal service
- 4. Small proprietor with/ without employees and farmers
- 5. Lower technical, foremen and skilled manual
- 6. Semi, unskilled and agricultural workers
- 7. Partner not working /partner's class not available
- 8. No partner

This represents a recoding of the Goldthorpe class schema⁶. It aims to control for the effect of either a women's partner being out of paid employment, or in a lower status job. The final category, no partner, contains information already supplied in the lifestage variable, and is therefore treated as a structural zero in the model.

Qualifications

- 1. Degree or above
- 2. Post-A level but below degree level
- 3. No higher qualification

Level of educational qualification has been demonstrated to have a strong influence of women's employment (Dale and Egerton, 1995). For ethnic minority women, lack of educational qualifications is a particularly strong determinant of employment (Brah and Shaw, 1992) especially among immigrants who may have difficulties with English. Though the classification is far too crude to control for the impact of illiteracy, it does distinguish highly qualified women from those with post-A level qualifications below degree level, and those with no higher qualifications.

Whether UK-Born

- 1. UK-Born
- 2. Non UK-born

Except for Black-Caribbean and Black-Other women, the majority of women in each ethnic minority group are born outside of the UK. However, for those women who are UK-born we may expect this to have some effect on their employment status and UK-born is included as a control variable.

The construction of the model is illustrated in Table 1a. Each variable is fitted twice, once for each partition. The results of the model are presented in Table 1b. As the results for the second partition are obtained indirectly, log odds and standard errors are not given.

Variable fitted	Reduction in scaled deviance	Degrees of freedom
1st Partition		
Lifestage	33861	8
Goldthorpe Class	4776	6
Qualification	3811	2
Ethnic Group	757	6
UK-Born	7	1
2nd Partition		
Goldthorpe Class	6397	6
Lifestage	2353	8
UK-Born	433	1
Ethnic Group	399	6
Qualification	91	2

Key for Lifestage variable, tables 4b and 5:

No part <35, ndpc No part >=35, ndpc Part <35, ndpc Part, dpc <=4 Part, dpc 5-9 Part, dpc 10+. Part >=35, ndpc No part dpc <=4 No part dpc 5+ No partner, no dependent children, aged less than 35 No partner, no dependent children, aged 35 and over Partner, no dependent children aged less than 35 Partner, youngest dependent child aged less than 5. Partner, youngest dependent child aged 5 to 9 Partner, youngest dependent child aged 10 to 16 Partner and no dependent children, aged 35 and over No partner, youngest dependent child aged less than 5 No partner, youngest dependent child aged 5 and over.

Table 1b:

Results of the Continuation Ratio Model

1st Partition

2nd Partition

	Not V	Vorking V Work	king	Part-time v Full-time
Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Odds Ratios	Odds Ratios
Lifestage:Base: Partner <35, ndpc				
No partner <35, ndpc	0.42	0.04	1.58	0.78
No partner >=35, ndpc	1.55	0.04	4.73	3.02
Partner, dpc <=4	2.43	0.03	11.32	26.47
Partner, dpc 5-9	1.37	0.03	3.92	27.28
Partner, dpc 10+	0.97	0.05	2.64	14.17
Partner >=35, ndpc	1.24	0.04	3.46	9.09
No Partner, dpc <=4	3.28	0.03	26.47	10.40
No Partner, dpc 5+	1.88	0.04	6.55	8.71
Partner's Goldthorpe Class				
Base: Higher Service				
Lower Service	-0.26	0.03	0.77	0.78
Non-manual/personal service	-0.42	0.04	0.66	0.68
Small proprietor /Farmer	-0.15	0.03	0.86	0.79
Lower tech/foreman/skill. man.	-0.35	0.03	0.70	0.86
Semi & unskilled/agri. worker	-0.29	0.03	0.75	0.82
Partner out of work	1.20	0.03	3.33	0.88
No partner	0.00	aliased	0.00	0.00
Level of Qual Base: Degree plus				
Below degree qual	0.05	0.05	*1.05	1.41
No higher quals	1.02	0.03	2.76	2.61
Ethnic group: Base: White				
Black Carib. & Other	-0.24	0.05	0.78	0.43
Black African	0.37	0.10	1.44	0.53
Indian	0.19	0.05	1.21	0.32
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	1.85	0.08	6.39	0.59
Chinese	0.00	0.12	*1.00	0.56
Other Asian	0.34	0.09	1.41	0.47
UK-Bom				
Non UK-born	0.19	0.03	1.21	0.86

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Domestic versus paid work

Stage of lifecycle has the greatest explanatory power, and the most striking results occur for women with a dependent child aged less than five. If these women also have a partner they are 11 times more likely to be in domestic than in paid work, by comparison with young women in a partnership but with no children (the base category); lone mothers with children under five are about 26 times more likely to be domestic workers than the base category. This clearly demonstrates the effect of young children on women's employment, and particularly for women heading one-parent families. Partner's Goldthorpe class and employment status also have substantial explanatory power. Relative to the base category, higher service, women with a working partner in any of the other groups are more likely to be in paid work, with odds ratios of 0.7 or 0.8. However, women whose partners are out of work are three times more likely to be domestic workers, relative to women whose partners have higher service occupations. Women with no higher qualifications are less likely to be in paid work relative to highly qualified women. The odds of being in paid employment for women born outside the UK are also lower than those for UK-born women.

There are some important differences in women's employment status between ethnic groups. Relative to White women (the base category), only Black Caribbean/Black-Other women are more likely to be in paid work, while women from all other ethnic groups, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, are less likely to be in paid work.

Part-time versus full-time working

The second stage of the analysis is restricted to women in paid work and compares their likelihood of working part-time rather than full-time. Only young women with neither partner nor child are more likely to be working full-time than the base group - young women with a partner but no dependent children. Women in all other lifestage categories are more likely to be working

part-time. If they have a partner and child less than 10, the odds in favour of part-time working rise to 27:1. However, the odds for women heading one-parent families are lower, suggesting that they are less likely to work part-time than mothers in partnerships. Nonetheless, lone mothers remain 10 times more likely to work part-time than the base category. Women with a partner in any of the class categories below the service class (the base category), including those with a partner out of work, are more likely to be working full-time than women in the base category. As expected, women with higher qualifications are more likely to work full-time than women is that women with no higher qualifications. The same is true for UK-born women in comparison with women in all minority ethnic groups are only about half as likely to be working part-time as White women.

iv Logit model of women's economic acitivty

The results from the continuation ratio model suggest that there is more variation between White and minoirty ethnic groups than within minority ethnic groups. To formalise these difference we have fitted two different binary logit models for each ethnic group. In the first model the dependent variable is economic activity as the distinction between economic activity /inactivity ensures that the analysis includes unemployed women. The second model is restricted to all women in paid employment and compares the odds of being in part-time versus full-time work. For both models the lifestage variable used in Figures 1 and 2 has been combined with partner's employment status, to investigate the effect of the latter at different lifestages and for different ethnic groups. The extended lifestage variable is:

- 1. No partner, less than 35, no dependent children
- 2 No partner, aged 35 and over, no dependent children.
- 3. With working partner, less than 35, no dependent children
- 4. With non-working partner, less than 35, no dependent children
- 5. With working partner, dependent child aged less than 5

- 6. With non-working partner, dependent child aged less than 5
- 7. With working partner, youngest dependent child aged 5-9
- 8. With non-working partner, youngest dependent child aged 5-9
- 9. With working partner, youngest dependent child age 10 or over
- 10. With non-working partner, youngest dependent child age 10 or over
- 11. With working partner, aged 35 and over, no dependent children
- 12. With non-working partner, aged 35 and over, no dependent children
- 13. No partner, youngest dependent child aged less than 5.
- 14. No partner, youngest dependent child aged 5 and over.

Two other variables are included in the model: level of highest qualification, and whether UKborn.

The results of model 1, fitted for each ethnic group, are given in Table 2. The reference category has been chosen to represent a group of women who are free from constraints which might impinge upon employment: under 35, single, educated to degree level and born in the UK. The probability of economic activity for women in this category is over 0.95 in each ethnic group (as before, full-time students are excluded). The six models are therefore examining the factors which are associated with leaving the labour market for women at later stages of the life-cycle. Some of the odds obtained are very large, reflecting the almost universal level of economic activity in the reference group.

Variable	White	Black- Caribbean & Black- Other	Black- African	Indian	Pakistani & Bangla- deshi	Chinese & Other- Asian
	odds	odds	odds	odds	odds	odds
Lifestage: Base No partner, ≪35, no chil	dren					
No part aged ≥ 35 no dep child	9.7	5.2	4.2	10.6	6.9	1.4
Part aged <35 no dep child Part work. Part no work.	*1.1 4.8	*1.6	*1.3 3.4	3.1 5.2	11.9 7.2	2.1 6.2
Part dep child 0-4 Part work. Part no work.	25.8 58.7	7.4 21.6	7.1 7.8	9.3 38.5	18.6 25.4	8.7 9.5
Part dep child 5-9 Part work. Part no work.	9.0 31.6	4.0 3.2	3.4 5.7	4.2 13.1	14.9 17.5	5.4 7.8
Part dep child 10+ Part work. Part no work.	6.0 22.2	2.5 3.6	3.9 4.3	3.4 11.8	5.4 13.8	3.4 19.1
Part aged ≥ 35 no dep child Part work. Part no work.	7.7 30.4	3.3 5.2	3.0 4.8	7.0 20.5	12.7 18.9	3.0 9.4
No partner dep child 0-4	58.0	16.1	6.2	32.8	12.5	21.1
No partner dep child 5+	15.8	7.2	2.6	9.4	13.9	4.9
Qualification: Base Degree level Qualification	n					
Below degree	1.1	*3.3	*1.0	*0.5	*0.5	*1.5
No Higher qual	2.6	13.8	4.4	2.7	12.7	4.9
UK- Born						
Non UK-born	1.3	*0.9	1.2	1.7	2.2	3.2

Table 2: Logit models of women's economic inactivity

Response variable: inactivity versus activity. * Not significant at 5% level.

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Generally, women under 35 with a partner in work but no dependent children, are as likely to be economically active as the base category - except, as established in Figures 1e and 1d, for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women (odds of 12:1 in favour of economic inactivity and Indian women (odds of 3:1). However in this lifestage category, if the partner is not in work, the odds of inactivity increase for all groups except Black-Caribbean women.

Amongst women with a partner and a child under 5, the odds of inactivity are greatly increased for all groups, by comparison with the reference category, but much more so for White women than for minority ethnic groups. Only Pakistani and Bangladeshi women come near to approaching the high odds recorded for White women with pre-school children.⁷ Within this lifestage category there is also a significant difference in the odds of inactivity depending on whether or not a woman's partner is in paid work. White, Black-Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani and Bangladeshi women all record substantially increased odds of inactivity if their partner is not working. Again, the odds for White women are much higher than for other ethnic groups. By contrast, Black African and Chinese and Other-Asian women do not.

For women with older children, odds of inactivity are generally lower. For these groups, too, the effect of a non-working partner is substantially higher for White women than for other ethnic groups; for Black-Caribbean and Black African women in particular, there is little difference in odds by whether or not a partner is in work. It would appear, therefore, that not only are White women more likely to be economically inactive when they have dependent children, compared to minority ethnic women, but the effect of a non-working partner is also much stronger. In the three groups with the largest proportion of lone mothers, White, Black-Caribbean and Black-African, odds of inactivity are substantially higher for White Women than for the other groups. Among lone mothers with pre-school children, odds of inactivity are similar to those for partnered women with children of the same age where the partner is out of work.

Higher qualifications play a particularly influential role for Black-Caribbean and Pakistani and Bangladeshi women - both of whom have odds of 13:1 in favour of inactivity if they have no higher qualifications. All other minority ethnic groups, except Indians, are more likely than White women to be economically inactivity if they have no higher qualifications. In all ethnic groups except Black-Caribbean, women born outside the UK are slightly more likely to be economically inactive than UK born women.

Model 2 is restricted to women in work, with part-time versus full-time employment as the response variable (Table 3). As expected, White women are distinctive in having much higher odds of part-time working associated with the presence of a partner and child, odds of part-time working are considerably lower where the partner is not in paid work and the youngest child is below the age of ten. For most other ethnic groups there is very little change in the odds of part-time working with stage of lifecycle, except for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who record high odds where there is a child under 5 and a partner not in work. Black-African women differ from other ethnic groups with high odds for part-time work for partnered women with children below ten. Generalising across all minority ethnic groups the effect of partner's unemployment is often the reverse of the White model, particularly when the youngest child is of pre-school age.

Variable	White	Black- Caribbean & Black- Other	Black- African	Indian	Pakistani & Bangla- deshi	Chinese & Other- Asian
	odds	odds	odds	odds	odds	odds
Lifestage: Base No partner, ⊲35, no child	Iren					
No part aged ≥ 35 no dep child	4.1	1.9	*1.2	3.8	*0.6	*0.8
Part aged <35 no dep child Part work. Part no work.	*1.1 1.8	*0.9 *0.0	*1.3 15.2	*1.0 *0.8	*1.9 *0.0	*0.6 *1.2
Part dep child 0-4 Part work. Part no work.	32.2 17.1	4.7 *0.0	6.9 10.7	5.2 7.4	3.5 26.5	*2.0 *1.4
Part dep child 5-9 Part work. Part no work.	32.4 23.7	3.5 4.8	22.3 3.8	5.5 *2.8	6.7 9.0	3.0 *3.9
Part dep child 10+ Part work. Part no work.	16.3 16.1	4.8 5.1	4.9* 7.4*	2.6 *2.2	3.9 *5.3	2.2 *2.2
Part aged ≥ 35 no dep child Part work. Part no work.	10.1 12.2	2.9 3.9	4.8 *1.9	2.7 3.3	7.1 *0.0	*1.2
No partner dep child 0-4	14.3	4.4	6.7	*1.9	*0.0	*1.5
No partner dep child 5+	11.8	3.5	4.0	3.8	*2.3	*1.9
Qualification: Base Degree level Qualification						
Below degree	1.4	*1.3	*0.5	*1.7	*4.5	*1.6
No Hi qual	2.6	*1.7	*0.9	*1.5	4.2	2.4
UK- Born						
Non UK-born	0.9	*0.9	*1.1	*1.0	*1.3	*0.9

Logit models of women's part-time v. full-time employment Table 3:

Response variable: part-time working v. full-time working given employed. * Not significant at 5% level.

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v. Discussion

In terms of our initial questions, it is clear that there is considerable variation in the effect of partnership and children on women's economic activity. Whilst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's employment shows the strongest relationship with partnership and children, this is mediated by the presence of a higher qualification which leads to a substantial increase in the odds of economic activity. For those women who were under 35, non-partnered, with no children, UK-born and a higher qualification, the predicted probability of being economically active was over 0.95, across all ethnic groups. This suggests that whatever cultural or ideological factors influence women's employment in general, this group of women, with no domestic commitments and a high level of education, are not being deterred from seeking employment.

In the introduction we suggested that Black Caribbean women's employment may be influenced by more egalitarian approaches to household finances (Mirza, 1992) or by a failure of Black-Caribbean men to provide financial support. From the evidence presented here it is clear that Black Caribbean women are likely to be economically active at all lifestages and that their odds of inactivity are affected very little by whether their partner is employed or not. Black African women, whilst having rather lower overall levels of economic activity, are similarly unresponsive to their partner's employment status. These women are more likely to retain their economic independence irrespective of their domestic circumstances and appear to find a way of resolving child-care problems that act as a deterrent to White women.

Levels of full-time working amongst partnered women with young children are much higher for all minority ethnic groups (except Pakistani and Bangladeshis) and particularly so for Black Caribbean women. Affordable child-care is one of the factors which restrict the hours of work offered by White women (Duncan, Giles and Webb, 1993) and is particularly important where women work full-time (Joshi et al, 1995). Yet there is little evidence to suggest that minority ethnic women have easier access to child-care than White women, despite their higher levels of full-time employment. A Community Relations Commission report in 1975 found that minority ethnic groups experienced considerable difficulties in securing appropriate day-care for their children, forcing them to rely on family or friends. Warrier's (1988) interviews with Asian women found that they preferred to rely on family support, mainly from grandparents who live in the family home, rather than use non-family based care. Despite evidence of childcare difficulties for all ethnic groups, White women opt for part-time work whilst minority ethnic women are more likely to work full-time and use a range of different childcare solutions. Most surveys of Asian women's employment highlight the importance of home-working (Brah and Shaw, 1992; Afshar, 1989) and family pressures for Asian women to work at home (Allen and Wolkowitz, 1987). This may provide one solution to combining work and childcare although, as already discussed, the 1991 Census provides little evidence of homeworking.

At all lifestages minority ethnic women experience much higher levels of unemployment than White women. Other work has shown that this cannot simply be explained by lower levels of human capital (Heath and McMahon, 1996) and that discrimination by employers is still practised (Karn, 1996). Discrimination is likely to operate not only in excluding minority ethnic women from employment but also in influencing the kinds of jobs they are offered and whether they are full or part-time. Whilst we cannot answer the question here, it is important to establish whether minority ethnic women who work full-time are doing so through choice or constraint.

Using a 'white' model of occupational attainment we would expect increased levels of full-time working to have a beneficial effect in retaining or improving occupational attainment, particularly during family formation. In the next section we use longitudinal data to compare occupational attainment of women from different ethnic groups over the ten year period, 1981 to 1991.

Longitudinal Analysis

i. Data and sample selection

To compare the occupational attainment of women from different ethnic groups we have used data from the ONS Longitudinal Study (LS) for England and Wales. The LS links records from the 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses with vital registration records for a 1 per cent sample of the enumerated population of England and Wales. It therefore provides employment and occupational details from each Census and, through the addition of birth registration information, provides data on births during each inter-censal period. Analysis has been restricted to women with linked LS records from both the 1981 and 1991 Censuses; information on ethnic group was taken from the 1991 Census and has been collapsed into five categories: Black, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, Chinese and Other-Asian. Although analysis would, ideally, have used more detailed work history information there is, as yet, no such British data available which can provide adequate distinctions between ethnic groups.⁸

The sample of women used to analyze occupational attainment was restricted to all those in employment at both 1981 and 1991 and aged 16-50 in 1981. There are several reasons for this restriction. Whilst the Census (and thus the LS) holds information on last occupation for women with a job in the previous 10 years, women who were not in paid work in 1991 could have left employment at any time between a week after the 1981 Census to two weeks before the 1991 Census date. More importantly, there is no information as to whether the date of a 'last' occupation reported in the 1991 Census occurred before or after a child was born⁹. In addition, the 1981 Census did not ask occupational information for women who were categorised as a 'housewife' in 1981, making occupational comparisons impossible between women not working in 1981 and working in 1991. It should also be born in mind that information on employment was recorded at two discrete time points; we cannot therefore assume that women employed at both time points were in continuous employment for the intervening period.

These restrictions on the 1981-1991 sample mean that there is considerable selection bias in the women retained in the sample. The characteristics of the longitudinal sample are given in Table 4. For comparison, characteristics of all women aged 16 to 50 who were not full-time students and were present in the LS in 1981 are given in Appendix 1.

In 1981 there were 95,297 women in the LS aged 16-50, not in full-time education and also present in the LS in 1991. Of this group 61.0 per cent were in paid work and 37.5 per cent were in paid work in 1981 *and* 1991 (or 61.5 per cent of women in work in 1981). The percentage of each ethnic group who were present in the LS in 1981 and in 1991 *and in work* in both 1981 and 1991 is shown below:

Ethnic Group

White	36.6
Black	39.1
Indian	31.0
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	5.4
Chinese and Other-Asian	31.0
All women	37.5

Generally, just over a third of women in this age group were in employment at both time points slightly more Black women and slightly fewer Indian and Chinese and Other Asian women. However, as suggested by the cross-sectional analysis, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are very unlikely to be in employment at both points in time - only 5 per cent.

Variable	White	Non- White	Black	Indian	Pakistani & Bangladeshi	Chinese & Other Asian
WES 81						
Professional	1	3	1	4	5	4
Teacher	7	2	3	2	-	1
Nursing	8	18	33	6	2	27
Other inter	10	7	3	9	12	10
Clerical	39	28	30	25	28	28
Shop	10	4	2	5	7	8
Skilled	8	9	10	9	7	5
Semi-skilled	18	30	20	40	40	19
Child 1981-1991						
No child	81	72	78	68	72	67
Child born	19	28	22	33	28	33
Age youngest dep child 1981						
No child	54	40	47	32	37	50
< 5	8.	23	14	30	19	29
5-9	15	17	17	19	23	8
10 +	23	20	23	19	21	13
Level of highest qual						
Degree	7	8	7	8	12	12
Below degree	12	13	21	6	2	21
None	81	79	73	86	86	67
Uk born	96	12	26	3	2	6
Total	33497	1239	480	604	43	112
Employment status 1981-1991 ¹						
Full-full	49	72	75	73	68 .	65
Part-part	19	10	7	6	15	7
Full-part	16	10	10	11	5	13
Part-full	17	7	8	9	12	15
Total	33298	1226	477	596	41	112

 Table 4:
 Characteristics of women in employment in 1981 and 1991

 \mathbb{C} Crown Copyright. ONS Longitudinal Study. All women in aged 16 to 50 in 1981, in employment in 1981 and 1991. ¹ All women with valid employment status in 1981 and 1991

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This longitudinal sample is distinctive in that women from all ethnic groups are more likely to have higher qualifications than the 1981 cross-sectional sample. Further, only a minority of women in the longitudinal sample gave birth to a child between 1981 and 1991, although this was lowest (19 per cent) for White women. Despite the fact that minority ethnic women were more likely to have had a child during the decennial period and to have dependent children at both 1981 and 1991, they were much more likely to be in full-time employment at both times points - again this is suggested by the cross-sectional analysis of the SARs. For all minority ethnic groups, 72 per cent of women were in full-time work in both 1981 and 1991, compared to 49 per cent of White women. Among women who had a child between 1981 and 1991, only 33 per cent of White women.

ii. Occupational attainment

We have used two measures of occupational attainment: firstly occupational position as indicated by the Women and Employment Classification (Martin and Roberts, 1984); secondly the Cambridge Occupational Scale, which gives an approximately interval measure of social standing (Prandy, 1992) standardised to a range of 0-95. In both analyses small numbers mean that we have had to compare minority ethnic women with White women. The former group is numerically dominated by Black-Caribbean and Indian women and, wherever possible, we highlight the particular circumstances of these two groups.

In the first analysis we use a simple measure of change in women's Cambridge scores between 1981 and 1991: moved up more than two points; down more that two points; stayed at the same level. We expect mobility to be affected by whether or not a woman has a child, whether she retains full-time employment and her type of occupation in 1981. Table 5 gives the percentage of women moving up or staying put within each of these cells. In non-manual jobs (WES categories 1-6) women are most likely to move up the Cambridge scale if they stay in full-time

work. Amongst White women in full-time work at both time points there is little difference in rates of moving up by whether or not a child has been born. This confirms other studies (Joshi et al, 1995) which suggest that if women retain full-time employment the impact of having a child is negligible. Minority ethnic women, similarly, are more likely to move up if they are in full-time work at both time points. The small number of minority ethnic women who have a child and do not retain full-time work do less well. Overall, a higher proportion of minority ethnic than White women are in full-time work, thereby improving the position of minority ethnic women generally.

Table 5:Percentage of women moving up and staying the same on the Cambridge score
scale by: ethnic group, non-manual/manual occupation 1981, employment status
1981-1991 and whether child born 1981-1991

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	Non-mar	ual occupa	ation in 19	81	Manual occupation in 1981				
	White		Minority ethnic		White	White		Minority ethnic	
	Up	Same	Up	Same	Up	Same	Up	Same	
No Child									
Full-Full	48	27	42	36	45	36	38	45	
Else	37	34	34	36	69	18	53	36	
Child Bom									
Full-Full	45	26	43	36	49	28	45	37	
Else	34	30	23	42	63	18	66	22	

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All women aged 16 to 50 in 1981, in employment tin 1981 and 1991, with valid WES class in both years.

However, for women in manual occupations in 1981 (irrespective of ethnic group) there is no upward mobility associated with a full-time working profile. Women who change employment status, or who stay in part-time work, are more likely to move up than those in full-time work; differences are slight between those with and without children. Thus minority ethnic women in manual jobs in 1981, who are also predominantly in full-time work at both time points, gain no benefit vis-a-vis White women.

These results are also confirmed by analysis of change in WES class between 1981 and 1991 for White and minority ethnic women (Table 6). Generally White and minority ethnic women in nonmanual occupations are equally likely to retain their occupational position or to move up. Only in intermediate jobs are minority ethnic women more likely to move into manual work - and the numbers in this group are very small. However, minority ethnic women are much more likely to remain in manual occupations (most of which are semi- or unskilled jobs) than White women. Half of all White women in manual jobs in 1981 moved into non-manual jobs, with nearly one fifth going into clerical work. By contrast three-quarters of minority ethnic women stay in manual jobs.

Comparison of women's WES occupational class in 1981 with WES class in 1991, Table 6: by ethnic group

Top row represents all white women Bottom row **in bold** represents all non-white women

1981 WES	Prof/ Teach	Nursing	Inter-med	Clerical	Shop	Manual	No.
Prof/	85	2	7	4	1	1	2820
Teach	86	3	5	3	-	2	59
Nurse	3	83	5	5	2	2	2710
	1	90	2	3	2	2	225
Inter-	8	5	54	19	7	5	3178
med	4	10	54	15	6	12	82
Clerical	3	2	19	67	5	4	12919
	4	4	18	67	4	4	341
Shop	2	5	15	20	49	11	3216
	2	6	16	22	43	10	49
Manual	2	7	10	19	12	50	8654
	1	4	11	5	5	74	483

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Further analysis sheds some light on the processes under-lying this difference (see table 7a & 7b file). Women in manual jobs in 1981 and working full-time at both 1981 and 1991 are more likely to remain in manual work than women who have some experience of part-time work. However, there is variation by ethnic group such that 65 per cent of White women, 68 per cent of Black women and 80 per cent of Indian women who worked full-time in 1981 and 1991

remained in manual jobs. (Most of the Indian women are in semi-skilled factory work). This difference is exaggerated by the fact that a higher percentage of minority ethnic than White women remain in full-time work. It is clear that, irrespective of ethnic group, a full-time profile does not lead to upward mobility for women in manual work - whether measured using the Cambridge scores or the WES classification. This probably reflects the lack of promotion prospects in most manual jobs held by women and, in particular for Indian women doing factory work. This analysis illustrates the important differences in the construction of full-time jobs across ethnic groups. The 'White' model, which identifies full-time employment as a career-oriented route, is derived from higher-status non-manual experience and does not apply to many ethnic minority women located in manual jobs and with very different reasons for working full-time.

Table 7a:

White women in employment in 1981 and 1991: percentage remaining in same occupation, 1981-91//moving up

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	% in same occupation in 1991 % in higher occupation in 1991										
1981 Occ.	ft-ft ch no ch.		pt-ft ch no ch.		ft-pt ch. no	ft-pt ch. no ch.		ю сh.			
Prof/ teach up	91 -	87 -	82 -	84 -	81 -	74 -	69 -	81 -			
Nurse	79	83	76	81	83	81	86	88			
up	5	4	12	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	4	-	1			
Inter	63	65	48	50	34	28	32	30			
<i>up</i>	22	10	<i>30</i>	14	15	8	38	24			
Cler	60	67	37	66	66	71	60	78			
up	34	5	51	29	14	14	20	11			
Shop	20	33	10	28	61	63	44	72			
up	60	<i>34</i>	62	58	<i>30</i>	26	<i>43</i>	22			
Skill	56	53	43	43	35	43	41	54			
up	38	31	36	45	54	46	<i>47</i>	39			
Semi/ Unsk	36	43	9	21	20	22	9	16			
up N.	<i>04</i> 2104	<i>37</i> 14175	91 300	79 5190	<i>80</i> 3290	2003	<i>91</i> 646	84 · 5590			

@Crown Copyright, ONS Longitudinal Study All women aged 16-50 in 1981, in employment in 1981 and 1991 with valid occupational information in both years

Table 7b:

Minority ethnic women in employment in 1981 and 1991: percentage remaining in same occupation, 1981-91/ /moving up

% in same occupation in 1991 % in higher occupation in 1991

	ft-ft	
	ch	no ch
Prof/teach	-	85
un	_	05
T	-	-
Nurse	78	01
110	70	91
ир	4	2
Intermed	50	
memed	50	56
up	15	16
Classian I		
Clerical	63	72
up	32	22
~		
Shop	*	*
	*	*
Skilled	*	49
ир	*	22
*		22
Semi/Uskill	55	64
1/n	JJ 45	04
up	43	30
N	225	
1 4	225	666

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* base less than 20

These exploratory analyses have been formalised using an ordinary least squares regression model with women's Cambridge score in 1991 as the response variable, conditional on her 1981 score. The other explanatory variables fitted in the model are: number of children born 1981-1991, level of highest qualification in 1981, manual or non-manual occupation in 1981 and ethnic group. The results of both the main effects model and that fitted with an interaction between occupation and ethnic group are shown in Table 8. Taking the main effects model first, children, occupation and qualifications all have the expected effect on the 1991 score: children have a negative effect whilst higher qualifications and being in a non-manual occupation have a positive impact on Cambridge Score. There is a slight ethnic penalty for both Black and Indian women, though Pakistani and Bangladeshi women appear to do better than their White counterparts, reflecting the selection bias in the sample used for analysis. However, when an interaction between occupation and ethnic group is added, with White manual women as the reference group, Black and Indian non-manual women improve their position to the extent that they lose their 'ethnic' penalty - that is they do as well as White women - while manual Black and Indian women do less well than manual White women. This confirms the tabular analysis reported above and, again, highlights the different effect of full-time work in the occupational attainment of White and minority ethnic women.

OLS model of women's Cambridge score in 1991, conditional on cambridge Table 8: score in 1991

R-squared = 0.52

Explanatory variable	Parameter estimate	Standard error	Prob >F					
Intercept	13.3	0.15	0.0001					
Cambridge score 1981	0.62	0.01	0.0001					
Child born 1981-1991: Base no child born								
One child	-0.61	0.2	0.0021					
Two Children	-2.81	0.22	0.0001					
Three or more children	-4.56	0.50	0.0001					
Level of highest qualificati	on: Base no higher qual							
Below degree	5.87	0.24	0.0001					
Degree and over	10.79	0.30	0.0001					
Manual/no manual occupat	ion: Base manual							
Non-manual	1.81	0.19	0.0001					
Ethnic group: Base white								
Black	-0.58	0.54	0.28					
Indian	-1.03	0.55	0.06					
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	4.44	1.8	0.015					
Chinese & Other Asian	0.55	1.09	0.61					
UK-bom: Base UK-bom								
Non UK-born	-0.72	0.29	0.015					
Interaction between non-man	nual and ethnic group							
Intercept	13.28	0.15	0.0001					
Non-manual	1.81	0.19	0.0001					
Ethnic group: Base White								
Black	-1.69	0.81	0.037					
Indian	-2.42	0.72	0.008					
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	2.44	2.54	0.33					
Chinese	-1.63	1.09	0.39					
Black/ non-manual	1.83	1.01	0.07					
Indian/ non-manual	2.91	0.96	0.002					
Pakis & Bang/non-manual	3.99	3.6	0.27					
Chinese/non-manual	3.15	2.28	0.17					

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Conclusions

We have sought to test some of the explanations offered for ethnic differences in women's employment against cross-sectional and longitudinal data from the British census. Ethnic groups in Britain are operating in the same legislative and policy context and so we are able to assess differences in responses to family responsibilities and partnership status having, in effect, controlled for the policy context.

It is evident that simplistic, monocausal explanations of ethnic differences in women's employment based either on cultural differences or economic necessity are inadequate. The low economic activity level of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women may suggest that cultural factors are playing an important role but we have seen that those women with higher educational qualifications are much more likely to be economically active than those without. Thus cultural factors alone are not preeminent. It is likely that other factors unmeasured here - such the opportunities offered in the local labour market, timing of immigration and language ability may also be powerful influences on economic activity. Generally, the economic activity of minority ethnic women, and in particular Black Caribbean and Black Africans, is much less responsive to partner's employment status than is the case for White women. In part this suggests a greater degree of economic independence amongst these groups, but also highlights the way in which part-time working amongst White women is strongly associated with having an employed partner. We have shown that, historically, part-time jobs were constructed for White women. There is evidence that employers may, still, make part-time jobs preferentially available to White women (CRE, 1991) and that full-time employment may, in some cases, be the result of discrimination rather than choice.

Evidence from linked Census data for 1981-1991 suggests that the role of full-time employment in promoting occupational attainment varies between the non-manual and manual sectors of the labour market and between ethnic groups. Whilst in the non-manual sector full-time employment

at both 1981 and 1991 was associated with retaining or improving occupational status for White and minority ethnic groups, this was not the case in the manual sector. Women in manual jobs in 1981 did not benefit from a full-time profile and, for Indian women in particular, there was evidence that they were trapped in semi-skilled factory work. It appears that, whilst retaining fulltime employment, particularly during family formation, is beneficial for minority ethnic women in the non-manual sector of the labour market, this does not hold for the manual sector. This doubly disadvantages minority ethnic women because they are more likely than White women to retain a full-time profile, but also more likely to be in manual jobs. Retaining a full-time employment profile cannot be seen as a career-orientated strategy for minority ethnic women, as, unlike for the White group, it shows no relationship to higher level occupations (Dale and Holdsworth, 1996).

These analyses raise a number of further research questions. First, there is a need for a greater understanding of the processes that influence women's employment choices. We need to identify the childcare facilities available to women from all ethnic backgrounds and the extent to which child-care provision influences economic activity and hours worked. However, we also need to examine the way in which local labour markets and employer practices interact with cultural norms to influence women's economic activity. These questions should be directed at White and minority ethnic groups, rather than explaining the deviance of ethnic minority women's employment patterns from the 'White' norm. Secondly, we need to examine long-term occupational mobility among minority ethnic women in low status, manual work.

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Notes:

1. A significant proportion of the adult Black-Other population are Black-British of Caribbean descent. Evidence from the ONS Longitudinal Study demonstrates that 79 per cent of the Black-Other population aged 20 and over in 1991 and present in the LS in 1971, were coded as West Indian in the 1971 Census (Dale and Holdsworth, 1997).

2. Non-partnered women are defined as living outside of a family unit.

3. Chinese women who are single and under 35 have the same level of unemployment as White women - 12 per cent.

4. The exceptions are Black African and Pakistani/ Bangladeshi women with a partner and youngest child 5-9.

5. A distinction has been made between working and not working, rather than economically active or not so that, when the first partition is weighted out of the analysis, it allows a contrast between and full and part-time working.

6. The schema was devised to contain members who are comparable 'in terms of their sources and levels of income and other conditions of employment, in their degree of economic security

and in their chances of economic advancement; and, on the other hand, in their location within the systems of authority and control governing the processes of production in which they are engaged' (Goldthorpe, 1987).

The recoding of the Goldthorpe schema is as follows:

	Original schema		Model
1.0	Higher Service		Higher Service
2.0	Lower service		Lower service
3.1.	Routine non-manual		
3.2.	Personal service		Routine non-manual & personal service
4.1	Small proprietor w employees)	Small proprietor with/w.out employees &
4.2	Small proprietor w.out employees	}	farmers
4.3	Farmers		
5.0	Lower technical & foremen)	Lower technical, foremen and
6.0	Skilled manual	}	skilled manual
7.1	Semi skilled and unskilled		Semi skilled, unskilled and
7.2	Agricultural workers		agricultural workers

7. Figure 1 shows a lower level of economic activity for Pakistani and Bangladeshi than for White women because the graphs do not control for educational qualifications)

8. The Working Lives Survey, conducted by the Department for Education and Employment, will provide work-histories for ethnic minorities but this was not available for academic analysis at the time of writing.

9. Some occupational information is collected at birth registration, but for women this was only recorded from 1986 and is, in any case, subject to reporting difficulties.

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Appendix 1: Characteristics of women in sample: all women aged 16-50 in 1981, who are not full-time students:

Ethnic Group	%	Number
White	95.5	91037
Black	1.3	1220
Indian	2.0	1925
Pakistani & Bangladeshi	0.8	755
Chinese & Other Asian	0.4	361
Level of highest qualification	%	Number
No higher qual	88.9	84676
Below degree level qual	7.3	6912
Degree and over	3.9	3710
Employment status in 1981	%	Number
Working	61.0	58101
Not working	39.0	37197
Number of children born 1981- 1991	%	Number
No children	73.0	69589
One child	14.3	13669
Two children	9.7	9289
Three or more children	2.9	2751

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