

Trends in ethnic intermarriage in the UK

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The Understanding Society People and Places mini conference

5 April 2022

Ethnic intermarriage in the UK

- ▶ Important measure of social distance between ethnic groups
- ▶ Little research on intermarriage in the UK (Muttarak and Heath 2010; Kulu and Hanneman 2019)
- ▶ South Asian groups are very endogamous, with more intermarriage with the White British among Black groups
- ▶ No studies specifically addressing trends in ethnic intermarriage

The UKHLS data on intermarriage

- ▶ Wave 1 (2009-11) and Wave 6 (2014-16) for the IEMS: marital history data (all marriages and cohabitations)
- ▶ But ethnicity of partners available only for members of the UKHLS sample
- ▶ Kulu and Hanneman (2019) use data from wave 1 and impute ethnicity for the earlier period, but this is a dangerous strategy for the study of trends as it assumes the same correlational structure across the periods
- ▶ For waves 2 to 11 I identify all new couples in the household roster

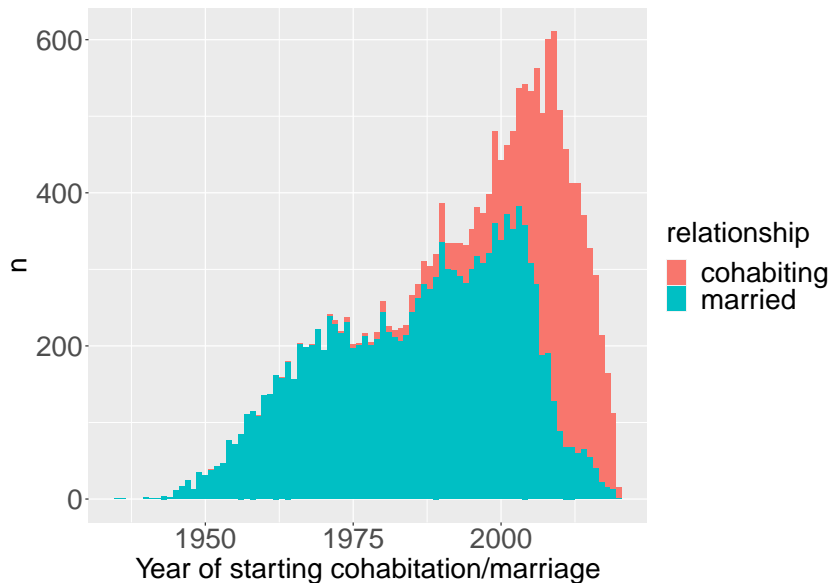
Analytic approach

- ▶ I do not impute ethnicity
- ▶ I include both married and cohabiting couples
- ▶ I use year when cohabitation started (both for cohabiting and married couples)
- ▶ I exclude first generation immigrant couples (include only couples where at least one person was born in the UK or came to the UK before age 15)
- ▶ Only include the couples that started cohabiting after 1989

Coding of ethnicity in the UKHLS

- ▶ Self-ascribed (“What is your ethnic group?”)
- ▶ British / English / Scottish / Welsh / Northern Irish
- ▶ Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, White and Asian (combined into South Asian)
- ▶ African, Caribbean, Any other Black background, White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African (combined into Black)
- ▶ In some cases ethnicity is not self-ascribed, but imputed (from proxy interviews, parental ethnicity)

Distribution of marriages and cohabitations in the data



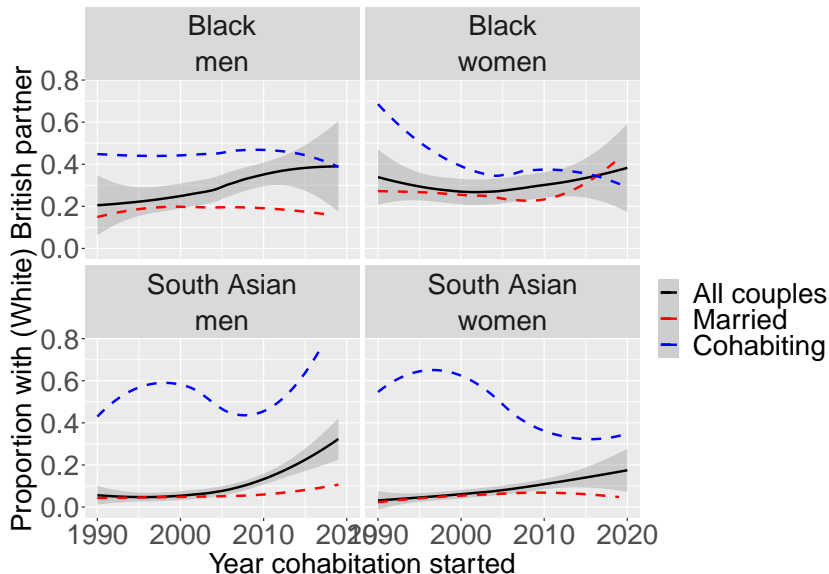
Black / (White) British intermarriage (since 1989)

```
## # A tibble: 4 x 3
## # Groups:   female_ethn_dv2 [2]
##   female_ethn_dv2 male_ethn_dv2     n
##   <fct>           <fct>         <int>
## 1 British         British        8094
## 2 British         Black           147
## 3 Black           British        138
## 4 Black           Black           274
```

South Asian / (White) British intermarriage

```
## # A tibble: 4 x 3
## # Groups:   female_ethn_dv2 [2]
##   female_ethn_dv2 male_ethn_dv2     n
##   <fct>           <fct>         <int>
## 1 British         British         8094
## 2 British         South Asian     95
## 3 South Asian     British         86
## 4 South Asian     South Asian    1030
```

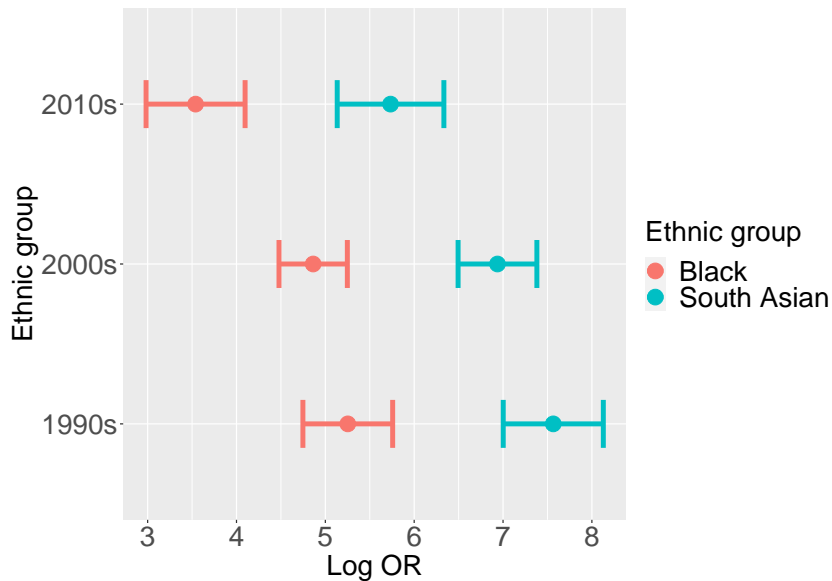

Proportion with British partner by year of starting cohabitation



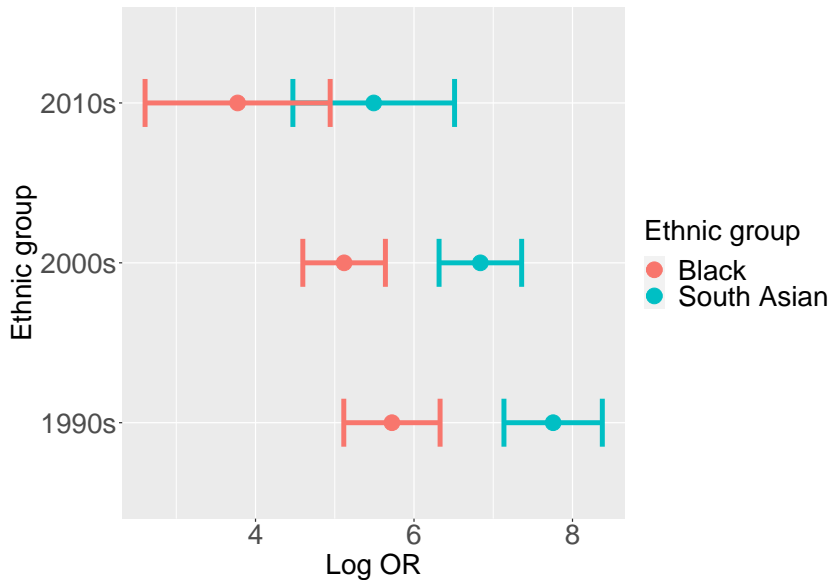
Odds ratios

- ▶ The proportions of intermarried couples may be a misleading measure since the relative size of ethnic group has been changing
- ▶ To account for this, the literature on ethnic intermarriage often uses the odds ratio as a measure of trends in endogamy

Odds ratios for endogamy across three decades



Odds ratios for endogamy across three decades (marriages only)



Limitations and sources of bias

- ▶ No weighting: it is not clear how to weight these data. Ethnic minorities were oversampled in the ethnic minority concentrations areas
- ▶ Coding of ethnicity: self-ascribed ethnicity and mixed groups
- ▶ Differential survival of marriages and in particular cohabitations before 2009: we only observe the ones that survived. The problem of retrospective data
- ▶ Small sample size
- ▶ Repeated cross-sections from the Annual Population Survey would be better for this task

Conclusion

- ▶ Although the proportion of intermarried couples remains stable both for South Asian and Black ethnic groups, the relative chances of intermarrying have been increasing in the 2000s and 2010s