

Participation in civil society organizations and ethnic minorities' inter-ethnic friendships in Britain

Abstract

In Britain, civil society organizations (CSOs) have garnered much praise for promoting inter-ethnic friendships (IEF) and strengthening community cohesion. Yet there is very little empirical evidence to suggest that participation in CSOs promotes ethnic minorities' IEF. Using nationally representative longitudinal (2011-2019) and cross-sectional (2010) data, this article explores the association between participation in CSOs and IEF formation among five British ethnic minority groups and analyses how this relationship is affected by the ethnic composition of CSOs. Overall, fixed effects models show that participation in CSOs only significantly promotes IEF for Indians. For other minority groups it has either no effect or, in the case of Pakistanis, significantly decreases IEF. Further analyses show that compared with ethnic minorities that do not participate in any CSOs, those who participate in mostly inter-ethnic CSOs tend to have significantly more IEF, whereas those who participate in mostly co-ethnic CSOs tend to have significantly less IEF. Taken together, these findings suggest that the association between civic participation and ethnic minorities' IEF is much more nuanced than previously thought and policy interventions seeking to improve ethnic integration should therefore take the ethnic background of participants and the ethnic composition of CSOs into account.

Keywords: civic participation, ethnic minorities, inter-ethnic friendships (IEF), civic organizations, immigrants, social integration.

Introduction

In the post-war period, the arrival and settlement in Britain of several million immigrants from British ex-colonies have triggered heated debates on the state of ‘race relations’ in the country. Opponents of immigration have repeatedly warned that migrants from Britain’s ex-colonies in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean would fail to integrate in British society and threaten the fabric of British communities across the country (Favell 2001). Concerns about inter-ethnic relations, community cohesion, and ethnic minority integration continue to this day. Since 2000, a series of urban disturbances and terror attacks involving ethnic minority youths have stimulated extensive debates about whether Britain’s multiculturalist policy framework has encouraged immigrants and their children to become segregated from the rest of society (Prime Minister’s Office 2011; The Casey Review 2016; Finney and Simpson 2009; Phillips 2010).

In this context, the perceived tendency of some minority groups to develop ethnically homogenous social networks has become a topic of considerable controversy. According to Muttarak (2014), around 44% of ethnic minorities in Britain have only co-ethnic friends. It is commonly argued that the possession of exclusively co-ethnic friendship networks may impede ethnic minorities’ life chances in a wide arrange of socioeconomic domains, and intensify hostility between some minority groups and mainstream society (Heath and Demireva 2014; Muttarak 2014). By contrast, out-group or inter-ethnic friendships (IEF), especially with host society members, are thought to facilitate ethnic minority integration by providing access to economic and cultural resources of people located outside their co-ethnic networks (Windzio 2012; Li 2004), reducing ethnic prejudice in society, strengthening pro-diversity attitudes (Hargreaves et al. 2020), and improving social cohesion in local communities (Sturgis et al. 2014; Gorny and Torunczyk-Ruiz 2013). Moreover, IEF with politically active members of the

host society have been found to improve the representation of ethnic immigrants' concerns in political institutions (Kokkonen and Karlsson 2017).

Recognizing the importance of IEF and interethnic contact more generally, a recent report of the British All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration (APPG) recommended that '[l]ocal authorities should proactively consider how they might support the growth of *civic and community institutions* which promote cross-community contact' (APPG 2017: 52, emphasis added). The report explicitly grounds this recommendation on the findings of the *intergroup contact* literature, which convincingly show that contact between members of different social groups in favourably structured settings tends to weaken intergroup prejudices and improve people's attitudes towards social out-groups (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Allport 1979 [1954]). The problem with the intergroup contact literature is its narrow focus on intergroup attitudes, rather than intergroup relationships (see, Dixon, Durrheim and Tredoux 2005). A favourable change in one's attitudes towards ethnic outgroups does not usually equate with new friendships. Besides, most CSOs with mixed-ethnic memberships cannot guarantee that interactions embedded within them will be mostly inter-ethnic.

In fact, one of the most consistent findings of the social network literature is that individuals in most social settings tend to interact with people who are similar to them in key sociodemographic dimensions - and will generally prefer to establish relationships with them rather than with dissimilar others (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2001; Skvoretz 2013). The impact of this 'homophily principle' tends to be stronger for more intense relationship categories, such as close friendships and intimate partnerships (Windzio and Bicer 2013; Blackwell and Lichter 2004; Windzio 2018). This suggests that CSO participation may *not* actually facilitate IEF between ethnic minority participants in CSOs. The contrasting theoretical expectations from CSO participation need to be tested using rigorous empirical

methods.

So far, only a small number of empirical studies have examined the relationship between participation in CSOs and ethnic minorities' IEF. Although they find that ethnic minorities who participate in CSOs tend to have more IEF than those who do not participate (Martinovic, Van Tubergen and Maas 2011; Laurence 2011; Muttarak 2014), these studies have several important limitations. First and foremost, they rely on cross-sectional data and thus only examine the snapshot association between IEF and civic participation. Although Martinovic, Van Tubergen and Maas (2011) study of immigrants in Canada explores how CSO participation six months after immigration relates to increases in ethnic minority immigrants' IEF ties two and four years later, the data and analytical method used are not fully longitudinal. The authors only measure CSO participation at one point in time, making it unclear whether subsequent increases in IEF are truly driven by previous civic participation or rather by the confounding effects of time-varying omitted variables.

Another important limitation of previous studies is that they only examine how participation in CSOs affects ethnic minorities *as a whole*. In actuality, well-documented socioeconomic and cultural differences between British ethnic minority groups (Heath et al. 2013; Zuccotti 2015) may very well mean that the relationships between CSO participation and IEF differ depending on participants' ethnic group memberships.

Furthermore, it is highly likely that IEF formed by ethnic minorities in a given CSO will also depend on the internal ethnic composition of the CSO's membership, as this will ultimately determine opportunities for inter-ethnic contact (see, Smith-Lovin and McPherson 1987; Smith, Maas, and van Tubergen 2014). After all, IEF cannot form in ethnically homogeneous CSOs. To our knowledge, the only study to test this relationship empirically is the aforementioned study by Martinovic, Van Tubergen and Maas (2011). Its authors find that immigrants who

joined CSOs with ‘mainly co-ethnic’ memberships acquired fewer IEF over time compared to immigrants who joined CSOs whose participants mostly belonged to other ethnic groups. Unfortunately, this study’s only looks at ethnic minorities born abroad and does not distinguish between different ethnic groups.

Building on this prior literature and its limitations, the present article uses two complementary studies to investigate the relationship between CSO participation and IEF formation in a more fine-grained and robust fashion. Study 1 uses longitudinal data analysed via fixed-effects models to investigate how participation in CSOs affects IEF among five different ethnic minority groups in Britain: ethnic Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Black-Caribbeans and Black-Africans. Meanwhile, study 2 is a *complementary study* (Mark 2015) that specifically examines the relationship between inter-ethnic contact opportunities within CSOs and ethnic minority participants’ IEF. It draws on a separate, cross-sectional dataset comprising a comparable ethnic minority sample, which is analysed using linear and logistic regression models.

The reason we conduct a separate study to investigate the effect of inter-ethnic contact opportunities is that the longitudinal dataset used in study 1 unfortunately does not contain information that allows us to include this variable in the fixed-effects analysis. Given the significant role of inter-ethnic contact opportunities in previous studies of structured tie formation, we reasoned that testing the effects of contact opportunities on IEF using a separate study is preferable to ignoring this variable altogether. We are mindful that doing so using a cross-sectional regression design implies that findings are potentially more vulnerable to endogenous selection bias (Elwert and Winship 2014). To reduce this risk, we introduce a range of relevant control variables into the regression models of study 2.

Even so, we recognize that the second study’s cross-sectional design and dissimilar

respondent sample place limits on our ability to draw robust inferences regarding the effect of CSOs' ethnic compositions on ethnic minorities' IEF. This is why we interpret study 2 in close complementarity with the findings of study 1, rather than treating it as a stand-alone investigation. Ultimately, the primary function of study 2 is to facilitate a more nuanced and comprehensive interpretation of the findings of study 1. This complementary, two-study approach helps us make maximal use of currently available UK survey data on civic participation and IEF, allowing us to investigate a wider range of potential determinants of IEF.

Overall, this article contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, by using panel data and fixed effects models, it provides a more rigorous empirical analysis of the relationship between CSO participation and ethnic minorities' IEF. Second, the article sheds lights on the impact of participant ethnicity on IEF formation within CSOs. Third and finally, it facilitates a more nuanced understanding of how a CSO's ethnic composition affects its participants' IEF ties.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

In the rest of this section, we draw on intergroup contact theory and the social network literature to develop a series of hypotheses on the relationship between participation in CSOs and ethnic minorities' IEF. We theorize friendship tie formation as a dyadic two-step process, consisting of two people (i) coming into contact and (ii) choosing to establish a friendship relationship. Following Verbrugge (1977), we call the processes underpinning each step 'meeting' and 'mating', respectively. The meeting process incorporates the events and mechanisms responsible for bringing people into interactional contact with each other. Mating, in turn, is the process responsible for transforming interactions within contact episodes into long-lasting relationships.

Our ensuing theoretical discussion of the link between CSO participation and ethnic minorities' IEF considers the joint impacts of ethnicity, ethnic homophily and intergroup contact on the meeting and mating processes taking place within CSOs. We organize our hypothesis around three distinct social-theoretical principles that we think would influence the relationship between participation in CSOs and IEF formation. These are intergroup contact, ethnic homophily, and contact opportunities.

Intergroup contact

As discussed previously, the intergroup contact hypothesis posits that under appropriate conditions, experiences of contact with people from different social groups will reduce individuals' prejudice and hostility, and foster positive attitudes toward out-groups (Pettigrew 1998; for a critical review of this literature, see Dixon, Durrheim, and Tredoux 2005). The optimal intergroup contact situation is one where participants (i) enjoy equality of status, (ii) engage in cooperative communication, (iii) collaborate towards shared goals, and (iv) have their interactions sanctioned by higher authorities such as law, custom or other authoritative institutions.

CSOs tend to be organized around informal cooperative activities that provide participants with opportunities to engage in open and friendly interactions that often involve working together on a shared task (Small 2009). This accords with the conditions set out in intergroup contact literature. We therefore expect participants in cross-ethnic CSOs¹ – that is, CSOs

¹ For simplicity, the term “CSOs” will be used throughout this paper to mean *cross-ethnic* CSOs. As explained in the Methods section, we exclude from the analytical sample ethnic minorities who only participated in religious and/or ethnic community CSOs, as these types of organizations are often (although not always - see, Sobolewska et al. 2015) ethnically homogeneous and/or provide few opportunities for meaningful inter-ethnic interactions as set out in the intergroup contact literature.

offering opportunities for inter-ethnic interactions - to develop more positive attitudes towards ethnic out-groups and, consequently, form new IEF. Basing ourselves on the intergroup contact hypothesis, we formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1a: Participation in CSOs significantly increases the share of IEF in ethnic minorities' friendship networks.

Ethnic homophily

One could alternatively argue that IEF formation within CSOs requires more than just positive attitudes towards other participants. After all, friendships involve high levels of mutual trust and relational investment (Allan and Adams 2006; Fehr 1996). We draw on the principle of homophily to suggest that, by and large, participants in CSOs would prefer to make these investments in co-ethnic rather than inter-ethnic relationships – even if their attitudes towards other ethnic minorities in a CSO are positive.

The homophily principle posits that social ties are more likely to form between individuals who are similar to each other in key dimensions, such as gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2001). Homophily in social networks can occur because similar people gravitate towards similar social milieus and organizations, where they are more likely to interact and form ties with each other (Feld and Grofman 2009). This discussion, however, focuses on a second variant of homophily – choice homophily - which is driven by individuals' psychological predisposition to prefer associating with similar others within a social setting (Smith-Lovin and McPherson 1987).

Ethnicity is an important dimension of choice homophily, structuring people's friendship choices in a variety of social settings, including schools (Leszczensky and Pink 2015; Goodreau, Kitts and Morris 2009; Schaefer et al. 2011), universities (Kossinets and Watts 2009),

workplaces (Kleinbaum, Stuart and Tushman 2013), and social functions (Ingram and Morris 2007), among others. Shared ethnicity signals to individuals that they are likely to share common experiences, interests and values, making each other appear more attractive and worthy of the costly relational investments associated with friendship (Lazarsfeld and Merton 1954; Gans 1961; Huston and Levinger 1978).

In CSOs, choice homophily would produce a biased mating process among participants, suggesting a counter-hypothesis to the one previously stated:

Hypothesis 1b: Participation in CSOs is not associated with, or even decreases, the share of IEF in ethnic minorities' friendship networks.

Contact opportunities

This perspective argues that IEF ties formed by CSO participants are relatively unaffected by their homophilous friendship preferences; instead what matters are the inter-ethnic contact opportunities available to them within their specific CSOs. This line of argument is based on Blau's (1977: 52) macrosocial theory of social structure, which posits that the probability of intergroup relations decreases the bigger the size of any one social group within a given social 'substructure'. Thus, for present purposes, the bigger one's ethnic group within a CSO, the more likely one is to engage in co-ethnic interactions and form co-ethnic friendships. Participants in CSOs in which most co-participants belong to different ethnic groups ('mostly inter-ethnic CSOs') will more likely form new inter-ethnic, rather than co-ethnic, friendships.

This prediction is consistent with multiple studies linking smaller ethnic group sizes to lower shares of IEF in educational institutions (Joyner and Kao 2000; Fischer 2008; Smith et al. 2016), workplaces (Kokkonen, Esaiasson and Gilljam 2015), and residential neighbourhoods (Schlueter 2012). It also aligns with the study by Martinovic, van Tubergen and Maas (2011)

discussed in the previous section, which found that IEF only increased among immigrants who joined mostly inter-ethnic CSOs. Thus, we advance the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2a: Participation in mostly inter-ethnic CSOs increases the share of IEF in ethnic minorities' friendship networks.

By the same logic, we would also expect contact opportunities to affect friendship formation in the opposite direction: Participants in CSOs with mostly co-ethnic memberships ('mostly co-ethnic CSOs') would likely engage in more co-ethnic than inter-ethnic interactions and subsequently develop more co-ethnic than inter-ethnic friendship ties:

Hypothesis 2b: Participation in mostly co-ethnic CSOs decreases the share of IEF in ethnic minorities' friendship networks.

Ethnic differences

The theoretical framework and hypotheses formulated thus far assume that the mechanisms mediating the relationships between CSO participation and IEF formation operate in the same way among all ethnic minority participants. However, there are good reasons to expect choice homophily to exert a greater force on the friendship choices of ethnic Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants than those of other ethnic minority participants, including ethnic Indians, Black Caribbeans and Black Africans. If so, we should expect that ethnic Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants will respond differently to inter-ethnic exposure within CSOs, when compared to the other minority groups investigated in this article.

The literature identifies two significant group features that reinforce individuals' ethnically homophilous attraction to members of their ethnic group. The first is the normative sanctioning of co-ethnic relationships by individuals' parents and wider ethnic community networks. Multiple quantitative and qualitative studies focusing on ethnic minority attitudes to

inter-ethnic mixing have found that preferences for co-ethnic friendships are stronger among individuals whose parents and ethnic communities emphasize the importance of the intergenerational transmission of traditional ethnocultural values and identity – with particular emphasis on ethnic endogamy and religious identity (Carol 2014; Maliepaard and Lubbers 2013; Kecskes 2003; Reinders 2004; Nauck 2001; Munniksma et al. 2012).

The second group feature reinforcing homophilous friendship choices is racialized group status (see, Gans 2017). Research on racialized ethnic minority groups has shown that experiences of discrimination and group marginalization often impels racialized group members to develop militant ethnic identities and ethnically homophilous friendship networks as a matter of personal resilience and group solidarity (Reynolds 2007; Portes and Rivas 2011; Tatum 1997). On top of that, racialization also discourages members of other ethnic groups from seeking close relationships with racialized group members (see for example, Barwick 2017; Leszczensky and Pink 2017; Wimmer 2008b). The outcome of both processes is that racialized and harshly stigmatized ethnic groups develop overwhelmingly co-ethnic tie networks – both by choice and through social exclusion.

With these considerations in mind, we expect Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities to have a stronger preference for co-ethnic friendships in CSOs compared to members of Indian, Black Caribbean and Black African ethnic groups - for several reasons. First, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have stronger religious identification and attachments to traditional ethnocultural values and norms compared to Britain's other major ethnic minority groups (Heath et al. 2013; Modood et al. 1997; Beishon, Modood and Virdee 1998; Goodwin, Christakopoulou and Panagiotidou 2006). Second, Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities in Britain have arguably experienced more discrimination and racialization in recent decades than other British minority groups - mostly due to heightened public prejudice against Muslims in the wake of the 9/11

terrorist attacks and Britain's subsequent involvement in the so-called 'war on terror' (Khan 2006; Field 2007; Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2015).

Of course, the processes described above do not only apply to ethnic Pakistanis and Bangladeshi minorities. Ethnic Indians can also exhibit a strong attachment to ethnocultural norms (Modood et al. 1997). Likewise, Black Caribbeans and Black Africans are also racialized minorities in Britain (Reynolds 2007) – unlike ethnic Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, however, they are significantly less committed to traditional ethnic group norms and relationships: Black Caribbeans and Black Africans express more positive views about inter-ethnic mixing and exogamy, are more likely to intermarry and have inter-ethnic friends, and live in more ethnically mixed neighbourhoods (Harris, Johnston and Manley 2017; Heath et al. 2013). At any rate, the reason we focus on ethnic Pakistanis and Bangladeshis is the conjunction and stronger salience of both features – ethnocultural attachment and racialized ethnic (or ethnoreligious) group status - in these groups. Indeed, some authors have suggested that the combination of heightened racialization and more traditional ethnocultural environments of ethnic Pakistanis and Bangladeshis lie at the root of these minorities' more ethnically segregated friendship networks and residential patterns as compared to other British ethnic minorities (Muttarak 2014; Heath et al. 2013: 31; Finney and Simpson 2009; Wang and Ramsden 2018).

For present purposes, however, the combined effect of these group features will likely be to (i) reinforce choice homophily and inter-ethnic avoidance behaviours (see, Skvoretz 2013) among Pakistani and Bangladeshi CSO participants, and (ii) discourage other participants from interacting with ethnic Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants. We would therefore expect Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants to be significantly less reactive than other ethnic minorities to inter-ethnic contact within CSOs. This means we can supplement each of the

previous two pairs of hypotheses with a third hypothesis concerning ethnic differences:

Hypothesis 1c: Participation in CSOs increases the share of IEF in ethnic minorities' friendship networks for all minority ethnic groups except ethnic Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

Hypothesis 2c: Participation in mostly inter-ethnic CSOs increases the share of IEF in ethnic minorities' friendship networks for all minority ethnic groups except ethnic Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

Study 1

The first study aims to facilitate a deeper understanding of the causal relationship between participation in CSOs and ethnic minorities' IEF by using a British longitudinal dataset analysed using fixed-effects models.

Method

Data and sample

The data used in this study come from the third (2011-2013), sixth (2014-2016) and ninth (2017-2019) wave of the United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS). All three waves contain consistent measures of respondents' civic participation and social network compositions, constituting a panel dataset. UKHLS comprises a stratified and clustered General Population Sample (GPS) of around 40,000 households as well as an Ethnic Minority Boost Sample (EMBS), which was designed to yield at least 1,000 respondents from Britain's five major ethnic minority groups: Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Black Caribbeans and Black Africans (Knies 2016). The average interview response rates in the three waves are 61% and 47% for the GPS and EMBS respectively (Knies 2016). In order to adjust for unequal non-response

rates, selection probabilities and potential attrition, appropriate weights provided by UKHLS were added to the analysis. To construct the analytical sample, we first excluded White British respondents, since they are not the focus of this investigation, alongside ethnic minority groups with very small sample sizes. After additionally dropping a small number of cases with missing values (5 per cent), the final sample used in this study contained 16,597 respondent-wave observations, including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African and Black Caribbean respondents living in the UK from 2011 to 2019.

Measures

Dependent variable

The dependent variable is inter-ethnic friendships (IEF). The questionnaire asked respondents about the proportion of their friends who are from the same ethnic group, and provided four ordinal options: ‘all the same’ (1), ‘more than half’ (2), ‘about half’ (3) and ‘less than half’ (4). For the purpose of consistency and comparability with previous studies (Muttarak 2014), we recoded ‘all the same’ response as 0 (i.e. respondent has no IEF) and other categories as 1 (i.e. respondent has IEF).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is measured by self-identified ethnic classification. Specifically, the questionnaire asked respondents to select from a list of 18 ethnic categories to which they think they belong (for more details, see understandingsociety.ac.uk). Using this approach, five ethnic minority groups (i.e. Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, black Caribbeans and black Africans) were identified and selected, reflecting Britain’s largest and most established ethnic minority groups (Office for National Statistics 2015).

Civic participation

Civic participation is our principal independent variable. The questionnaire asked respondents whether they joined the activities of any one of sixteen types of CSOs on a regular basis. Religious and ethnic community organizations were excluded from the analysis, as this article focuses on the impact of CSOs that would, at least in principle, cater to all ethnic groups equally. We first recoded civic participation simply as a binary variable where 0 indicates no participation in any organization, and 1 means participation in at least one organization.

In robustness checks, we further distinguished between participation in one organization and participation in two or more organizations to measure the effect of higher civic participation intensity. We also conducted a robustness check using *membership* (instead of participation) in a civic organization as the independent variable, so as to distinguish between passive and active civic participation. Finally, because religious organizations in Britain sometimes have ethnically heterogeneous memberships (Sobolewska et al. 2015), we included these organizations in the civic participation variable in a third robustness analysis. Reassuringly, we found that our results are robust to this alternative variable specification.

Other control variables

As a range of demographic and socio-economic features are also related to ethnic minorities' IEF (Muttarak 2014; Martinovic, Van Tubergen and Maas 2011), the analysis controlled for these variables. These include respondents' age (grand mean centred), age squared and partnership coded as a binary variable indicating whether respondents have a partner. Employment and occupational status have four categories: 'no work', 'lower occupations', 'intermediate occupations' and 'higher occupations'. Logged equivalized household income

takes into account the number of people in the household. For more details about the distribution of each variable, see Table A1 in Online Supplementary Material. It is important to note that as we use panel data and fixed effects models, we are only able to control for time-varying variables. All time-constant variables such as gender, family backgrounds are automatically controlled for in the models (for more details, see analytical strategy section). Further analysis showed that for all independent variables Variance Inflation Factor is smaller than three, suggesting that there is no multicollinearity among these variables.

Analytical strategy

As we have a panel dataset and our dependent variable is binary, we used fixed effects (FE) logistic regression analysis with cluster robust standard error. FE models use only ‘within-individual’ variation and analyse how *changes* in civic participation are linked to *changes* in IEF within each individual over time. In this way, the FE regression eliminates all unobserved heterogeneity and confounding effects due to time-constant variables, enabling a more accurate estimate of the causal relationship between CSO participation and ethnic minorities’ IEF (Allison 2009). We fitted a separate model for the pooled ethnic minority sample as well as for each ethnic minority group independently, in order to explore whether CSO participation affects IEF differently for different ethnic minorities - all while controlling for demographic and socio-economic characteristics. We also conducted a number of robustness checks to confirm the validity of the results.

Results

Descriptive statistics (see Table A1 in Online Supplementary Material) shows that on average 87.77% of black Caribbeans and 83.21% of black Africans have IEF as opposed to 77.55% of

Indians, and only 71.12% Pakistanis and 67.44% Bangladeshis. In terms of civic participation or membership, we find that around 37-41% of Black Caribbeans and 31-39% of Black Africans are members or participate in CSOs, as opposed to 26-32% of Indians, 17-22% of Pakistanis and 17-22% of Bangladeshis. Taken together, these results suggest that Black Caribbeans and Black Africans are the most civically engaged groups with most IEF, followed by Indians, while Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are relatively less civically engaged and least likely to have IEF.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

Table 1 reports the odds ratios of six fixed-effects logistic regression models examining the effects of civic participation on ethnic minorities' IEF while controlling for a range of demographic and socioeconomic variables. Overall, we find that for ethnic minority participants as a whole, participation in civic organizations is not significantly associated with greater shares of IEF. The results lend support to hypothesis 1b rather than hypothesis 1a, suggesting that civic participation has no effect on ethnic minorities' IEF. However, considering we have no information on the precise ethnic compositions of participants' CSOs, we cannot rule out the possibility that IEF acquired by participants in mostly interethnic CSOs are counterbalanced by reductions in IEF among participants in mostly co-ethnic CSOs. This possibility is explicitly examined in Study 2.

In subsample analyses, we find that for Indians civic participation is significantly associated with more IEF, whereas for Pakistanis civic participation is significantly associated with reductions in IEF. For Bangladeshis, Black Caribbeans and Black Africans, civic participation does not significantly affect the share of IEF. While this pattern of results supports

our suggestion that the impact on IEF of civic participation varies by ethnic minority group, it does not fit into any one of the hypotheses concerning ethnic differences. Contrary to expectations, only Indians seem to obtain IEF following civic participation; all other ethnic minorities do not, with Pakistanis appearing to lose IEF following CSO participation.

Next, we conducted a number of robustness checks (see Online Supplementary Material). First, Table A2 explores the intensity of civic participation and shows that for Indians participation in two or more organizations is significantly associated with having IEF, with a slightly stronger effect than participation in only one organization. For other ethnic minority groups, participation in two or more organizations is not significantly associated with the presence of IEF. This may be due to relatively small sample sizes for ethnic minority groups who participate in more than one organization. Second, Table A3 shows that for ethnic minorities as a whole *membership* in civic organizations is not significantly associated with the presence of IEF and the effect size of the odds ratio is very small. The same pattern of results applies to all specific ethnic groups, suggesting that CSO membership alone does not affect ethnic minorities' IEF. Third, Table A4 includes religious organization in our measures of CSO membership and participation. The results remain very similar, suggesting that our model is robust to this alternative variable specification. Finally, Table A5 includes interaction terms of civic participation with gender and migration generation, and finds that the effects of civic organization membership/participation on IEF do not significantly vary across genders and generations.

Study 2

The second study complements the first study by exploring the role of ethnic composition within CSOs in shaping ethnic minorities' IEF using a nationally representative cross-sectional

dataset.

Method

Data and sample

The data used in the second study come from the Ethnic Minority British Election Survey (EMBES) 2010. EMBES provides a nationally representative sample of the major ethnic minority groups in Britain i.e. Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Black Caribbeans and Black Africans (Howat et al. 2011). The survey uses a clustered and stratified sampling strategy. Specifically, addresses were first screened for presence and density of ethnic minorities. Next, areas with high densities of ethnic minorities have higher probabilities to be sampled, whereas areas with low ethnic minority density are less likely to be sampled (Howat et al. 2011). The overall response rate is 60%. In order to adjust for the unequal selection probabilities, probability weights are used in all analyses. To construct the analytic sample, we first excluded ethnic minority groups with small sample sizes and only keep the major five ethnic minority groups. After excluding a small number of missing cases (1%), the final analytical sample contained 2,531 respondents. For further details about the data, see Howat et al. (2011).

Measures

Dependent variable

The dependent variable is inter-ethnic friendships (IEF). The questionnaire asked respondents about the proportion of their friends who are from the same ethnic group, and provided five ordinal options: ‘all the same’ (1), ‘most of them’ (2), ‘about half of them’ (3), ‘a few of them’ (4) and ‘none of them’ (5). As the measure and distribution of this variable are different from those in Study 1, we treat it as a continuous variable. Just in case, however, we also conducted

robustness checks where we recoded the variable into a binary variable (0 indicates ‘all the same’ or ‘most of them’, 1 indicates ‘about half of them’, ‘a few of them’ or ‘none of them’) and found that the results remain similar (see online supplement, Table A7).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is measured by self-identified ethnic categories to which they think they belong. Using this approach, five ethnic minority groups (i.e. Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Black Caribbeans and Black Africans) are identified and selected because they are the largest and most established minority groups in Britain.

Civic participation

The survey first asked respondents whether they participate in the following six types of organizations: sports club, hobby club, charity group, political or citizens group, children’s school group, other associations. As with study 1, participation in places of worship and ethnic organizations is excluded from the analysis of study 2 - these categories of participation are queried in a separate part of the questionnaire.

Inter-ethnic contact opportunities within CSOs

Next, respondents were asked about the proportion of members from the same ethnic group in each organization they participated in, with five options: ‘all the same’ (1), ‘most of them’ (2), ‘about half of them’ (3), ‘a few of them’ (4) and ‘none of them’ (5). As there are a small number of cases for categories of ‘all the same’ and ‘none of them’, we recoded this question into three categories: ‘mostly co-ethnic’ (all the same or most of them), ‘intermediate’ (about half of them) and ‘mostly inter-ethnic’ (a few of them or none of them). We therefore

constructed a variable for ethnic composition that includes the following categories: ‘no participation’ (1), ‘mostly co-ethnic (respondents who participated in mostly co-ethnic organisations only)’ (2), ‘intermediate and other mixed (including respondents who participated in intermediate, intermediate & mostly co-ethnic, intermediate & mostly inter-ethnic organizations)’ (3) and ‘mostly inter-ethnic (respondents who participated in mostly inter-ethnic organizations only)’ (4).

To ensure that the results are robust, we tried an alternative specification, combining ‘mostly co-ethnic’ organizations’ with ‘intermediate & mostly co-ethnic’ organizations, and ‘mostly inter-ethnic’ organizations’ with ‘intermediate & mostly inter-ethnic’ organizations. The recoded variable has the following categories: ‘no participation’ (1), ‘mostly co-ethnic or intermediate & mostly co-ethnic’ (2), ‘intermediate’ (3) and ‘mostly inter-ethnic or intermediate & mostly inter-ethnic’ (4). We excluded a small number of people who participated in both mostly co-ethnic and mostly inter-ethnic organizations due to difficulties of classification.

Other control variables

As a range of demographic and socio-economic features are also related to ethnic minorities’ IEF (Muttarak 2014; Martinovic, Van Tubergen and Maas 2011), we controlled for these variables. These include respondents’ age (grand mean centred), age squared, gender, migration generation, education levels (including three categories: ‘tertiary’, ‘secondary’ and ‘no qualification’) and whether they have suffered ethnic discrimination. We also included ethnicity of partner (including three categories: ‘no partner’, ‘co-ethnic partner’ and ‘inter-ethnic partner’), ethnicity of work colleagues (including three categories: ‘no work’, ‘co-ethnic work colleagues’ and ‘inter-ethnic work colleagues’) and proportion of co-ethnics in

local areas. The three variables can help us reduce self-selection effects of civic participation on IEF (i.e. people with more IEF are more likely to participate in CSOs). For more details on the distribution of each variable, see Table A6 in Online Supplementary Material.

Analytical strategy

This study first used Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models to analyze the role of ethnic composition in shaping the metrical measure of IEF and then used logistic regression models with a binary measure of IEF in robustness checks. We fitted models for both the pooled ethnic minority sample and for each ethnic minority group separately using two types of ethnic composition variables – while simultaneously controlling for a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

Results

Table 2 shows a number of OLS regression models investigating the relationship between ethnic composition in CSOs and ethnic minorities' IEF. In Models 1, we find that for ethnic minorities as a whole, those who participated in mostly co-ethnic organizations have a significantly smaller proportion of IEF compared to those that did not participate in CSOs, whereas those who participated in mostly inter-ethnic organizations have a significantly larger proportion of IEF in their friendship networks. Ethnic minorities who participated in organizations with an intermediate share of co-ethnics have a similar proportion of IEF compared with those who did not participate in any organizations. These results provide strong support for hypotheses 2a and 2b, highlighting the important role of ethnic composition within CSOs in ethnic minority participants' IEF.

[Insert Table 2 Here]

This pattern of results repeats itself for most ethnic minority groups considered independently – with two exceptions. One is Indians, for whom there is no decrease in the share of IEF among participants in mostly co-ethnic CSOs. The second exception is Bangladeshis. In the latter group, although the directions of the coefficients are similar to the ones in the pooled sample analysis, none of the coefficients reaches statistical significance. This is likely due to the small sample size of Bangladeshi respondents. In anticipation of this, we also included a pooled sample of Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents in the analysis shown in Table 2, since both ethnic minority groups were associated with the same country before 1971 and share many characteristics, including religion, labour market outcomes, gender role values, and more (Wang and Coulter 2019; Wang 2019). For the pooled Pakistani/Bangladeshi group, we find that the ethnic composition of CSOs affects IEF in the same way as for the other ethnic groups. Overall, with the partial exception of Indian participants in majority co-ethnic CSOs, our findings lend further support to hypotheses 2a and 2b, while failing to support hypothesis 2c, which expected participation in mostly inter-ethnic CSOs not to increase IEF among Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants. In Models 2, we repeated the same analyses while using a different variable to measure CSO ethnic composition and find that the results are generally consistent with those of Models 1.

We also test the robustness of our results by conducting two additional analyses. First, we repeat the main analysis while using a logistic regression model that uses a binary IEF variable (see Table A7 in Online Supplementary Material). Reassuringly, we find the results of this robustness test to be consistent with those of the main analysis, suggesting that our findings are robust to alternative model specifications. Second, we control for ethnic minorities' attitudes

towards inter-ethnic mixing to consider a possibility of motivational self-selection, whereby ethnic minorities who are willing to make IEF are more likely to participate in cross-ethnic CSOs to achieve that goal (see Table A8 in Online Supplementary Material). This variable is measured by a single question asking respondents to what extent they agree that people of their ethnic origin should mix with white people and other ethnic minority groups. Responses are recorded on a five-point scale ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. As this question was only asked in a subsample of ethnic minority respondents, the robustness check was conducted using the pooled sample of ethnic minorities to ensure sufficient sample size. Reassuringly, we find the results remain similar to ones in the main analysis, suggesting that our findings are unlikely due to motivational self-selection.

Discussion and conclusions

There is a growing consensus in policy discourse that positive social ties between members of different ethnic groups are an important driver of social cohesion and social capital in ethnically mixed communities in Britain (APPG 2017; The Casey Review 2016; Social Integration Commission 2014; Hargreaves et al. 2020). Towards this end, recently published policy recommendations state that government and local authorities should proactively support the growth of civic and community organizations that promote cross-ethnic contact (APPG, 2017). And yet, there is very little empirical evidence on this issue. In response, we set out to critically investigate the relationship between CSO participation and ethnic minorities’ IEF – focusing on the five largest ethnic minority groups in Britain. Our analyses yielded several important findings.

In a first study using longitudinal data and fixed effects models, we found that participation in CSOs does not significantly affect the IEF of ethnic minorities as a whole. However, in

ethnic group-specific analyses, we found that participation in CSOs significantly promotes IEF among ethnic Indian participants. For other minority groups, it seems to have either no effect or, in the case of Pakistanis, a negative effect on participants' IEF ties. This pattern of results strongly suggests that the impact of CSO participation on minorities' IEF varies by ethnic group membership. At the same time, the findings do not fit squarely within any one of the theoretical perspectives that we thought might explain the relationship between CSO participation and ethnic minorities' IEF.

It bears stressing that in the absence of precise information on the ethnic composition of participants' CSOs, the non-significant results of study 1 might actually reflect the effects of divergent inter-ethnic interaction opportunities found within participants' IEF: participants with few inter-ethnic contact opportunities in their CSOs might have experienced a drop in their IEF share, whereas those participating in CSOs with abundant inter-ethnic contact opportunities experienced an increase in IEF. This explanation is partially supported by the findings of study 2, as discussed below.

Even so, assuming that the CSO ethnic compositions reported by participants in study 2 resemble those of participants in study 1, then only a very small minority of participant in study 1 participated exclusively in ethnically homogeneous CSOs; the vast majority of them enjoyed at least some inter-ethnic exposure within their respective CSOs. This means that even though almost every CSO participant in study 1 was exposed to at least some ethnic outgroups within his or her CSOs, this exposure did not increase participants' IEF. In other words, mere exposure to members of other ethnic groups within CSOs does not promote IEF formation among Britain's ethnic minorities as a whole.

In sum, the findings of study 1 make it clear that participation in CSOs does not guarantee new IEF, and that friendship formation within CSOs is shaped by multiple, ethnic

group-sensitive, mechanisms. This calls into question policy recommendations that use intergroup contact theory to assert that ethnic minority participation in CSOs will promote inter-ethnic ties in Britain. Intergroup contact theory alone does not appear to adequately explain friendship formation patterns in complex settings like CSOs.

That participation in CSOs does not increase the share of IEF for Black Caribbeans and Black Africans is particularly surprising, considering that these groups have the highest level of civic participation and the largest share of IEF among British ethnic minorities (Heath et al. 2013). One possible explanation is that Black Caribbeans and Black Africans in Britain may already have extensive inter-ethnic networks before they join civic organizations (Peach 2005). They also tend to live in more ethnically diverse areas than other minorities (Zuccotti 2015). Drawing on McPherson, Popielarz and Drobnic (1992), we suspect that CSO participants from both of these groups experience greater competing social pressures to devote their time and efforts to alternative settings and social circles. As a result, they enjoy fewer opportunities for, and invest fewer resources in, intra-organizational interactions and IEF formation (Fehr 1996).

Another significant finding in our first study is that mere membership – as opposed to active participation - in CSOs seems not to affect any ethnic minority group's IEF. This suggests that it is active participation, rather than passive membership, that contributes to friendships formation within CSOs. If so, our findings support previous research showing that more active forms of voluntary civic engagement increase personal benefits for participants (McGarvey et al. 2019: 59).

In a second study using cross-sectional data and a more detailed measure of IEF, we showed that the ethnic compositions of ethnic minorities' CSOs significantly affect the share of IEF in their friendship. Compared to not participating in CSOs, we found that participation in mostly inter-ethnic CSOs is associated with a greater share of IEF ties, while participation in

mostly co-ethnic CSOs is associated with a lower share IEF. Meanwhile, participation in CSOs with an intermediate share of co-ethnics had no discernible effect on minorities' friendship networks. This pattern of results applied to every ethnic minority group examined – with the exception that ethnic Indian participants in majority co-ethnic CSOs did not seem to have a lower share of IEF. That aside, even Pakistani and Bangladeshi participants - who belong to racialized ethnic groups with more traditional ethnocultural values - seem to have more IEF when participating in majority inter-ethnic CSOs.

The findings of study 2 suggest that the relationship between civic participation and ethnic minorities' IEF depends on the inter-ethnic contact opportunities available to minorities within their CSOs. Arguably, the non-significant results of study 1 reinforce this conclusion: the likely reason civic participation did not increase the share of IEF reported by ethnic minorities in study 1 is that a large share ethnic minorities participate in mostly co-ethnic CSOs, where they are more likely to form co-ethnic, rather than inter-ethnic, friendships. This conclusion supports the view that intra-organizational contact opportunities represent the principal mechanism of intergroup friendship formation (Van De Bunt, Duijn and Snijders 1999; Kossinets and Watts 2009).

Another interesting finding in study 2 is that, unlike the other minority groups, ethnic Indians who participate in mostly co-ethnic CSOs do have less IEF than non-participants. This might explain why ethnic Indians in study 1 were the only respondent group to experience increases in IEF following CSO participation: ethnic Indians are not necessarily better than other groups at forming IEF in majority inter-ethnic settings - rather, they are significantly less likely to experience reductions in IEF when they participate in *co*-ethnic CSOs.

Unfortunately, we found no previous studies in the ethnicity and social network literatures to explain why ethnic Indian friendship formation patterns behave this way. One possible

explanation is that ethnic Indians who join mostly co-ethnic CSOs attend them less frequently (see Low et al. 2007: Table 3.4) and/or for shorter periods of time compared to other participants in mostly co-ethnic CSOs, thereby reducing opportunities for co-ethnic tie formation (Popielarz and McPherson 1995). Another possibility, drawing on Blau (1977; see also, Smith-Lovin and McPherson 1987), is that majority-Indian CSOs have more socioeconomically and religiously heterogeneous membership pools compared to other majority single-ethnic CSOs. This would narrow the basis for choice homophily among ethnic Indian participants and, consequently, reduce the appeal of co-ethnic friendships. Either way, without more information on the characteristics of ethnic Indians' CSO participation and the features of majority-Indian CSOs, the source of ethnic Indians' atypical friendship formation patterns in CSOs remains an open question.

We should stress here that the above interpretations of the first study's findings on the basis of the results of study 2 rely on the use of a cross-sectional analysis of one dataset (study 2) to explain the findings of a longitudinal study drawing on a different (albeit comparable) dataset (study 1). This complementary, two-study design was chosen because it allowed us to take available UK data on ethnic minorities' civic participation as far as it can go - enabling us to examine a wider range of determinants of IEF formation than would have been possible in a single study. On the other hand, the chosen design also means that we cannot fully rule out the possibility that the non-significant findings of study 1 reflected methodological or other issues associated with the study itself. Moreover, there is also the risk that the findings of study 2 are the products of self-selection or other biases commonly associated with cross-sectional designs. We discuss these and other possible limitations later in this section.

Overall, the findings of study 2 support Blau's (1977) theory of structured associations insofar as they highlight the importance of demographically diverse intra-organizational

contact opportunities for intergroup tie formation. More importantly, they support multiple previous studies linking individuals' inter-ethnic friendship patterns to contact opportunities embedded within organized social settings (Smith et al. 2016; Schlueter 2012; Kokkonen and Karlsson 2017; Currarini, Jackson and Pin 2010). Lastly, while the findings of our second study resemble those of previous quantitative investigations of IEF formation within CSOs (Martinovic, van Tubergen and Maas 2014; Muttarak 2014), we go beyond the previous literature in two important respects. First, we show that inter-ethnic contact opportunities facilitate IEF for different ethnic minority groups considered independently. Second, using a more nuanced measure of contact opportunities than those employed in previous studies, our study suggests that the influence of CSO participation on minorities' IEF can also be negative: a participant in a CSO that offers mostly co-ethnic contact opportunities is more likely to make new co-ethnic, rather than inter-ethnic, friends.

Considered together, the studies comprising this article make important contributions to the previous literature by advancing a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between ethnicity, CSO participation and IEF using large-scale longitudinal and cross-sectional data. They underscore the importance of contact opportunities to IEF formation within CSOs while showing, using a rigorous longitudinal design, that CSO participation in and of itself does not tend to promote IEF among most British ethnic minorities. The implications for policy are straightforward: policy initiatives hoping to use CSOs to promote positive inter-ethnic ties in mixed communities would do well to ensure that these organizations attract sufficiently diverse memberships.

Future research wishing build on these findings should bear in mind the limitations associated with each of the studies conducted. First and foremost, given the cross-sectional design of study 2, we cannot rule out the possibility that our findings concerning the effect of

inter-ethnic contact opportunities on IEF formation reflect a self-selection bias. For one thing, it is possible that individuals with more pre-participation IEF tended to join mostly inter-ethnic CSOs, while those with few/no pre-participation IEF tended to join mostly co-ethnic CSOs. After all, besides improving people's attitudes towards ethnic outgroups, inter-ethnic friendships represent an important channel of recruitment for CSOs. Both mechanisms could cause ethnic minorities with more IEF to prefer mostly inter-ethnic CSOs (Hewstone 2015; Low et al. 2007:37; Popielarz and McPherson 1995; but see also Wiertz 2016). Another possible self-selection effect could be that participants with high motivation to form IEF tended to join mostly inter-ethnic CSOs, while those averse to IEF joined mostly co-ethnic CSOs². In this case, the propensity to form IEF in mostly inter-ethnic CSOs would reflect between-subject motivational differences, rather than a contact opportunity effect.

We should stress, however, that while both types sources of bias are plausible, the models used in the second study included several control variables chosen to minimize the potential influence of these self-selection processes on the outcome variables. We included several known predictors of prior IEF (namely: partner's ethnicity, ethnicity of work colleagues, and neighbourhood co-ethnic share) and inter-ethnic friendship motivation (attitudes towards inter-ethnic mixing) (see Table A6 in Online Supplementary Material) (Kokkonen, Esaiasson and Gilljam 2015; Fong and Isajiw 2000; Schlueter 2012). Our findings proved robust to the inclusion of these control variables. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that we could not control for all conceivable processes of self-selection. For example, none of the control variables available could adequately control for the possible confounding effects of respondents' school-based pre-participation IEF. Future investigations will hopefully be able to examine the

² We thank the anonymous reviewer who brought this point to our attention.

relationships between inter-ethnic contact opportunities and CSO participants' IEF using longitudinal data on the ethnic composition of respondents' CSOs. We believe that the availability of such data in our longitudinal study would have enabled us to replicate the findings of our second, cross-sectional study.

Another important limitation concerned study 1. Although we used a longitudinal dataset and fixed effects model to explore the relationship between CSO participation and ethnic minorities' IEF, the said dataset only contains three waves and, therefore, relatively small within-subject variation. Thus, the results obtained may have underestimated the effect of civic participation on IEF, seeing as respondents that did not experience any changes in civic participation and IEF during the longitudinal survey were removed from the analyses. When more waves of UKHLS are available, future studies could explore the effects of civic participation on ethnic minorities' IEF using a sample that offers more statistical power.

Finally, due to small sample sizes and data limitations, our analysis could not distinguish between different types of civic organizations. For example, charities and trade unions may exert different effects on the process of friend-making. Thus, future research could make significant contributions to the social integration and cohesion literatures by distinguishing between different types of civic organizations and investigating their differential impact on inter-ethnic tie formation.

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