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The Ethnic Majority in a Multicultural Society.

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Abstract

The term ethnic majority is infrequently used and there is no agreed way for discussing that part of the population, which is *not* 'ethnic minority'. The majority is differentiated by class and region and, we would expect, by ideological or 'cultural' orientation. This paper will reflect on some uses of the term 'majority' and its equivalents - such as 'whites' in the UK - as well as considering whether this should be regarded as a discursive rather than a substantive category. One way of exploring how 'the majority' view themselves and others is to explore their views of multicultural England/Britain. There have been some quantitative survey data on attitudes to multiculturalism; qualitative material on this is relatively rare. In the empirical part of the paper I will review some qualitative interview material where ethnic majority respondents talk about 'multicultural Britain'.

About the Author

Steve Fenton is Professor of Sociology at Bristol University and is affiliated to the Centre for the **Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship** (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sociology/ethnicitycitizenship/>). The Centre, in collaboration with the Migration Research Centre at UCL, currently has funds from the Leverhulme Trust, for a five year programme of research on **Migration and Citizenship** (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sociology/leverhulme/>). As part of this programme Steve Fenton, with Robin Mann, is working on a study of everyday discourses of nation in its intersection with class. In 2003 Steve Fenton published *Ethnicity* with Polity Press, and (Ashgate 2004) contributed to *Governance in Multicultural Societies* (Rex and Singh eds).