The Labour Market Situation of Minority Ethnic Groups in Britain and the US*

Yaojun Li
School of Social Sciences, The University of Manchester
Kantorovich Building, Humanities Bridgeford Street, Manchester, M13 9PL, UK
E-mail: Yaojun.Li@Manchester.ac.uk

Abstract

Both Britain and the US are committed to social and ethnic equality. But how much ethnic disadvantage is there in the two countries? Do minority ethnics fare better in one country than in the other? Is there progress over time? This paper examines the employment status and the class position of minority ethnics in the two countries using micro-data from the two recent censuses of the population. The analysis shows that most minority ethnics in both countries were heavily disadvantaged in employment and in access to professional-managerial (salarium) positions. Among comparable groups, people in the US fared better than in Britain, but those in Britain, especially those of the second-generation, were making more progress over time. There was also greater ethnic polarisation in the US than in Britain.

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Britain. Overall, while some signs of improvement are visible, persistent disadvantages are the defining feature of the social structure in both countries. Much more needs to be done to ensure socio-ethnic equality.

**Key Words:** ethnicity, employment, class, Britain, US