Who represents us in the Council chamber?

<u>Question</u>

Do your senior staff look like those on the shop floor or behind the till? Do your customers look like the people who serve them? Do your new recruits look like the staff they have replaced? These are some of the most basic questions business leaders need to answer if they are to track the effectiveness of their diversity and inclusion policies.

Important though these issues are, woefully few business leaders know the answers to these questions. Human resource departments may collect data from those prepared to divulge it, but it is rare for this information to be organised in such a way as to answer these important questions.
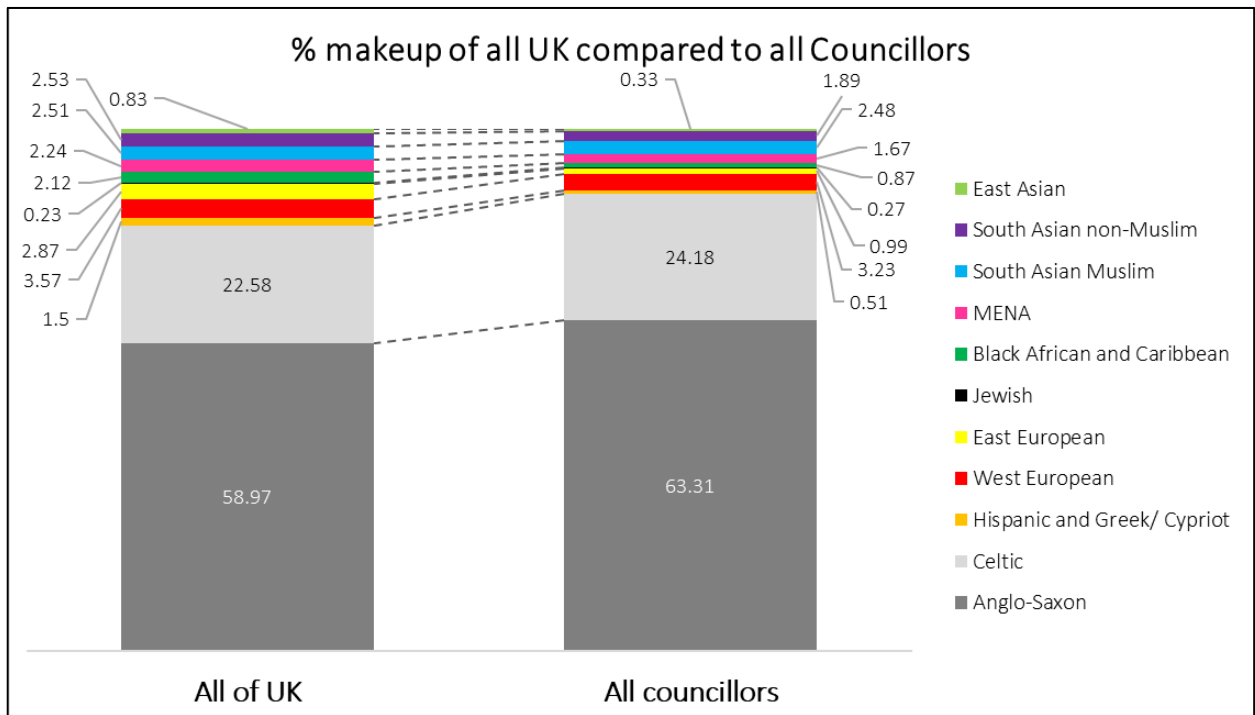
Having access to the names of all current Councillors in local government and the parties they represent, we thought it would be interesting to use this file to illustrate the effectiveness of the Origins name recognition tool in addressing a similar question – do our local government Councillors look like the electorate they serve?

<u>Insight</u>

To undertake the analysis we have passed the names of all sitting Councillors in the UK[1] through the Origins name recognition tool and compared the heritage of their names with the heritage of the names of the UK resident population as a whole. As the chart below shows, Councillors are more likely to be of Anglo-Saxon heritage, to a tune of around 3.5 percentage points. They are also about 1.5 percentage points more likely to be of Celtic (i.e., Scottish, Welsh or Irish) heritage.

The difference is not huge, but it is statistically significant. Minority groups – i.e., those not of Anglo-Saxon or Celtic heritage – are clearly under-represented among those making decisions at the local level.

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[1] Data from http://opencouncildata.co.uk/downloads.php

% makeup of all UK compared to all Councillors

Legend:
- East Asian
- South Asian non-Muslim
- South Asian Muslim
- MENA
- Black African and Caribbean
- Jewish
- East European
- West European
- Hispanic and Greek/ Cypriot
- Celtic
- Anglo-Saxon

All of UK values: 2.53, 2.51, 0.83, 2.24, 2.12, 0.23, 2.87, 3.57, 1.5, 22.58, 58.97

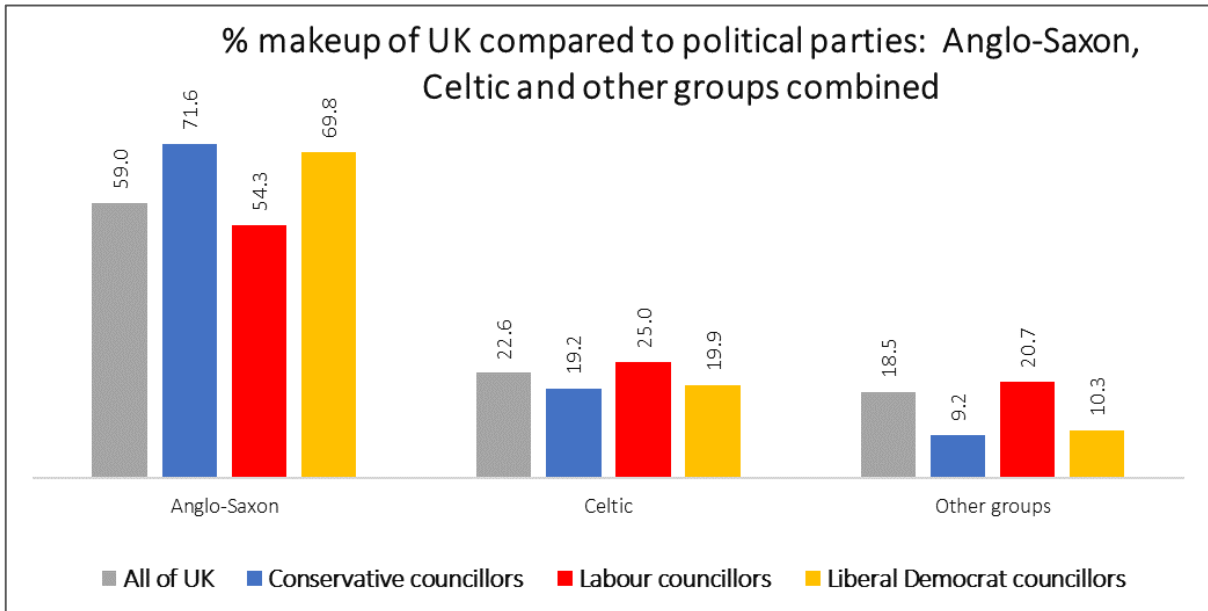All councillors values: 0.33, 1.89, 2.48, 1.67, 0.87, 0.27, 0.99, 3.23, 0.51, 24.18, 63.31

How well are different minority groups represented in the Council chamber? Broadly people of East European, East Asian, Black African and Hispanic heritage are the least likely to be represented by a Councillor from their own heritage whilst Muslims, West Europeans, Jews and other South Asian groups are proportionately much better represented in the average council chamber.

The table below quantifies the extent to which groups over or under index, in terms of their likelihood of attaining electoral office. A score of 100 indicates a group is exactly as well represented as it 'should' be. Scores over 100 mean groups are over-represented, and scores under 100 mean they are under-represented. [NB: For the charts in the rest of this analysis we have broken up/ grouped together a couple of Origins categories, meaning that the labels are slightly different to the table below].

Group	Index
Jewish	119.05
British	107.28
All	*100.00*
West European	90.48
Muslim	87.74
Other South Asian (e.g., Hindu, Sikh)	74.70
Greek or Greek Cypriot	62.06
Black African and Caribbean	49.62
East Asian	39.76
East European	34.49
Hispanic	27.27

How does this pan out when it comes to the different parties? Are the rates of over and under representation similar? The chart below shows, in grey, the proportion of UK adults that are Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and of other origins. It compares this, respectively, to the Councillor cohorts of Britain's main parties according to our data.

% makeup of UK compared to political parties: Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and other groups combined

Anglo-Saxon: 59.0 (All of UK), 71.6 (Conservative councillors), 54.3 (Labour councillors), 69.8 (Liberal Democrat councillors)

Celtic: 22.6 (All of UK), 19.2 (Conservative councillors), 25.0 (Labour councillors), 19.9 (Liberal Democrat councillors)

Other groups: 18.5 (All of UK), 9.2 (Conservative councillors), 20.7 (Labour councillors), 10.3 (Liberal Democrat councillors)

Legend: All of UK, Conservative councillors, Labour councillors, Liberal Democrat councillors

The chart shows that Labour councillors are, in fact, *less* likely to be Anglo-Saxon than the population as a whole. But they are more likely to have Celtic names than the UK resident base.
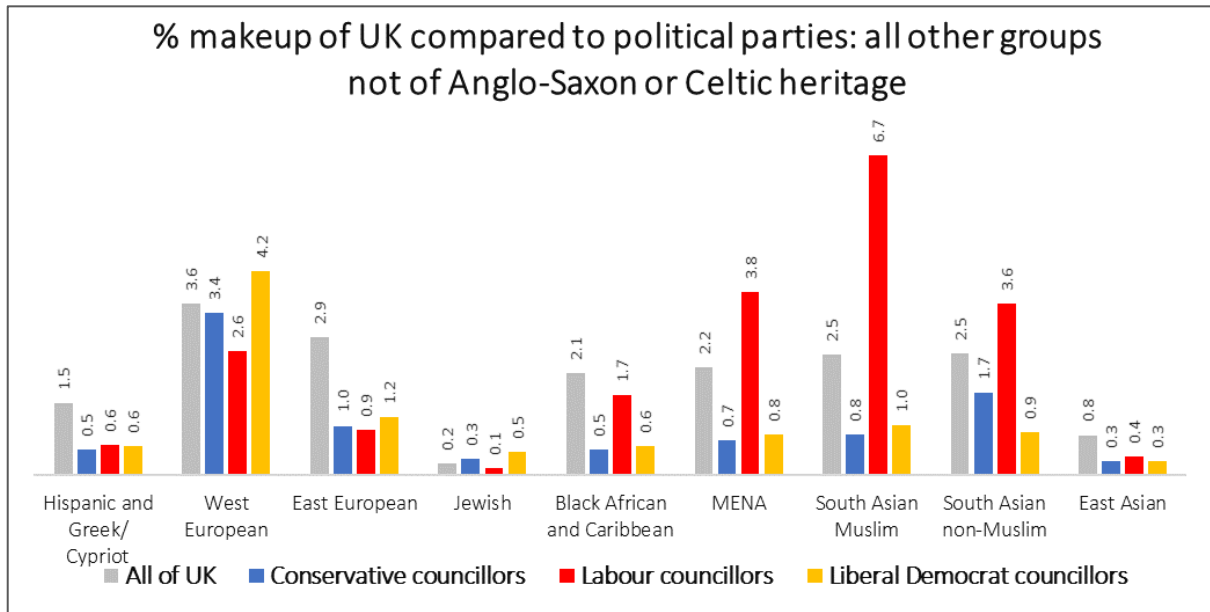
This perhaps reflects historic aversions to voting for the Conservatives – and even to voting for the Liberal Democrats – among Irish communities and those with Irish heritage, as well as among Welsh and Scottish residents. The average Labour Councillor is much more likely than average to be an O'Neill, a Jones or a McDonald. And the average Conservative Councillor is more likely to be White.

But what of the 'other groups' category – within which Labour is again better represented, compared both with the other two parties and with the UK as a whole? The chart below shows a more detailed breakdown of this.

As we can see, Labour's Councillor group includes very high numbers of South Asian Muslim residents (i.e., those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage). Those from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are also disproportionately common among Labour Councillors, compared to the UK average. So too are those with non-Muslim South Asian names, such as residents of Hindu, Sikh or Sri Lankan origin.

This perhaps reflects Labour having established itself, over many decades, in certain urban and semi-urban communities, such as Ealing or Tower Hamlets. But it may also be an area of

concern for Keir Starmer's party, whose appeal among non-white groups appears to come mainly from two or three quite specific communities (most notably, according to the data, among those of Pakistani heritage).

% makeup of UK compared to political parties: all other groups not of Anglo-Saxon or Celtic heritage

Legend: All of UK · Conservative councillors · Labour councillors · Liberal Democrat councillors

Group	All of UK	Conservative councillors	Labour councillors	Liberal Democrat councillors
Hispanic and Greek/Cypriot	1.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
West European	3.6	3.4	2.6	4.2
East European	2.9	1.0	0.9	1.2
Jewish	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.5
Black African and Caribbean	2.1	0.5	1.7	0.6
MENA	2.2	0.7	3.8	0.8
South Asian Muslim	2.5	0.8	6.7	1.0
South Asian non-Muslim	2.5	1.7	3.6	0.9
East Asian	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.3

The Liberal Democrats, by contrast, have above average representation among Jewish and Western European communities. One wonders how much this owes to Brexit – which mobilised many of those with connections to continental Europe – and to Labour's anti-Semitism crisis.

And the Conservatives are effectively below the UK average in relation to almost every minority group – although perhaps as a result of recent efforts, to a lesser extent than may have been the case a decade ago.

Conclusion

The findings above are interesting, because they look at the core political makeup of the three major parties. Whereas at the level of national government (i.e. within Cabinet) the numbers are so small that representativeness is hard to gauge, at the local level you get a more thorough picture.

We can see that Labour has done well among South Asian communities, and that the party is ultimately more representative as a result – at least in terms of reaching beyond white British communities. But the underrepresentation, across all three major parties, among certain newer migrant groups must remain a concern. How will Labour, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats reach out to potential Eastern European candidates, for example?

How relevant are the methods and findings to large organisations in the private and public sector who want to monitor the diversity of their own staff? From other studies we have undertaken we can draw two conclusions. One is that variations in ethnic representation in the Council chamber are broadly similar to the variations among the staff of large enterprises. The second is that large variations exist in the ethnic composition of the workforce in different job functions.

What conclusions can we draw about the methods used to examine diversity in the council chamber? We would cite five. The study was quick to do: it was completed in under a day; it had minimal resource cost; had it been necessary it could have been done retrospectively; it reveals differences between groups which tend to be grouped together using standard classifications; and the distribution of councillors by ethnicity can be directly and reliably compared with the distribution of the UK adult population.