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Ethnic Residential Segregation and Assimilation in British Towns and Cities: a Comparison of those claiming Single and Dual Ethnic Identities

Ron Johnston, Michael Poulsen and James Forrest¹

Abstract

There is considerable public debate over the degree of residential segregation of members of ethnic minority groups in British urban areas. Some claim that this is increasing, others that with economic and social assimilation members of those minority groups are increasingly moving away from the areas of initial concentration. The implication is that the more assimilated are also the least segregated. To test whether this is the case, data from the 2001 British census are used to explore whether those who claim a mixed or dual ethnic identity – and who are assumed to be more assimilated than those who identify with one of the minority groups only – are less segregated residentially. The evidence overwhelmingly sustains that argument that they are.

Keywords: ethnic identity, residential segregation, assimilation.

The assimilation of immigrants into the cultures of the countries to which they have moved has been a major subject of academic research for almost a century. In this, work on the situation in the United States has been particularly influential on work in a number of other, especially English-speaking, countries, and models developed there – notably by the so-called ‘Chicago School’ of sociologists (Burgess and Bogue, 1967; Bulmer, 1984) – have substantially informed

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approaches to assimilation studies elsewhere. Whereas in the United States the predominant model was one of assimilation and integration, whereby immigrants and, especially, their descendants changed their identity, 'became Americans' and became spatially assimilated into their 'host society', in other countries multi-cultural models developed whereby immigrants became economically and politically assimilated into 'mainstream' society but retained their cultural identity. The latter may include a wish to live in particular neighbourhoods where sustaining their cultural distinctiveness may be easier. This has been the case recently in Britain, where multi-cultural policies have been pursued by successive governments.

An issue of considerable recent debate within the wide theme of multi-culturalism in contemporary Britain has been both the degree of residential segregation of the country's main ethnic minority populations and whether that segregation has increased or decreased recently. In general the evidence – almost all of it derived from studies deploying census data – suggests that levels of segregation are relatively low, especially when compared with the situation in the United States for both African-Americans and Hispanics, and that it has not been increasing, save in a small number of places for certain Asian groups only.² Thus it is argued that the current situation is one where spatial assimilation of minority ethnic groups is the norm. (See, for example, Peach, 1996, 1997, 1999; Johnston, Forrest and Poulsen, 2002; Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest, 2002.)

Despite this, there is continuing public concern about levels of segregation, which is occasionally exacerbated at times of (apparent) inter-ethnic disturbances. In January 2005, for example, the *Guardian* newspaper published a special supplement on London as 'the most cosmopolitan place on

² A recent press report, for example, discussed research which shows that in the decade 1991-2001 the number of ethnic minority group members living in 'mixed' residential wards increased – *The Guardian*, 15.11.2005 (available on the website at www.guardian.co.uk).

earth' and a series of analyses on various aspects of the contemporary situation. In this supplement, Cantle (2005, 26) claimed that:³

Britain is a multicultural society, but most people do not live in multicultural communities. Most of the ethnic population lives in London and a few other regional centres. The White population dominates the rest of the country. Even in areas that are mixed, the separation is often just as evident, with most towns and cities divided by neighbourhoods. But does it matter, and, if it does, what should we do about it?

The extent of that division is shown in accompanying maps of where various ethnic and religious groups live within London. The clustering that they depict is in part due, Cantle claims, to 'self-segregation', some degree of which is desirable because 'if we want to preserve cultural identity a critical mass of each community is necessary'.⁴ But, Cantle continues,

...“segregated” communities are so dominated by particular groups that the possibility of contact with the majority population or another minority group is limited. These “parallel lives” do not meet, leaving little or no opportunity to explore differences and build mutual respect. We cannot issue edicts about where people should live, but we should always remember that a segregated society is a divided society.

The paper's leading article on the same day stressed the same point: 'communities which do not overlap or have meaningful cultural interchanges, breed fear, distrust and division' (*The Guardian*, 21 January 2005, 29).

Later in the same year, the theme was taken up again. A paper given at an academic conference (Poulsen, 2005) obtained wide press coverage, in part because it indicated that

³ Cantle is Associate Director of the UK Government's Improvement and Development Agency: he has had a long career in local government, is a visiting professor at Nottingham Business School, and is the author of a recent book on community cohesion (Cantle, 2005b).

⁴ On self-segregation among British ethnic minority communities see Simpson (2004, 2005) and Phillips (2005).

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segregation of Asian ethnic groups had increased between 1991 and 2001 in three English cities. This finding was taken up – and somewhat exaggerated – by the Chairman of the Commission on Racial Equality (Trevor Phillips) a few weeks later, in a speech in which he suggested that Britain was ‘sleepwalking to segregation’, in a society that was ‘becoming more divided by race and religion ... more unequal by ethnicity ... our schools ... are becoming more exclusive’. He further claimed that:⁵

Residentially, some districts are on their way to becoming fully-fledged ghettos – black holes into which no-one goes without fear and trepidation, and from which no-one ever escapes undamaged. The walls are going up around many of our communities, and the bridges that so many ... have laboured to build are crumbling.

This was immediately challenged by a number of academics,⁶ who claimed that Phillips had over-interpreted the evidence: that there were no ghettos in the UK, that residential segregation was declining in most places, and that there was no self-segregation by members of ethnic minority groups: indeed they argued instead that many were moving away from the relatively segregated areas and to the extent that the latter were expanding, this was very largely because of natural increase in relatively young populations.⁷

As with many debates, the nature of the data used in the analyses can vary – some researchers use small-area census data, for example, whereas others use ward data – and the interpretations may also vary as a consequence. Thus there is a continual need for further analyses to clarify the situation.

⁵ The text is available on the Commission for Racial Equality website (www.cre.gov.uk).

⁶ See, for example, the articles by Dorling (‘Why Trevor is wrong about race ghettos’) in *The Observer* on 25 September, 2005 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/race/story/0,,1577790,00.html>) and on research by Simpson in *The Financial Times* for 16 November 2005 and in *The Guardian* for 15 November 2005 (at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/britain/article/0,,1642916,00.html>).

⁷ See also the Greater London Authority (2005) publication on *Patterns of Ethnic Segregation in London*.

That is the purpose of this brief paper, which uses data not heretofore deployed to address the issue of assimilation, within a framework provided by a model of segregation trends. Do those who identify themselves as of mixed ethnicity live in relatively segregated areas, or are they – as the assimilation model suggests – more likely to be found in residential areas where members of ethnic minorities are few in number and the white majority population dominates?

A model of segregation trends

Most studies of ethnic residential segregation in cities are based (at least implicitly) on the work of the Chicago School. This focused on urban in-migrants who were distinguished from their 'host' society on one or more characteristics, notably: *disadvantage*, as shown by educational levels and ability to compete in the labour market; *cultural differences* – as expressed in language, religion and social practices; and *discrimination*. As a consequence of one or more of these, most immigrants were concentrated into relatively low status residential areas, in many cases because they were unable to compete in the wider housing market and so were constrained to low-cost, low-quality dwellings many of which they occupied at high densities. Such concentrations were exacerbated where there was either or both of explicit discrimination virtually confining the minority groups to such areas and a wish among their members to live in close proximity to sustain their cultural identity and practices – the latter being extended by the process of chain migration whereby those already settled in a city sponsored both members of their families and their friends to join them, in many cases helping them to find homes within the same neighbourhood.⁸

⁸ There are exceptions to this, as with migrations of individuals into particular occupational niches (such as au pairs and housekeepers) whose accommodation is provided by their employers: the Chicago School model applies to the majority of migrants who are not sponsored by an employer and whose stay in the country is limited by their employment contract.

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According to the Chicago School model this residential congregation - or segregation - continued to build-up as the ethnic minority population grew, through a combination of continued immigration and natural increase. But it was countered as the members of the minority groups became assimilated into the wider society, at first economically, which would allow them to compete for a wider range of housing, and then socio-culturally, which would reduce their ties to those from the same background. With this assimilation came residential desegregation (or integration) - in line with Park's (1926) famous dictum that social distance can be equated with spatial distance: over time, as more and more members of an ethnic group became assimilated with the wider population, so their residential segregation declined. This trajectory was followed by many migrant groups to US cities throughout the twentieth century - such as the Italians and Greeks - although not by African-Americans, who remained largely separate from the remainder of society for most of that period. A similar trajectory to that of the Italians and Greeks has been experienced by Black migrants to UK cities.

At any one time, therefore, the level of residential segregation for a defined minority group can be expressed as a function of the balance between two forces. On the one hand, there are those which sustain the segregated situation for at least some of the members; on the other are those which promote assimilation and movement away from areas of ethnic residential concentration. For the former, continued in-migration of disadvantaged group members who want to live among their cultural peers is the most common contributor; for the latter, it is the degree of both economic assimilation and socio-cultural acceptance.

We can use this simple 'balance of forces' argument to present a simple model of segregation trends over time - where segregation is defined as the degree to which members of a group live apart from members of other groups and in areas where members of their own group dominate. In the early years after a group moves to a city, the level of ethnic concentration will increase. If, however, either in-migration

declines or the degree of spatial assimilation becomes greater than that of in-migration (whereby members of the group, especially their descendants, leave the areas of concentration to live elsewhere in the city), then the level of concentration will fall: the proportion of members identifying with the ethnic group living in relatively segregated areas will decline. Only if assimilation is slow relative to the group's growth (through either or both of natural increase and continued in-migration) will levels of concentration continue to increase.

In the British situation, it is generally argued that for most groups in most cities social and spatial assimilation is the norm for migrant groups who have been established there for some decades, such as those generally known as Black Africans and Black Caribbeans: more recent arrivals – especially those from South Asia – are more likely to live at relatively high levels of residential segregation. Thus in Bradford, for example, Simpson (2004, 2005) argues that the relatively small increase in segregation there between 1991 and 2001 is largely accounted for by continued growth of the, mainly Pakistani, Muslim population, but that this has been paralleled by considerable dispersion away from the areas where the Pakistanis were initially concentrated. Desegregation is becoming the norm for South Asians too, he claims, and there is little prospect of further substantial increases in their residential segregation.

Single and dual ethnicities in England and Wales

This argument is consistent with many interpretations of the contemporary British situation. Can it be sustained through data analyses? Here we use data collected for the first time in the 2001 UK census to evaluate the proposition that assimilation is resulting in a move away from areas of residential concentration for all ethnic minorities.

In the 1991 UK Census, respondents were asked a question regarding their self-identified ethnicity: they were required to identify with one ethnic group only. (For detailed analyses of these data, see Ratcliffe, 1996.) This approach was extended in 2001, and the tabulated responses sepa-

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rately identified four 'Mixed' ethnic groups, those whose members identified with two groups, such as White and Caribbean. A total of sixteen different categories were deployed, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. The number of individuals in the different ethnic groups identified in the 2001 census of England and Wales, and the percentage living in Greater London.

Ethnic Group	Number	GL	Ethnic Group	Number	GL
White, British	45,533,741	12	Indian	1,036,807	44
White, Irish	641,804	37	Pakistani	714,826	21
White, Other	1,345,321	47	Bangladeshi	280,830	56
			Other Asian	241,274	58
White/Caribbean	237,420	31			
			Black		
White/African	78,911	45	Caribbean	563,843	62
White/Asian	189,015	35	Black African	479,665	80
White/Other	155,688	62	Black Other	96,069	64
Chinese	226,948	38	Other	219,754	54

This table identifies four separate ethnic groupings within the population of England and Wales: Whites; South Asians; Blacks; and those who have a Mixed, or Dual, identity. The first of these is by far the largest, comprising 91.3 per cent of the total. The Asians form the second largest group - some 2.2 million individuals - and those identifying as Blacks another - just over 1.1 millions. The fourth group (those with 'mixed ethnicities') is the smallest, comprising just 661,034 individuals. But they are nevertheless substantial in number. Those claiming a dual White/Caribbean ethnicity are the largest, approximately half of the number of Black Caribbeans: those claiming dual White/African ethnicity are about 16 per cent of the Black Africans; those claiming dual White/Asian ethnicity are 8 per cent of the Asian population. In general, therefore, those with backgrounds incorporating minority ethnic groups with the longest roots in the

country – Black Caribbeans and Africans – are more likely to claim dual ethnicities.

For the first time, therefore, the 2001 British census data allow some investigation of processes associated with ethnic group assimilation. If claiming a mixed or dual ethnic identity can be taken as an indicator of assimilation – i.e. that a person who does so identifies with two ethnic groups – then the available data allow contrasts to be drawn between three groups: those who identify with the majority – White – society; those who identify with one of the minority ethnic groups; and those – the (at least partially) assimilated – who identify with both.⁹

Residential segregation

If claiming a mixed or dual ethnicity can be taken as an indicator of partial assimilation – that the individuals concerned identify with their host society as well as with their own or their parents' culture (which would include the situation where the parents had separate cultural backgrounds because of inter-ethnic partnership or marriage) – it is possible to ask if this is reflected in where they live? Assimilation, according to the argument above, is associated with spatial desegregation, thus those claiming dual ethnicities should be more likely to live outside the areas of ethnic residential concentration than those who claim a separate identity from that of their host population.

To test whether this is the case, we look at the level of segregation of the various groups in the major urban centres of England and Wales – defined as those with more than 5,000 non-white residents – according to the 2001 Census: there are 73 such places, ranging in population from Greater London (8.3 million) to Nelson (28,988) and Oadby (22,679). If our model is correct, and the claim of a dual ethnicity can be interpreted as an indicator of assimilation, then we would expect lower levels of segregation for those with dual ethnici-

⁹ Some, though probably only a minority, may be members of mixed ethnicity households – on which see Holloway et al (2005) for the USA, and Wright (2006).

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ties than for other groups. Following this general exploration, we then look in more detail at the difference between the situation in London and the other urban areas.

Most studies of segregation use indices to measure its extent – notably that of dissimilarity/segregation and, less so, isolation. Although these have many merits, not least their simplicity and ease of interpretation, they also have substantial drawbacks – in part because they refer to the average situation for a group and thereby cannot depict the complexity of some residential patterns.¹⁰ Furthermore, their size (especially that of the indices of dissimilarity, segregation and isolation) is very much a function of the relative size of the group being studied in the particular town, which makes comparative study difficult. In addition, they are averages, and fail to disclose intra-urban variations.¹¹ For these reasons, as set out in a number of papers (e.g. Poulsen, Johnston and Forrest, 2001), we prefer to use a classification schema which categorises areas – in this case Output Areas, the smallest reporting units for the 2001 Census, with average populations of 297 (standard deviation, 72) – according to the ethnic mix.

This schema has five categories as follows:

I – Whites predominant, comprising 80 per cent or more of the total population;

II – Whites dominant, comprising 50-79 per cent of the total population;

III – Non-Whites dominant, comprising 51-69 per cent of the total population;

IV – Non-Whites predominant, comprising 70 per cent or more of the total population;

¹⁰ This would be the situation with the current data, especially which displayed in Table 3. The bi-modal distributions indicated there, and interpreted in the text, would be lost if single-index approaches were deployed.

¹¹ The index of isolation can be standardised for group size (see Noden, 2000; Johnston et al, 2004) , but that of dissimilarity can not.

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V - One Non-White group predominant: Non-Whites form 70 per cent or more of the total population and one Non-White group forms more than half of the Non-White total.

Although the dividing lines are arbitrary, nevertheless these five types clearly divide cities into those with White and non-White majorities and each of those divisions into further sub-divisions which emphasise either White predominance or the predominance of a single Non-White group.

Table 2. Percentage of ethnic group totals in the 73 urban areas in each of the categories of the ethnic segregation schema

	V	IV	III	II	I
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>1.9</u>	<u>9.3</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>27.9</u>	<u>54.8</u>
Black African	1	38.1	17.2	34.6	8.9
Black Caribbean	1.2	33.1	14	36.2	15.4
<u>Black Other</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>13.8</u>	<u>35.8</u>	<u>14.3</u>
<i>White-African</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>10.5</i>	<i>37.3</i>	<i>27.1</i>
<u><i>White-Caribbean</i></u>	<u><i>0.9</i></u>	<u><i>17</i></u>	<u><i>8.1</i></u>	<u><i>35.7</i></u>	<u><i>38.2</i></u>
Indian	10.4	25.2	15.5	31.5	16.4
Pakistani	17.9	25.7	18	27.5	10.8
Bangladeshi	18	32.9	18.6	23	7.5
Other Asian	5.1	30.8	13.3	34.4	16.2
<u>Chinese</u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>16.6</u>	<u>10.4</u>	<u>41.8</u>	<u>30.2</u>
<u><i>White-Asian</i></u>	<u><i>2.2</i></u>	<u><i>15</i></u>	<u><i>9</i></u>	<u><i>38.1</i></u>	<u><i>35.6</i></u>
White-British	0.4	4.1	3.2	25.1	67.1
Irish	0.7	15.7	7.4	39.5	36.7
Other White	0.6	17	12.2	45.5	24.7
<u>Other</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>26.3</u>	<u>12.8</u>	<u>40.2</u>	<u>19</u>
<i>Other White-Mix</i>	<i>1.2</i>	<i>19.6</i>	<i>9.7</i>	<i>39.7</i>	<i>29.9</i>

Table 2 gives the percentage of the members of each of the 16 separate ethnicities living in each of the five schema categories across the 73 urban places. A little over half of the total population there (19,927,815 people) lived in predominantly white areas (Type I) with a further 28 per cent in areas with a white majority of less than 80 per cent (Type II). At the other extreme, only 1.2 per cent lived in areas where a

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single Non-White group predominated (Type V); another 9.3 per cent were in areas where Non-Whites formed more than 70 per cent of the population, but no one group dominated (Type IV); and 5.9 per cent were in areas with Non-White majorities but substantial White minorities (Type III).

Turning to those with Non-White ethnicities, the next block in Table 2 shows that more than half of all people in the three Black ethnic groups lived in areas with Non-White majorities (i.e. Types III-V), although there was an almost equal split between Types I-II on the one hand and Types III-V on the other for the Black Other group. Very few Blacks lived in Type V areas where a single Non-White group predominated, however: indeed, there were about equal proportions in the Type IV and Type II areas – Blacks were equally likely to be found in areas that were 70 per cent or more Non-White as they were to be in those where Non-Whites formed 20-50 per cent of the population.

The similar patterns for the three groups claiming an exclusive Black ethnic identity differ markedly from those for the two groups claiming a dual White-Black ethnicity. In particular, those claiming dual White-African and White-Caribbean ethnicities were much more likely to live in predominantly White areas than their single-ethnicity counterparts: 38 per cent of White-Caribbeans lived in Type I areas compared to only 11 per cent of Black Caribbeans, for example; the comparable figures for White-Africans and Black-Africans were 27 and 9 per cent respectively. Complementing that, many fewer of those claiming dual ethnicity lived in areas with Non-White majorities.

Turning to those claiming Asian ethnicities, the next block in Table 2 shows that a majority of members of each of the separately identified South Asian groups – Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis – lived in areas with Non-White majorities, with between 10-18 per cent of them in areas where one Non-White minority predominated (i.e. Type V areas). Very few lived in the predominantly White Type I areas, although a slight majority of those in the 'Other Asian' group lived in White-majority area. Among those claiming dual White-Asian ethnicities, almost three-quarters lived in

White majority areas (Types I and II), with almost equal proportions in each type – a situation very similar to that of the Chinese, who stand out as the most residentially-assimilated non-White ethnic group: and only 2 per cent of those with dual ethnicities lived in the Type V areas.

These patterns clearly confirm our expectations with regard to residential choices of those choosing single and dual ethnicities. The latter group are much more likely to live in areas where Whites either dominate or predominate than are their counterparts who claim a single non-white ethnicity. With assimilation – as indicated by the claim of a dual ethnicity – comes desegregation.

The special case of London?

London houses only 12 per cent of the total population of England and Wales, but much larger proportions of those who claim ethnic identities other than White, British (Table 1). Those who claim Black ethnic identities are very substantially concentrated in the country's capital city – with as many as 80 per cent of all Black Africans and nearly two-thirds of the other Black groups. It also has approximately one-third or more of those claiming dual ethnic identities. Given this much greater multi-ethnic mixture in London compared to the other urban places, most of which have a single dominant non-white ethnic group,¹² has assimilation proceeded further there, making Britain's most cosmopolitan city one with greater neighbourhood diversity than the country's other urban places?

Table 3 contains the data with which this question can be addressed: the information given in Table 2 is subdivided to show the contrast between London and the 72 other urban areas. A major difference stands out from the first row: whereas over 72 per cent of the population of those other places lived in areas with a predominantly White population in 2001 (Type I), this was so for only 30 per cent of Londoners, over 40 per cent of whom lived in Type II areas, with a White majority of less than 80 per cent. This evidence that

¹² The main exception to this is Birmingham.

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Londoners were more likely to live in relatively mixed neighbourhood milieux is further exemplified by the larger percentage there (18.6; six times that for the other urban areas) living in Type IV areas, where Non-Whites predominate but no single group is larger than any other. By contrast, more than twice as many residents of the other urban areas lived in neighbourhoods where a single Non-White ethnic group predominated (Type 5).

Table 3. Percentage of ethnic group totals in each of the categories of the ethnic segregation schema, comparing London with the 72 other places

TOTAL	V	IV	III	II	I
London	1.1	18.6	9.4	40.5	30.4
Rest	<u>2.4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>18.9</u>	<u>72.1</u>
<i>Black African</i>					
London	0.8	42.3	18.6	33.8	4.5
Rest	2.6	13.3	9.3	39.4	35.4
<i>Black Caribbean</i>					
London	0.5	42.1	15.7	36.4	5.1
Rest	2.5	15.7	10.6	35.7	35.5
<i>Black Other</i>					
London	0.6	42.9	15.5	36.5	4.6
Rest	<u>2.1</u>	<u>15.8</u>	<u>9.7</u>	<u>34.2</u>	<u>38</u>
<i>White-African</i>					
London	0.9	34	14	41.3	9.8
Rest	1.4	6.8	4.5	30.2	57.1
<i>White-Caribbean</i>					
London	0.3	24.2	9.1	33.8	10.9
Rest	<u>1.2</u>	<u>6.6</u>	<u>5.5</u>	<u>30.2</u>	<u>56.5</u>
<i>Indian</i>					
London	5.3	38.3	16.8	30.7	9
Rest	15.7	12.2	14.2	32.2	25.6
<i>Pakistani</i>					
London	1.9	47.9	14.6	29.4	6.2
Rest	22.9	18.8	19.1	27	12.3
<i>Bangladeshi</i>					
London	20.6	32.7	23.4	21.8	2.7
Rest	13.7	33.3	12.5	25.1	15.4

Table 3 continued:

<i>Other Asian</i>					
London	1.9	38.8	14.1	35.7	9.5
Rest	11.6	14.4	11.9	32	30.1
<i>Chinese</i>					
London	0.7	25.2	15	45.2	13.7
<u>Rest</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5.3</u>	<u>4.3</u>	<u>37.3</u>	<u>52.1</u>
<i>White-Asian</i>					
London	0.5	23.1	11.1	45.9	19
<u>Rest</u>	<u>3.7</u>	<u>5.5</u>	<u>6.7</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>55.1</u>
<i>White-British</i>					
London	0.3	9.9	5.8	41.4	42.4
Rest	0.5	0.9	1.7	16.1	80.8
<i>Irish</i>					
London	0.5	24.6	10	5	17.8
Rest	1	3.9	3.9	29.8	61.4
<i>Other White</i>					
London	0.5	22.2	15.2	49.9	12.2
Rest	1.1	3.2	4.4	34	57.3
<i>Other</i>					
London	0.8	32.6	15.4	42.2	8.8
<u>Rest</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>11.2</u>	<u>6.6</u>	<u>35.5</u>	<u>43.6</u>
<i>Other White-Mix</i>					
London	0.6	27.9	12.6	45.1	13.8
Rest	2	6.2	4.9	31.1	55.8

This difference between London and the other urban places is repeated, with few exceptions, for each of the single-identity ethnic groups. Many fewer Black, Asian and also other White (White Irish and White Other) Londoners lived in predominantly White residential areas (Type I) and many more lived in areas of single-ethnic group concentration (Type V): the main exception relates to Bangladeshis, who are much more concentrated in London than the two other large Asian groups (Indians and Pakistanis: Table 1).

Turning to those claiming dual ethnic identities, Table 3 shows the same pattern: compared to the situation in the rest of the country, members of these groups living in London are much more likely to be found in areas with relatively mixed populations ethnically (Types II, III and IV) rather

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than in those where either Whites or a single Non-White group predominates (Types I and V). Outside London, a majority of dual-identity residents live in areas where Whites predominate: in London, the largest percentage (but not a majority) live in areas with White majorities (Type II) but a further substantial group - 20-35 per cent of the total - live in areas where Non-Whites predominate. Given the overall pattern of ethnic segregation in London, the first of these major contrasts is not surprising: many more non-Londoners than Londoners live in Type I areas, for example. Nevertheless, the variations do suggest major differences in at least the spatial component of assimilation as displayed by those with dual identities between London and the other urban areas. Outside London, the great majority of those claiming a dual identity live in White-dominated areas (Types I and II), suggesting that the degree of cultural assimilation expressed by their self-identity is linked to a decision to live away from neighbourhoods where people with the Non-White ethnic group that they partially identify with dominate. In London, although - with the exception of White-Caribbeans - a majority of those with dual identities also live in White-dominated areas, many more (some four times more than those in the rest of the country's urban areas) live in areas where non-Whites form at least 70 per cent of the total.

In large part, this different pattern in London reflects the greater variety of residential milieux available: the larger non-White population there is reflected in the greater proportion of areas where such people predominate. As a result, it appears that a substantial number of those with dual identities either prefer to live in such areas or are precluded by labour and housing market constraints from joining the majority of the dual ethnic population and electing to live in dominantly White areas. Outside London, either those constraints are weaker or those claiming dual ethnicities are more likely to prefer predominantly White neighbourhoods. In this, urban size may be important. In large cities such as London a move into a predominantly-White neighbourhood may mean living a long distance from members of the non-

White ethnic group with whom the individuals partly identify, with consequences for sustaining close ties with family and friends from that ethnic group, as well as its cultural and other institutions. In smaller places such barriers to contact may be much less, and thereby less discouraging to moves into predominantly White areas and the 'heterolocalism' that Zelinsky and Lee (1998) argue is increasingly happening as distance becomes less of a barrier to inter-personal contact.

Conclusions

Many studies of migrants from ethnic backgrounds different to that of the host population in their chosen city of residence suggest that they pass through a process of residential segregation followed by desegregation. The latter accompanies assimilation – both economic and socio-cultural – so that as the differences between the immigrant groups and their host society become less marked, so they become spatially assimilated.

This model is generally applied to the British situation, and studies of members of minority ethnic groups – depicted in the country's censuses, first by birthplace and then by self-identified ethnicity – have generated results consistent with the overall argument. Recently, however, concerns have been expressed that segregation is increasing, with the implication that assimilation rates are relatively slow. One problem in addressing those claims is the relative absence of data with which the generality of the argument can be assessed.

For the first time, the 2001 UK Census allowed respondents to the ethnicity question to claim dual ethnicities. In England and Wales, 1.3 per cent of the population did so, compared to 7.4 per cent who claimed an exclusive Non-White ethnicity. Those claiming a dual ethnicity including White are likely to be more residentially assimilated with their host society than those claiming a single Non-White ethnicity. According to the segregation model, this greater assimilation should be reflected in their residential choices: those claiming dual ethnicities should be more able and/or prepared to live in areas where Whites dominate (even pre-

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dominate) than those claiming single ethnicities, who might still be both economically disadvantaged and unwilling/unable to move away from areas where those from similar backgrounds to their own are numerically dominant.

This expectation was tested using data from the 2001 Census for 73 cities and towns in England and Wales, using a classification of small areas according to their ethnic composition to identify the number of members of each group living in different milieux. The results are very clear: those claiming dual ethnicities were much more likely to live in White-majority areas than those claiming single ethnicities. There were, however, substantial differences between London – which houses the majority of the UK's non-White residents – and the other urban areas: although those claiming dual ethnicities living in London were also concentrated into White-dominated areas, they were less so than was the case outside the capital city, and many more such people in London were living in areas where non-Whites predominated.

The implication from this finding is that the assimilation model is indeed working in England and Wales – though further exploration, using longitudinal data, will be needed to suggest in more detail the processes involved.¹³ Whether assimilation is proceeding fast enough relative to the growth of the minority ethnic population as a whole is, thus, the prime determinant of changing levels of ethnic residential segregation. As people from different cultural backgrounds feel ready to identify with their local society, while at the same time not rejecting their separate cultural roots, so they are prepared to live away from the major areas of ethnic residential concentration.

¹³ The Longitudinal Study data from the Office of National Statistics could be of value in this, although they do not allow exploration of the type of neighbourhood in which people live.

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