

**Racial and Ethnic Residential Segregation in the United Kingdom
and United States^{*}**

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Abstract

Immigrant incorporation is a critical social and policy issue confronting a growing number of countries. This study examines one aspect of integration in the United Kingdom and the United States: the residential patterns of immigrants and minority group members. Using data from the 2001 UK census and the 2000 US census, we compute dissimilarity, information theory, and isolation indexes for a set of comparably defined ethnic and foreign-born groups and geographic areas. We further examine the association between nativity and levels of segregation among the panethnic groups and the differing role that metropolitan context plays in shaping residential patterns. In doing so we aim to arrive at a better understanding of the ethnic incorporation process in the UK and the US.

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Introduction

Immigration has increased racial and ethnic diversity in the United States, the European Union, and indeed in many countries around the globe. Commentators have struggled to understand the social, political, and economic implications of this diversity. In this paper we develop a cross-national comparison of the residential or “spatial” incorporation of ethnic minority groups between the United Kingdom and the United States. More specifically, we compare levels of segregation in the two countries for panethnic groups by nativity and for specific foreign born groups as well. We pay close attention to the methodological issues that can affect such cross-national comparisons, including the choice of geographic units, and the role that basic groups and metropolitan area characteristics play in shaping residential patterns in the two countries.

A few cross-national studies have indicated that levels of racial and ethnic residential segregation in the United States are relatively high as compared with levels in some European and other immigrant-receiving countries (Peach 1999; Johnston, Poulsen, and Forrest 2007; White, Fong, and Cai 2003). These suggest that racial and ethnic group divisions might be more salient in the U.S. than other countries, and/or that immigrants are not integrating as easily there. However, immigrant incorporation is becoming an issue of greater concern a number of European countries, in part because ethnic communities are growing at a rapid pace, coupled with the fact that many of these countries have little recent experience integrating large-scale migration flows than the U.S. Indeed, there is a considerable degree of ambivalence about neighborhood racial and ethnic integration in Europe (Semyonov, Glikman, and Krysan 2007). To better understand the integration process, we thus also examine whether segregation varies by

nativity. If the native-born of a particular ethnic group are less segregated than the foreign born, this suggests that some measure of residential incorporation is occurring across generations (Iceland 2009).

Comparing levels of segregation across countries is methodologically challenging. Countries often collect demographic information using different kinds of ethnic group definitions. The French census, for example, does not collect information on race or ethnicity at all because of concerns that race has relatively little biological significance and that collecting such data may contribute to divisions in French society. Countries also disseminate data with varying degrees of geographic detail and with different geographic unit definitions. The “census tract” in the United States (with a mean of 4,000 people) is quite different from the “ward” in the United Kingdom (with a mean of 9,000 people) or enumeration districts (mean of 416 people in London in 1990) that has been used in some studies of segregation there (Peach 1999).

The goal of our analysis is therefore carry out a systematic comparison of levels of racial and ethnic segregation in the UK and the US paying careful attention to the methodological issues involved. Using data from the 2001 UK census and the 2000 US census, we compute levels of ethnic segregation, using the dissimilarity, information theory, and isolation indexes for a set of comparably defined panethnic and specific foreign-born groups. We analyze the association between nativity and levels of segregation among panethnic groups in the two countries, as well as the role that basic group and metropolitan characteristics play in explaining patterns. Our ultimate aim is to thus arrive at a better understanding of the ethnic incorporation process in the two countries.

Notes on Methodology

Geographic definitions

For the U.S. we will use 1999 county-based MSA/PMSA definitions, N=318. For the UK we will use Travel to Work Areas (TTWA) (Bond and Coombes, 2007), n=232. For the unit of analysis, we will use census tracts (mean=4,000 people) and block group areas (mean=1,000 people) in the US. In the UK, we will use Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs: Mean=1500 people) and Middle Level Super Output Areas (MSOAs: Mean=7200 people).

Group definitions

We will examine three panethnic groups that are present in large numbers in both countries (non-Hispanic whites/white British, blacks, and Asians), and the role that nativity plays among these groups. We then look at segregation patterns of the foreign born by 1) global region (10 regions: sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe, South Asia, Far East, Southern Europe, North Western Europe, North America, Central and South America, and the Caribbean); and 2) country of origin (20 countries: Bangladesh, Canada, China, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey). We calculate segregation indexes for a given group in a metropolitan area only if there are at least 1,000 group members living there.

Very Preliminary Results

(see the table on the next page)

Group Type	Group Description	US	UK		Highest Country
		Tract	MSOA	LSOA	
COB	Bangladesh	0.88	0.71	0.75	US
COB	Nigeria	0.84	0.55	0.59	US
COB	Iraq	0.78	0.55	0.66	US
COB	Jamaica	0.76	0.57	0.60	US
COB	Turkey	0.73	0.60	0.65	US
COB	Pakistan	0.73	0.67	0.71	US
COB	Portugal	0.72	0.52	0.59	US
COB	Netherlands	0.67	0.41	0.61	US
COB	Spain	0.67	0.43	0.52	US
COB	Hong Kong	0.66	0.35	0.50	US
COB	Greece	0.65	0.54	0.67	US
COB	China	0.65	0.47	0.61	US
COB	Iran	0.63	0.50	0.60	US
COB	France	0.62	0.41	0.49	US
COB	Poland	0.60	0.44	0.55	US
COB	India	0.58	0.50	0.54	US
COB	Japan	0.57	0.57	0.65	Britain
COB	Italy	0.47	0.39	0.47	US
COB	Germany	0.37	0.21	0.30	US
COB	Canada	0.36	0.35	0.50	Britain
Pan-ethnic	Black	0.66	0.51	0.54	US
Pan-ethnic	Hispanic/Irish & White_Other	0.52	0.28	0.30	US
Pan-ethnic	Asian	0.46	0.52	0.55	Britain
Pan-ethnic foreign born	FB_Black	0.72	0.52	0.54	US
Pan-ethnic foreign born	FB_Hispanic/Irish & White_Other	0.60	0.30	0.32	US
Pan-ethnic foreign born	FB_Asian	0.48	0.51	0.54	Britain
Pan-ethnic native born	Native_Black	0.66	0.52	0.54	US
Pan-ethnic native born	Native_Hispanic/Irish & White_Other	0.47	0.25	0.30	US
Pan-ethnic native born	Native_Asian	0.45	0.55	0.58	Britain
Subcontinent of Birth	Sub-Saharan Africa	0.68	0.38	0.42	US
Subcontinent of Birth	Caribbean	0.65	0.52	0.55	US
Subcontinent of Birth	Central & South America	0.60	0.42	0.47	US
Subcontinent of Birth	South Asia	0.57	0.54	0.57	US
Subcontinent of Birth	Middle East	0.52	0.45	0.49	US
Subcontinent of Birth	Eastern Europe	0.50	0.37	0.45	US
Subcontinent of Birth	Far East	0.49	0.34	0.41	US
Subcontinent of Birth	Southern Europe	0.45	0.38	0.43	US
Subcontinent of Birth	North America	0.36	0.38	0.45	Britain
Subcontinent of Birth	North Western Europe	0.28	0.21	0.25	US

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