Migration, Integration and Neighbourhoods
The policy challenges of ethnic inequalities

KEY FINDINGS

- Britain is experiencing deepening social integration as measured by the residential geography, educational attainment, citizenship practices and political engagement of its ethnic minority populations.

- Inequalities in housing and the labour market distort integration processes producing significant social costs for those living in Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods. Persisting inequalities in health outcomes are a key marker of the segmented integration of some ethnic minorities.

- Integration policies need to be more clearly targeted on immediate, short-term and long-term processes. Greater focus on social exclusion rather than cultural identity will enable more effective policy-making that recognizes the variegated trajectories of different migrant groups.

THREE TRANSFORMATIONS
Social integration, policy discourse, immigration control

In the wake of the 2001 riots and the 7/7 bombings there were widespread fears that Britain was undergoing a sharpening of ethnic polarization and ghettoization. A decade later, neighbourhood residential integration has increased, while Britain's ethnic minorities have experienced a continuing transformation of their position in British society as marked by improving educational performance, expanding citizenship practices and broadening political engagement.

This deepening of social integration has been paralleled by a second transformation marked by a shift in how policy discourse on "integration" has moved from a focus on ethnic groups and physical areas to individuals and behaviours. For over a century, immigrant integration has been conceptualized as a multi-generational process in which spatial dispersal was accompanied by social mobility and cultural assimilation. Increasingly, integration is being narrowly defined as the short-term product of individual choice, driven by cultural values rather than social position.
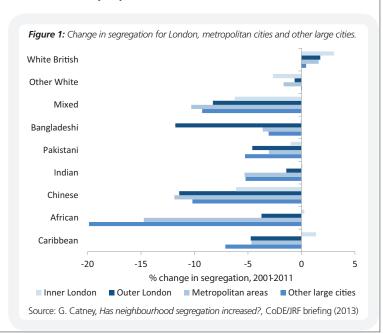
A third transformation has been in the reconfiguration of policy with the end of the historical compact (inclusion within the borders / exclusion at the border) created by the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act and the 1965 Race Relations Act. The rapid expansion of anti-terror policies and creation of new forms of immigration control within the border has resulted in their increasing distance from integration policy, reinforced by declining state support for language acquisition, housing support or employment assistance for migrants.

CHALLENGING THE CRISIS NARRATIVE
Evidence of deepening integration

Geographic clustering remains at the heart of contemporary debates over segregation. Census data confirms increasing dispersal of ethnic minority groups across Britain and that the ethnic mix within neighbourhoods is also becoming more diverse (See Figure 1). While smaller spatial scales are often used to claim that individual streets contain ethnic clusters, the census also shows that one in eight households with more than one person now contains more than one ethnic group.[1]

Measured in demographic terms, schools are often more ethnically segregated than their surrounding neighbourhoods, however they are even more segregated by social class than by ethnicity. Ethnic segregation rates in schools are decreasing in London and other major cities. A silent revolution in education has occurred with those ethnic groups seen as the most disadvantaged making rapid progress driven by the groups themselves, selective migration policies and education reform. Within two decades the proportion of the Bangladeshi ethnic group with degree qualifications has quadrupled to 20% and of the Pakistani ethnic group has tripled to 25%.[2]
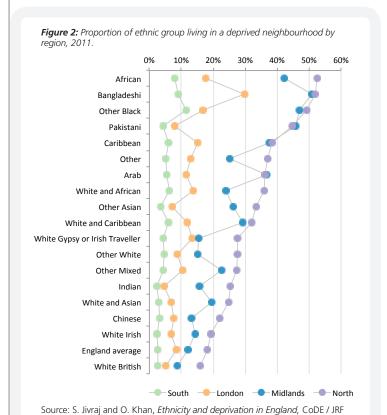
Equally, citizenship is another arena of significant integration success with 45% of immigrants in England identifying with a UK identity, increasing to 54% for those born outside the EU. Debates about the boundaries of Britishness have often been deeply marked by race, but today non-white ethnic minorities across the UK are much more likely to see themselves as British than white ethnic minorities. In England over three-quarters of South Asian and Caribbean ethnic groups identify with a UK national identity compared to a quarter of the Other White ethnic group. Non-white ethnic minorities also show high levels of political and civic engagement that parallel those of the white majority.[3]

Figure 1: *Change in segregation for London, metropolitan cities and other large cities.*

% change in segregation, 2001-2011

Inner London   Outer London   Metropolitan areas   Other large cities

Source: G. Catney, *Has neighbourhood segregation increased?*, CoDE/JRF briefing (2013)

WHY ETHNIC INEQUALITIES MATTER FOR INTEGRATION

Housing and employment are two key arenas of integration that are marked by significant ethnic inequalities. For many ethnic minority people, the labour market is dominated by barriers and precarity, as reflected by the substantial differences in unemployment and part-time employment rates.

Precarity also characterizes the position of some groups in the housing market – such as the four-fifths of Somalis living in social housing, or the 14% increase in Pakistani ethnic group living in private rental accommodation over the past twenty years. Recent migrant groups are particularly exposed to discrimination and exploitation in the bottom tier of private rental housing.[4]

Figure 2: *Proportion of ethnic group living in a deprived neighbourhood by region, 2011.*

Legend: South · London · Midlands · North

Source: S. Jivraj and O. Khan, *Ethnicity and deprivation in England,* CoDE / JRF briefing (2013)

Ethnic minorities are disproportionately likely to be living in Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods, especially in the North and Midlands (see Figure 2). This not only limits access to employment and social mobility but has significant implications across the lifecourse, especially for their health.

Health is also strongly affected by experiences of racial harassment, discrimination and racism, making it a key marker of the limits on integration experienced by ethnic minorities. [5]

In the US, ethnic minority people's experience of deprivation, discrimination and bifurcated labour markets, has led some researchers to argue that they are experiencing downward integration rather than social mobility. Such segmented assimilation raises significant policy challenges, given the complex geography of ethnic inequalities in Britain.[6]

POLICY CHALLENGES

Britain has an integration story that needs to be celebrated – there have been a range of cultural projects and local initiatives across the UK in which ethnic minority people have expressed their Britishness. However, more needs to be done to confront how deprivation and discrimination are distorting the long-term dynamics of social integration in employment and housing. Equally, the implications of restricting access to state services as part of immigration control may directly and indirectly fuel new forms of exclusion for recent migrants in the short and long-term.

While the third sector has been one of the key drivers of local programmes enabling integration, such provisions are facing increasing financial restrictions. With fewer resources available, integration policy needs greater targeting of the disadvantages faced by particular ethnic minority groups, and to be more responsive to the geographical variations in inequalities.

The above is based on discussions at the "Migration, Integration and Neighbourhoods: Where's the harm?" residential conference at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park held on 21 - 22 November 2014 in partnership with the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE).

For more on ethnic inequalities in education, employment, health and residence see:

www.ethnicity.ac.uk

[1] L. Simpson, *More segregation or more mixing?*, CoDE/JRF briefing (2012); G. Catney, *Has neighbourhood segregation increased?*, CoDE/JRF briefing (2013)

[2] K. Lymperopoulou and M. Parameshwaran, *How are ethnic inequalities in education changing?*, CoDE/JRF briefing (2014)

[3] S. Jivraj, *Who feels British?*, CoDE/JRF briefing (2013); D. Sanders, S. Fisher, A. Heath, and M. Sobolewska, "The democratic engagement of Britain's ethnic minorities." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37: 1 (2014): 120-139; T. O'Toole and R. Gale, *Political engagement amongst ethnic minority young people* (Palgrave, 2013)

[4] N. Finney and B. Harries, *How has the rise in private renting disproportionately affected some ethnic groups?* CoDE/JRF briefing (2013); E. Kofman, S. Lukes, A. D'Angelo and N Montagna, *The equality implications of being a migrant,* EHRC Research Report (2009)

[5] S. Jivraj and O. Khan, *Ethnicity and deprivation in England,* CoDE / JRF briefing (2013); J. Nazroo, "The structuring of ethnic inequalities in health: economic position, racial discrimination and racism", *American Journal of Public Health*, 93: 2 (2003): 277-284.

[6] M. Waters, V. Tran, P. Kasinitz, and J. Mollenkopf, "Segmented Assimilation Revisited: Types of Acculturation and Socioeconomic Mobility in Young Adulthood", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33: 7 (2010): 1168–1193; N. Finney and K. Lymperopoulou, *Local Ethnic Inequalities. Ethnic differences in Education, Employment, Health and Housing in Districts of England and Wales,* 2001-2011 (The Runnymede Trust, 2014)

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