

Is Shared Space Really Shared?

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Key Words

Segregation Contact Integration
Ethnicity Prejudice Discrimination

The United Kingdom: Diversity and Segregation

1. 'Levels of segregation in England's schools are high – over half the minority pupils would have to switch schools to produce an even spread' (Burgess & Wilson, 2004)
2. UK segregation is 'mostly accustomed for by unevenness in social background in the state school sector... and is associated with the prevalence of selective choice of pupils by schools' (Jenkins et al, 2006)
3. 80.5% of the UK population is White British (ONS, 2011)
4. Nationally, 25% of the UK population says the level of prejudice and discrimination they experience has gone up since 2000. In the South West, this rises to 31% (BSA, 2013).
5. UK schools are some of the most 'socially segregated' in the world, with 80% of migrants' children clustered in 'disadvantaged' schools (OECD, 2012).

The Harsh Realities of Segregation

Segregation is evident within everyday life spaces – cafes, bars, shops, schools, workplaces, and places of residence. Segregation could be based on factors such as race, socioeconomic position, class, and religion.

"Everywhere on this earth we find a condition of separateness among groups. People mate with their own kind. They eat, play reside in homogenous clusters. They visit with their own kind, and prefer to worship together. Much of this automatic cohesion is due to no more than convenience. There is no need to turn to out-groups for companionship. With plenty of people at hand to choose from, why create for ourselves the trouble of adjusting to new languages, new food, or to people of a different educational level? It requires less effort to deal with people who have similar presuppositions" (Allport, 1954, p.17)

Segregation can breed prejudice (and vice versa).



How can we reduce prejudice?

The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) suggests contact is one of the most effective prejudice reduction tools:

Bringing conflicted groups together under the right circumstances lessens negative out-group prejudice.

The contact effect has substantial empirical support with a meta-analysis demonstrating in 95% of 515 studies, contact reduces prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)

