



Harris, R. (2019). Measuring diversity of place: A case study of London. *Geography Review*, 32(3), 22-26.
<https://www.hoddereducationmagazines.com/magazine/geography-review/32/3/measuring-diversity-of-place/>

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record on the Bristol Research Portal](#)
PDF-document

This is the accepted author manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via Hodder Education at <https://www.hoddereducationmagazines.com/magazine/geography-review/32/3/measuring-diversity-of-place/>. Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

University of Bristol – Bristol Research Portal

General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/pure/user-guides/brp-terms/>

Segregation in the City?

A Case Study of London

Richard Harris

25 April 2018

A topic of A level geography is the changing demographic and cultural characteristics of places, for which the use of quantitative data to present place characteristics is required. Here the case study is London, a major World City with an ethnically and culturally diverse population unlike most parts of the UK.

Introduction

In December 2016 the Government published The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration. The review was commissioned in response to concerns about religious and political extremism in the UK, community divisions, and social and economic disadvantage. As the diversity of the nation has increased, concerns about social integration and community cohesion have arisen. The Casey Review argues that although minority groups have become more dispersed, in some cases they also have become more segregated.

This article considers that claim in the context of recent changes to London's population. London's size, colonial past, history as a major port and opportunities for employment have long attracted migrants, resulting in an ethnically diverse population that is very different from the rest of the UK. A simple marker of this is to look at the percentage of the resident population that identified as White British in the last national Census (which took place in 2011). For England and Wales, omitting London, the percentage was 86.6 per cent. The percentage for London was almost half that, at 44.9 per cent. London's diversity means that it is one of the few places in the UK where the White British (the nationally largest group) do not form a majority.

(Box 1)

Quantitative data are essential for understanding demographic changes and understanding geographical processes. The data used here include the Census, schools and pupils data, and information about births. These can be accessed at

- <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-and-pupil-numbers>
 - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/datasets/birthcharacteristicsinenglandandwales>
-

Mapping the ethnic diversity of London's Boroughs

It is easy to map the ethnic geography of London (and of the rest of England and Wales) using the online maps of census data at <http://datashine.org.uk>. However, census data are collected only once a decade and date most quickly in the places that are fastest changing. To gain a more up-to-date understanding, Figure 1 maps data from a wider project looking at the ethnic and social characteristics of pupils in English state schools and how those are changing geographically. The map focuses on pupils who were in the middle years of state-funded primary education in 2017 and where they were living. Using these data (which exclude pupils in fee-charging schools), the ethnic composition can be estimated of the primary school age population in each of London's 32 Boroughs, plus the City of London.

For each Borough and for each of thirteen ethnic groups, a square is coloured for every 5 per cent of the Borough's (primary school) population that belongs to the ethnic group. A Borough with an entirely White British population would have 20 squares drawn ($20 \times 5\% = 100\%$), with each shaded dark grey (the colour used to represent the White British in the map's legend). In practice that does not happen. Although the White British is the most prevalent group in London, filling a total of 160 squares, many Boroughs have an ethnically diverse population, especially Brent (#9 on the map); also Hillingdon (#2), Ealing (#5), Newham (#28) and Redbridge (#32).

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

(caption) The ethnic composition of London's Boroughs in 2017 for those in the middle years of state primary schooling

List of abbreviations

ABAN (Asian Bangladeshi); AIND (Asian Indian); APKN (Asian Pakistani); AOTH (Asian Other); BAFR (Black African); BCRB (Black Caribbean); BOTH (Black Other); CHNE (Chinese); WBRI (White British); WOTH (White Other); MIXD (Mixed ethnicity); OTHER (other ethnicity)

Residential patterns within the city

Despite the ethnic diversity, there are still geographical patterns in where each of the ethnic groups live in London. There are six Boroughs that are majority White British, which are Richmond (#3), Hammersmith (#7), Sutton (#12), Bromley (#22), Bexley (#30) and Havering (#33). There are also Boroughs where the White British do not form a majority but remain the largest group. These include Kingston (#4), Barnet (#15) and Greenwich (#27). In other Boroughs, different groups are the largest, including Black Africans in Southwark (#20) and the White Other group (White but not White British) in Enfield (#23). Of particular note is the prevalence of Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets (#25) where that group forms a majority.

(Box 2)

Geodemographic classifications are a way of grouping a large number of areas into a small number of neighbourhood types. One such classification is the London Output Area Classification, which is based on 2011 Census data. An interactive map of London's neighbourhood structure based on this classification can be viewed at <http://loac.datashine.org.uk>.

Thinking about segregation

The ethnic geography of London's Boroughs and neighbourhoods can be taken as evidence of segregation. Segregation is an emotive word because it can be linked to racial discrimination, prejudice and intolerance. Academic usage is more neutral and refers only to the (residential) separations of different groups from one another. Why those separations occur is a matter for debate. Homophily - the (assumed) tendency for individuals to associate with people of similar social and ethno-cultural backgrounds to themselves (for mutual support and understanding, for example) - could be a factor. However, the idea that 'minority' groups choose to self-segregate is contentious, especially when it ignores the social inequalities that mean places are not equally accessible to all group - unequal employment opportunities, for example, or the effects of rental and property markets: think of the very high cost of housing in many parts of London, the types of job people are employed in, and the fact that people from ethnic minorities tend to earn less, on average, than the White British.

Measuring segregation

How high is the level of segregation in London? To answer requires a measurement of it. There are many that could be used but the most common is the Index of Dissimilarity (ID). Its logic is straightforward. Consider that of the total number of White British primary school pupils in the data for London, 1.3 per cent of them live in Tower Hamlets. If the chances of living in Tower Hamlets are no different for the Bangladeshi population then for the White British, then the percentage of the total number of Bangladeshi pupils living in Tower Hamlet ought also to be 1.3. In fact, it is 37.7 per cent. The difference is indicative of the spatial clustering of the Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets and shows that the two groups do not have the same geographical patterns of residence as each other. All the index does is take the differences for each Borough and sum them together in a way that ranges from 0, to indicate no segregation (when the chances of living in any particular Borough are the same for both groups), to 100, meaning complete separation (wherever one group is living, the other is not).

How separated are the White British from other groups in London?

Index values are shown in Figure 2 comparing the White British with other selected ethnic groups in London. The highest amount of residential separation is of the White British from the Bangladeshi population. This is not surprising given the high prevalence of

Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets wherein 60.9 per cent of the state primary pupils are Bangladeshi and only 10 per cent are White British. This contributes to the amount of White British - Bangladeshi segregation being numerically high, at almost 70 per cent.

This high value partly is due to the relatively small number of Bangladeshi pupils, which limits the extent to which they can be spread out across the city (only 5.3 per cent of all the pupils are Bangladeshi). However, the same argument could be applied to the smaller Black Caribbean group that comprises 4.4 per cent of all pupils but for which the amount of residential separation from the White British is nevertheless lower, at less than 50 per cent. The least amount of separation is between the White British and the Mixed, White Other, Black African and Asian Other groups.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

(caption) Segregation values measuring the amount of residential separation of the White British pupils from each of the other named ethnic groups

The changes since 2011

Although some of the values in Figure 2 might seem high, it is unrealistic to expect a value close to zero when one population group (the White British) is much larger than the others. Encouragingly, Figure 2 provides little evidence that the ethnic segregation is increasing overall (despite some increase in the amount of separation of the White British from Indians). A more general pattern is of slight decline. There are two reasons for this, which can be discerned by comparing the map for 2017 (Figure 1) with the corresponding map for 2011 (Figure 3). The first is the increased ethnic diversity of many Boroughs, including Bromley (#22), Croydon (#17) and Hillingdon (#2) (compare the colours of the squares in 2011 and 2017). The second (which is related to the first) is the decreased share of pupils who are White British across London and the increased share of some other groups, especially the White Other group (compare the number of squares for these groups in 2011 and 2017).

[FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

(caption) The ethnic composition of London's Boroughs in 2011 for those in the middle years of state primary schooling

The declining share of the White British in London can arise because there are fewer White British people living in London or because other groups have increased at a faster rate. From the 2001 to the 2011 Censuses, the count of White British residents in London was observed to have fallen from 4.3 million to 3.7 million. It led to media comments such as "it is not wrong to discuss the cultural changes that large-scale immigration can cause, such as 'white flight' from certain areas in London"

(<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/9888310/Lets-talk-about-the-exodus-of-600000-whites-from-London.html>).

However, such rhetoric is potentially misleading because it ignores broader demographic cycles including fluctuations in birth rates (consider the post-war baby boom) and the

different age structures of the various ethnic groups. In 2011, the White British were aged about 40-44 years, on average in England, whereas the Bangladeshis averaged about 20-24 - see Figure 4. The decreased number of White British was not limited to London: in England and Wales, excluding London, their number fell from 43.2 million in 2001 to 41.5 million in 2011. There is evidence that this demographic trend has continued. In 2014, there were 436,054 children born in England and Wales who were classified as White British. In 2015 there were 432,110. In 2016, there were 421,562. Even so, the number of White British pupils in London's state primary schools which was 154,850 in 2011, and 153,420 in 2014, rose back to 154,069 in 2017.

[FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]

(caption) Population pyramids showing the age distribution of selected ethnic groups recorded in the 2011 Census (English data) (source: Harris R, Quantitative Geography: The Basics (Sage, London))

Living together, schooled apart?

In 2018, five English councils were required to adopt new integration plans to address the problems of segregation, one of which was Waltham Forest (#29 on the maps). The broad motivation for this is a concern (found also in The Casey Review) that increased ethnic diversity does not necessarily result in increased interaction and respect.

One clue to whether people from different ethnic groups maintain an avoidance from one other can be found in the schools they attend. In a system of (some) school choice, it is possible for people from different ethnic backgrounds to make choices or to have their choices limited in ways that mean intakes into schools no longer reflect the neighbourhoods that surround them. Is that true of London? To some degree, yes: analysis suggests that the average primary school is slightly less ethnically diverse than if pupils attended their nearest school, and this gap is greater for London than for any other region of England. However, London is also much more diverse than any other region and has a greater amount of public transport facilitating movement from home to school. What is more surprising is not, perhaps, that the schools are less diverse than they might theoretically be but that the differences are generally small. Nevertheless, in a minority of Boroughs (including Harrow, #6) the gap appears to have increased.

(Box 4)

'Telling stories with data' is an important part of geographic learning. Resources to support data skills in geography are available at www.rgs.org/dataskills

Summary

- London is one of the most ethnically diverse parts of the UK, reflecting its historic and contemporary role as a major World City

- Ethnic groups are not evenly distributed across the city but have a residential geography
- Over the period 2011-17 there was trend toward increased diversity and decreased segregation.
- The ethnic diversity of state primary schools in London appears, on average, less diverse than the neighbourhoods that surround them but not greatly so suggesting diversity in neighbourhoods leads to diversity in schools

Discussion points

- Take a look at the online animation at <https://bit.ly/2HuDI84> and, focusing on three or four specific Boroughs, discuss how the ethnic composition of their primary aged population has changed over the period.
- The data do not include pupils in fee-charging schools outside of the state sector. Thinking in terms of data collection and the statistical idea of bias, how might the omission of these pupils affect the maps?
- It has been argued that ethnic segregation is caused by “White avoidance” (<https://www.integrationhub.net/majority-avoidance-one-of-the-few-holes-in-caseys-strong-report/>) but also that it is a function of social segregation (<https://www.integrationhub.net/ethnic-or-social-segregation-harris/>). What other views and perspectives could be considered?

Suggestions for further reading

- Summary of the Casey Review: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration>
- 13 Charts That Show Why London Is Basically Another Country: (<https://www.buzzfeed.com/dlknowles/14-reasons-why-london-should-be-independent-and-o-fm44>)
- <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2012/04/another-country/>
- <http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/code/briefingsupdated/has-neighbourhood-ethnic-segregation-decreased.pdf>

Richard Harris is Professor of Quantitative Social Geography at the University of Bristol

Figure 1: The ethnic composition of London's Boroughs in 2017 for those in the middle years of state primary schooling

Primary school age population, 2017

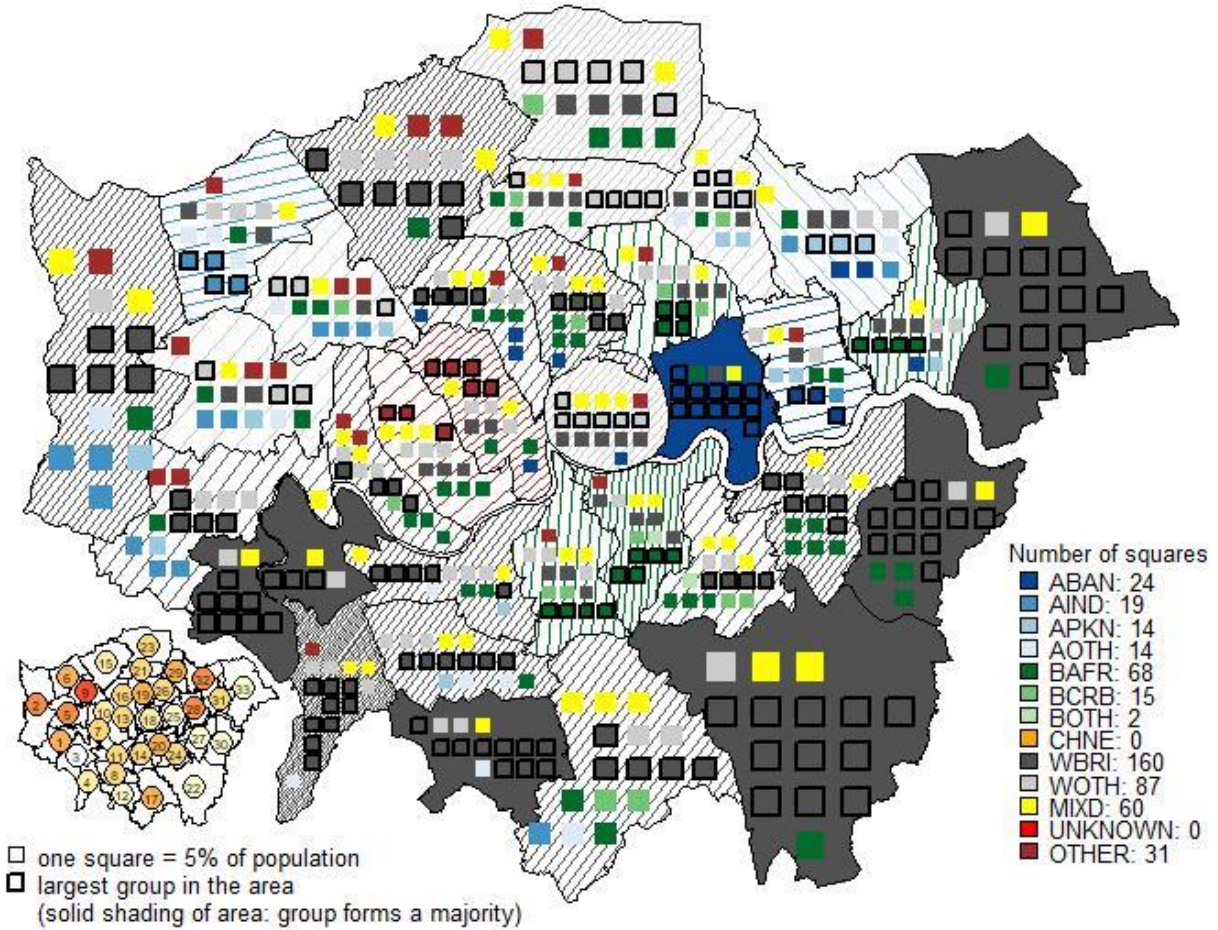


Figure 2: Segregation values measuring the amount of residential separation of the White British pupils from each of the other named ethnic groups

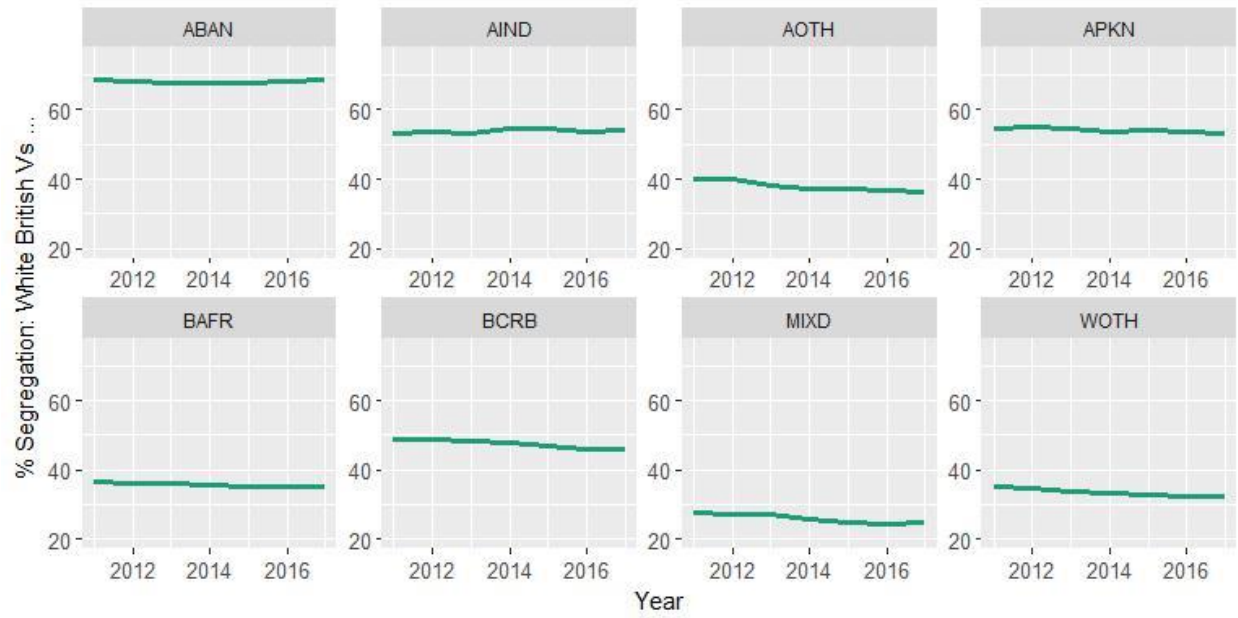


Figure 3: (caption) The ethnic composition of London's Boroughs in 2011 for those in the middle years of state primary schooling

Primary school age population, 2011

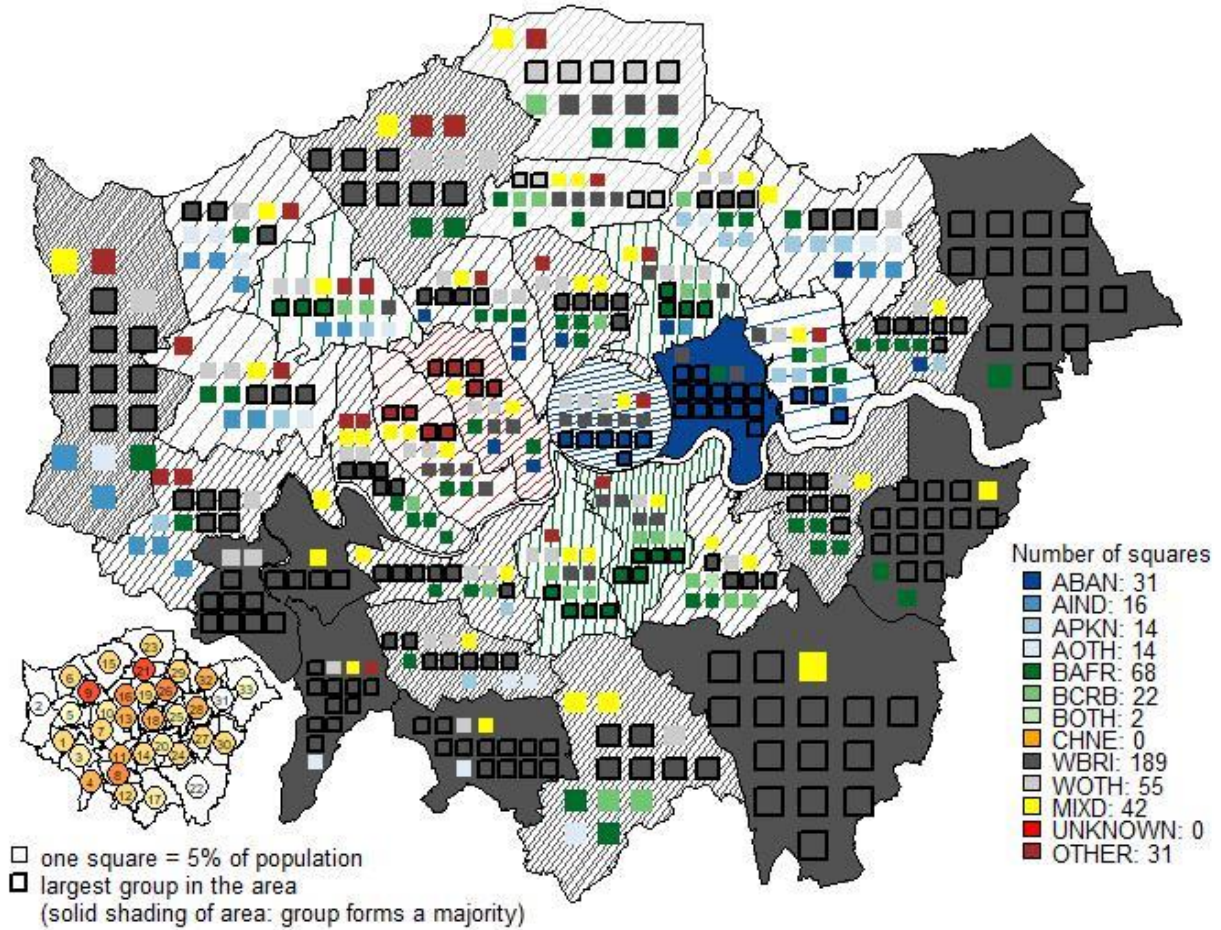


Figure 4: (caption) Population pyramids showing the age distribution of selected ethnic groups recorded in the 2011 Census (English data) (source: Harris R, Quantitative Geography: The Basics (Sage, London))

