Commentary

Multiethnic residential areas in a multiethnic country? A decade of major change in England and Wales

When the first detailed results of the 2011 Census of England and Wales were released in late 2012 there was much media coverage of the extensive changes to the population’s ethnic composition over the previous decade. Headlines such as “Census reveals multicultural country: but are we tolerant?” (The Week), “Alien nation: the new census reveals a Britain that would be unrecognisable to our grandparents” (Mail Online), “2011 Census: good news, bad news or both?” (Guardian Online), and “7.5 million migrants live in Britain” (Express) illustrate the range of coverage. Early treatments by academics focused on the changing spatial distribution of ethnic groups across the two countries’ 348 local authorities and concluded that not only had the ethnic minority populations increased in size but also their members “lived in more mixed areas in 2011 than before” (Simpson, 2012a, page 1; see also Simpson, 2012b; 2012c). Because of the large average and great variability in the size of those authorities, however, such analyses give no insights into the degree of ethnic mixing at the neighbourhood scale, one of the main locales where people experience the population’s ethnic mix (others include the workplace and public spaces such as city centres). This commentary provides a first exploration of that much more local condition.

The changing ethnic population of England and Wales

The total population of England and Wales increased by just over four million people (7.8%) between 2001 and 2011, but those self-identifying as White according to the ethnicity question formed only 17% of that increase: of the four million additional residents only 690 000 claimed to be White, an increase of just 1.4%. Other ethnic groups grew much more rapidly. The number of Black Africans more than doubled, for example (just under one million now identify with that group) and the number of Pakistanis increased by 98%; the smallest change was in Black Caribbeans, whose numbers increased by only 5.4%, and the largest was the 246% change in the number of ‘Other Asians’, who now form 1.5% of the total.

Some of these changes may reflect different responses to the ethnicity question between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, as well as to major changes within society: the number of people claiming a Mixed ethnic identity increased by 85%, for example, and they now form 2.2% of the total population. (Some who identified as Black in 2001 may have changed to a Mixed identification in 2011.) But the main message carried by the media—more negatively in some than others—was of a decade of rapid change towards a more multiethnic society: from constituting 91.3% of the population in 2001, ten years later Whites formed only 86%.

Many of the media reports focused particular attention on London, whose total population increased by just over a million (14%) during the decade but the White population fell by 4.2%; in 2011 Whites constituted just under 60% of metropolitan residents. Meanwhile, all other ethnic groups increased in size there, with the largest growth (over 100%) being of the ‘Other Asian’, ‘Other Black’, ‘Other Non-White’, and ‘Mixed’ groups. The slowest rates of growth were of

(1) The sources are:
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2248707/Peter-Hitchens-The-new-census-reveals-Britain-unrecognisable-grandparents.html
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2248707/Peter-Hitchens-The-new-census-reveals-Britain-unrecognisable-grandparents.html
http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/blog/2012/dec/12/2011-census-good-bad-news
http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/364176/7-5-million-migrants-live-in-Britain?comments=show-all
the longer established groups according to the census classification, notably Black Africans and Black Caribbeans (whose percentage contributions of the capital’s total population fell): the Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi populations all increased by c.25–50%, and together in 2011 they constituted 12% of London’s enumerated residents (as against 10% in 2001).

The population of England and Wales, and especially of London, is more ethnically diverse than it was a decade ago, therefore, which for many commentators means that those populations are more multicultural. But whether such a multiethnic/multicultural society respects its internal differences and flourishes through a cosmopolitan integration in which all individuals and groups are treated equally will depend on much more than just counting numbers living in different local authorities. Among the indicators of, and potential influences on, whether a society is ‘integrated’, multicultural as well as multiethnic (Modood, 2012, page 33), is the housing market and the degree to which group members live separately from each other—with residential separation often linked to opportunities in the all-important educational systems and labour markets.

Rather than look at the ethnic mix of either the countries’ or London’s population as a whole, here we use the detailed census data released at the end of January 2013 for a first examination of the ethnic composition of each of the output areas (OAs) employed for reporting the 2001 and 2011 Census data: in 2011 the 181 408 OAs had an average population of 309. For this overview we used a classification scheme widely deployed over the last decade in comparative analyses of the ethnic diversity of small residential areas in a number of countries (eg, Johnston et al, 2007). This typology categorises each area along two dimensions (figure 1): the percentage of its population who self-identify as White along the horizontal axis, and the largest Non-White ethnic group as a percentage of the total Non-White population (ie, all those not identifying as White) on the vertical axis. Five categories are identified. The first two have White majorities—they predominate in type 1 (ie, constitute more than 80% of the total). Whites form a minority only in the others (types 3–5). The White component is larger in the third than in the fourth, but in neither does a single other group dominate the Non-White component. In the fifth type one of those groups is dominant. Although the boundaries of these five types are somewhat arbitrary (Poulsen et al, 2001, page 2074), they provide a clear picture of the residential pattern and a valuable framework for identifying changes over time.(2)

![Figure 1. The typology of residential areas](image)

**The pattern in England and Wales**

Table 1 portrays the changing ethnic geography of England and Wales, 2001–11. There are three rows for each ethnic group. The first gives the percentage of the group’s members who lived in each of the five types of area in 2001, and the third gives the same figures for 2011:

---

(2) The classification was undertaken using Geo-Segregation Analyser, software available at [http://geoseganalyzer.ucs.inrs.ca/EN/Home.html](http://geoseganalyzer.ucs.inrs.ca/EN/Home.html)
A number of clear trends emerge from this table. The first is the decline in the percentage living in type-1 areas across all ethnic groups: more than 9 percentage points less lived in those White-dominated areas [citadels? (Marcuse, 1997)] in 2011 than in 2001. The second relates to the type-5 areas. Less than 1% of all people in England and Wales lived in such areas—dominated by a single Non-White group—in either year, and the increase over the

| Ethnic group | Year | Neighbourhood type | Population |
|--------------|------|--------------------|------------|
|              |      | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |            |
| White        | 2001 | 92.0  | 6.5   | 1.2   | 0.2   | 0.1   | 47 520 921 |
|              | 2011 | 86.0  | 11.0  | 2.3   | 0.6   | 0.1   | 48 209 395 |
| Mixed        | 2001 | 63.6  | 25.6  | 7.9   | 2.0   | 0.9   | 660 979    |
|              | 2011 | 51.5  | 30.5  | 12.3  | 5.0   | 0.7   | 1224 400   |
| Indian       | 2001 | 33.3  | 29.4  | 17.7  | 9.8   | 9.8   | 1036 577   |
|              | 2011 | 26.2  | 30.0  | 17.4  | 19.5  | 6.9   | 1412 958   |
| Pakistani    | 2001 | 21.6  | 28.6  | 20.7  | 13.0  | 16.2  | 714 727    |
|              | 2011 | 14.4  | 26.8  | 21.4  | 22.8  | 14.7  | 1124 510   |
| Bangladeshi  | 2001 | 20.7  | 29.7  | 20.9  | 13.8  | 15.0  | 280 873    |
|              | 2011 | 16.4  | 24.9  | 24.4  | 23.4  | 10.9  | 447 201    |
| Chinese      | 2001 | 64.0  | 27.7  | 6.5   | 1.2   | 0.5   | 226 933    |
|              | 2011 | 45.4  | 37.0  | 13.3  | 3.6   | 0.7   | 393 141    |
| Other Asia   | 2001 | 36.1  | 34.1  | 17.2  | 8.0   | 4.6   | 241 600    |
|              | 2011 | 31.1  | 33.4  | 19.4  | 13.9  | 2.3   | 835 720    |
| Black African| 2001 | 22.5  | 46.3  | 24.6  | 5.4   | 1.1   | 479 460    |
|              | 2011 | 21.8  | 36.7  | 27.5  | 13.1  | 0.9   | 989 628    |
| Black Caribbean| 2001 | 29.0  | 43.1  | 20.4  | 6.3   | 1.2   | 564 051    |
|              | 2011 | 20.6  | 37.1  | 27.7  | 13.8  | 0.8   | 294 825    |
| Other Black  | 2001 | 29.9  | 43.3  | 20.9  | 4.9   | 1.0   | 95 854     |
|              | 2011 | 17.5  | 36.3  | 29.0  | 16.1  | 1.0   | 280 437    |
| Other Non-White | 2001 | 49.6  | 35.0  | 10.8  | 3.4   | 1.2   | 219 376    |
|              | 2011 | 28.1  | 37.5  | 21.6  | 11.3  | 1.5   | 563 396    |
| Total        | 2001 | 87.1  | 8.8   | 2.5   | 0.8   | 0.7   | 52 041 361 |
|              | 2011 | 77.9  | 14.0  | 4.8   | 2.5   | 0.8   | 56 075 912 |

*For a discussion of the definition of the neighbourhood types, see text and figure 1.*
decade in that share was only 0.1 of a percentage point. Overall, there has been no retreat of
the Non-White groups into relatively exclusive areas for any one group, and the largest
relative declines in that type have been for the three groups—Indians, Pakistanis, and
Bangladeshis—who had the largest shares of their populations living in type-5 areas in 2001.
Overall, therefore, there has been a decline in the percentage of the population in general,
as well as each of the separate ethnic groups, living in areas where one group (whether
White or Non-White) predominates: a more multiethnic society is associated with greater
multiethnic sharing of small residential spaces.

But what types of shared space? The data in the bottom block of table 1 for the total
population indicate that the largest change has been in the percentage living in type-2 areas,
which have White majorities—although in relative terms the shares in the type-3 and type-4
areas increased more (by 92% for type 3 and by 257% for type 4). Nevertheless, the largest
share of the population living in the mixed areas is in the White-majority type-2 districts.
There is considerable variability in this trend across the ethnic groups, however. For five—
White, Mixed, Indian, Other Non-White, and Chinese—the percentage living in type-2 areas
increased (although substantially so only for the Chinese): for most of the other six groups—
including the longer established Black Africans and Black Caribbeans, the Pakistanis and the
Bangladeshis—the percentage living in those White-majority areas declined, just as it did
for the type-1 areas. For all of them, plus the Indians, the main areas of increase were in the
type-4 areas, where Whites form only a small minority (less than 30%)

Overall for England and Wales, therefore, three features stand out. The first is that, although
most of the population (still over three quarters) live in areas where Whites predominate, that
percentage is declining. The second is that there has been virtually no growth in the—albeit
small—share of the population living in areas where a single Non-White group dominates
(type 5). This leads to the third—consequential—pattern: more people are living in mixed
residential areas, but the main shift—other than for Whites and those of Mixed ethnicity—
is into the type-4 areas where Whites are in a small minority only. By 2011 an increasing
proportion of those claiming a Non-White ethnicity were living in areas where Non-Whites
predominated but no single Non-White group formed a majority. England and Wales are
becoming characterised by two types of residential arrangement, therefore: White-majority
areas, of which about one tenth house substantial proportions of the various Non-White groups
(ie, type 2); and mixed Non-White majority areas, characterised by diverse Non-White
populations, in part reflecting the wider range of immigrant origins during the decade—the
rapidly growing Other Asian and Other Non-White groups)

London

Have these trends also characterised London, which has the main concentration of
Non-Whites in England and Wales (3.3 million in 2011, some 42% of all Non-Whites), or is
the capital city different in its multiethnic residential mosaic? Here the major feature—much
more extensively than elsewhere—of the changing situation relates to the White population
(table 2). This not only declined, both absolutely and relatively, over the decade but in
addition the percentage of Whites living in the near-exclusive predominantly White type-1
areas fell very substantially: 2.7 million Whites occupied such areas in 2001, but only 1.5
million ten years later. Many more lived in the type-2 and type-3 mixed areas: 2.4 million in
the former in 2011 (2 million in 2001) and 750 000 in the latter (370 000 in 2001); the second
of those figures indicates a doubling in the number of Whites living in areas where they
formed a minority of the population only.

(3) As a consequence, it is suggested but as yet not confirmed by rigorous analyses, of the declining
White birth rate and ‘White flight’ to exurbia beyond London’s boundaries.
London is no longer characterised by large tracts of residential districts where Whites predominate, therefore: those neighbourhoods’ share of the total population almost halved in a single decade indicating a very significant resorting of the capital’s population. As with the country as a whole, this was not complemented by an increase in the share of the population living in the type-5 areas where one Non-White ethnic group predominates. The main growth has been in the mixed residential areas, notably those of type 3 (which housed just under 900,000 Londoners in 2001 and 1.8 million in 2011) and type 4. The latter, where Non-Whites predominate but with no single group forming a majority, more than tripled in size, both relatively (from 3.1% to 10% of all Londoners) and absolutely (222,000 residents in 2001 and 817,000 ten years later).

### Table 2. The percentage distribution of members of ethnic groups across the five types of residential area in London in 2001 and 2001 (with percentage points change shown in parentheses).

| Ethnic group | Year | Neighbourhood type<sup>a</sup> | Population |
|--------------|------|--------------------------------|------------|
|              |      | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |            |
| White        | 2001 | 53.0  | 38.5  | 7.3   | 0.9   | 0.4   | 5103176    |
|              |      | (−21.5) | (+11.0) | (+8.0) | (+2.6) | (0.0) |            |
|              | 2011 | 31.4  | 49.5  | 15.3  | 3.5   | 0.3   | 4887435    |
| Mixed        | 2001 | 27.4  | 51.9  | 16.8  | 3.1   | 0.8   | 226282     |
|              |      | (−13.7) | (−2.5) | (+10.5) | (+5.9) | (−0.2) |            |
|              | 2011 | 13.7  | 49.5  | 27.3  | 9.0   | 0.5   | 405279     |
| Indian       | 2001 | 15.8  | 37.5  | 26.0  | 14.1  | 6.7   | 437084     |
|              |      | (−9.1) | (−7.1) | (+0.5) | (+18.9) | (−3.2) |            |
|              | 2011 | 6.7   | 30.3  | 26.5  | 32.9  | 3.5   | 542857     |
| Pakistani    | 2001 | 11.6  | 39.0  | 29.2  | 17.8  | 2.5   | 142719     |
|              |      | (−7.8) | (−10.8) | (+2.2) | (+18.0) | (−1.7) |            |
|              | 2011 | 3.9   | 28.1  | 31.4  | 35.8  | 0.8   | 223797     |
| Bangladeshi  | 2001 | 6.4   | 37.5  | 28.2  | 9.4   | 18.5  | 153841     |
|              |      | (−3.9) | (−12.8) | (+8.5) | (+13.0) | (−4.8) |            |
|              | 2011 | 2.4   | 24.7  | 36.7  | 22.4  | 13.7  | 222127     |
| Chinese      | 2001 | 28.7  | 53.4  | 14.8  | 2.4   | 0.8   | 80124      |
|              |      | (−15.4) | (+0.1) | (+11.5) | (+4.0) | (−0.2) |            |
|              | 2011 | 13.3  | 52.7  | 36.3  | 6.4   | 0.6   | 124250     |
| Other Asian  | 2001 | 18.0  | 45.9  | 23.7  | 9.9   | 2.5   | 133109     |
|              |      | (−10.0) | (−6.4) | (+7.0) | (+11.1) | (−1.6) |            |
|              | 2011 | 8.0   | 39.5  | 30.7  | 20.9  | 0.9   | 398515     |
| Black African| 2001 | 11.3  | 52.7  | 29.0  | 6.0   | 1.0   | 378924     |
|              |      | (−6.2) | (−14.6) | (+11.0) | (+10.2) | (−0.4) |            |
|              | 2011 | 5.1   | 38.0  | 40.0  | 16.2  | 0.7   | 398515     |
| Black Caribbean| 2001 | 12.6  | 54.6  | 26.7  | 5.5   | 0.6   | 343616     |
|              |      | (−7.3) | (−14.6) | (+12.6) | (+9.4) | (−0.1) |            |
|              | 2011 | 5.3   | 39.9  | 39.3  | 15.0  | 0.5   | 344597     |
| Other Black  | 2001 | 11.4  | 55.6  | 27.7  | 4.6   | 0.7   | 60311      |
|              |      | (−7.3) | (−16.6) | (+11.9) | (+11.9) | (+0.1) |            |
|              | 2011 | 4.2   | 39.0  | 39.6  | 16.5  | 0.7   | 170112     |
| Other Non-White| 2001 | 23.4  | 53.9  | 17.6  | 4.0   | 1.0   | 112812     |
|              |      | (−15.5) | (−7.5) | (+14.3) | (+9.1) | (−0.5) |            |
|              | 2011 | 7.9   | 46.4  | 22.4  | 10.0  | 1.0   | 281041     |
| Total        | 2001 | 42.2  | 41.0  | 12.4  | 3.1   | 1.3   | 7171998    |
|              |      | (−20.6) | (+3.9) | (+10.0) | (+6.9) | (−0.3) |            |
|              | 2011 | 21.6  | 45.0  | 22.4  | 10.0  | 1.0   | 8173941    |

*a For a discussion of the definition of the neighbourhood types, see text and figure 1.*
The degree of clustering together of the various ethnic groups in those White-minority areas varied, however. Among Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Other Asians the main growth was in the type-4 areas where Whites form less than 30% of the population (figure 1). Among the three Black groups, however, as well as the Chinese and those of Mixed ethnicity, there was least as much, if not more, growth in the type-3 areas, where Whites form a little less than half of the residents: those groups also have a much larger percentage share—over half in every case—of their total populations living in type-2 areas. With the exception of the Chinese, therefore, members of the Asian groups are more residentially separated from the White population than are those who self-identify as Blacks.

London changed very much over the decade, not only in its overall ethnic composition but also the make-up of many of its residential areas. The massive tracts of White ‘citadels’ have more than halved in their share of the city’s residential fabric—in part because some Whites have moved away from London but much more so because many Non-Whites, especially those of Black and Mixed ethnicities, have moved in to share neighbourhoods where Whites formerly predominated. Many more Whites are now exposed to substantial numbers of Non-Whites in their neighbourhoods, and many more Non-Whites live in close proximity to Whites. South Asians (many of whom practise non-Christian religions) have participated in this general trend to a lesser extent, however. More continue to live in areas where Whites are in a minority, but there has been no movement towards the creation of substantial Indian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi exclusive neighbourhoods: indeed the number of members of those three groups who lived in type-5 areas declined from 61 314 to 51 221 over the decade.

Conclusion
This first picture has revealed that the increased multiethnic composition of the population of England and Wales over the decade 2001–11 has been paralleled by the increased multiethnic character of many residential neighbourhoods, especially in London. At the latter date, many fewer Whites lived in districts where their ethnic group predominated and more lived in mixed neighbourhoods: 19.1% of London’s Whites lived in areas with a Non-White majority in 2011, compared with 8.6% a decade earlier. The degree and nature of such increased residential sharing vary across the Non-White groups, however: those identifying with the three main South Asian groups were less likely in 2011 to live in areas where Whites were in the majority than were those with Black or other ethnic identities. South Asians were more likely to live in neighbourhoods where Non-Whites dominated, but there is no evidence of growing enclaves where members of only one of those groups predominated. They were living in mixed areas, too, but with a different type of mix than Whites and other Non-Whites. The increased residential mixing is a characteristic of only a few urban areas, of course: maps show that England and Wales as a whole are dominated by type-1 areas.

Showing that there is more sharing of small residential spaces by members of different ethnic groups does not provide evidence of greater social contact across groups—and thus the emergence of a truly multiethnic/multicultural society. But this first picture of the changing small-scale geography of England and Wales(4) and their major city provides a valuable framework within which more detailed research can be undertaken. As the media reports heralded, English/Welsh society changed substantially over the 21st century’s first decade.

Ron Johnston
School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol
Michael Poulsen, James Forrest
Human Geography, Department of Environment and Geography, Macquarie University

(4) The comparable Scottish data have not yet been released.
References
Johnston R J, Poulsen M F, Forrest J, 2007, “The geography of ethnic residential segregation: a comparative study of five countries” Annals of the Association of American Geographers 97 713–738
Marcuse P, 1997, “The enclave, the citadel and the ghetto—what has changed in the post-Fordist city? Urban Affairs Review 33 228–264
Modood T, 2012 Post-immigration ‘Difference’ and Integration: The Case of Muslims in Western Europe (British Academy Policy Centre, London)
Poulsen M F, Johnston R J, Forrest J, 2001, “Intraurban ethnic enclaves: introducing a knowledge-based classification method” Environment and Planning A 33 2071–2082
Simpson L, 2012a More Segregation or More Mixing Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, University of Manchester
Simpson L, 2012b Does Britain have Plural Cities? Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, University of Manchester
Simpson L, 2012c How has Ethnic Diversity Grown 1991-2001-2011? Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, University of Manchester