

Patterns of concentration and how they arise.

[Slide 2: *People like us*: Ethnic density, Ethnic concentration, Ethnic diversity, Ethnic segregation]

These four terms are used here in all but one the titles of each of the presentations today. Today these terms will generally refer to the population of an area, but could equally refer to the ethnic composition of a school, a workplace, or a social network.

In this talk I want to:

- (a) describe ethnic density in Britain and some significant methodological difficulties for using these measures, particularly when comparing different areas
- (b) Refer to the divided policy context which gives rise to the visibility of ethnic density if not creating the ethnic density itself.
- (c) Question the direction of causation between ethnic density and social behaviour.
- (d) Give a demographic review how ethnic concentrations arise.

It is the kind of talk that set a lot of stones rolling without a definite end in sight. So I look forward to other views in the discussion.

Definitions and measurement

The simple percentage has a big wardrobe of clothes. Summary measures used in research often come down to the simple percentage of White or White British in an area.

[slide of % White in Britain]

Low White British density is high minorities density. This is often called a concentration of minorities sometimes a diverse area, sometimes called 'a segregated area'.

White areas - red – are in fact more segregated, because the others usually are population by a variety of groups. One person's segregation is another person's diversity.

[Slide, Ethnic diversity].

From same source: an interestingly composite measure of the distribution of all groups, giving them all equal weight, not just White versus everyone else.

But it's the same map. Some complications are over-blown. Does differentiate Brent and Blackburn.

Maps that are not the same: No Religion (Celtic fringes); African: each ethnicity different.

How do we compare the ethnic density of one area with another?

This is likely to be a key methodological component of the talks today.

There is a question of norms. If someone tells you that large concentrations of a particular ethnicity present a concern, ask them how *large* a concentration or how much segregation they think presents a problem, and why?

[Slide of Bradford and Manchester]

Segregation is how much the percentage of a group varies between areas.

In this case between wards of Bradford and Manchester.

Similar sized populations in total and similar numbers of wards. Bradford has higher segregation.

Bradford contains large White rural areas that are much less ethnically diverse than the city in the south of the district so the higher variation than Manchester is not so surprising.

When the boundary of Bradford is drawn around its densely urban parts, its segregation is about the same as Manchester. So it is not a fair comparison.

Calderdale's segregation was increased by the Boundary Commission in 2004.

If interested in indices of segregation and their behaviour related to regions' boundaries, urge you to look at JRSS article which discusses.

This is one of the difficulties of comparing, for example, segregation in the USA and Britain.

Difficulties in fairly comparing areas are not restricted to segregation, but exist also for the simple percentage. Some parts of central Manchester where we are, are 75% Jewish... if you draw the boundary around each of us then some parts are more than 75% Jewish and we all live in ghettos of one.

Moving boundaries gave a big chunk of ethnically diverse Redbridge to Barking and Dagenham in the 1990s: Margaret Hodge claimed it had a higher growth of minority population than any other place. Daft but true and the boundary change was not reported along with her claim (buried in New Statesman yesterday).

This is not an issue only related to ethnicity. When I worked for Bradford Council I told the politicians that if they had smaller electoral wards then more of them would have high percentages of deprived households and therefore be eligible for government grants. They just had to be ahead of the game before other Councils did the same thing. The government's Index of Multiple Deprivation nowadays gets around that issue by using similar sized areas throughout England, the Super Output Areas.

My advice is: don't compare indices of segregation, or percentages, unless you can use same-sized areas or otherwise have a clear way to take account of the different nature of area boundaries and population sizes. I imagine that the presentations today will illustrate a variety of ways of doing this.

[Slide: Strangers in our own country]

The context for ethnic density research

Who cares about the impact of being with people like us?

We could clinically tear apart this story from Monday's Express, and its poor handling of data, but my point is that it expresses a belief that is the most commonly heard perspective from commentators in Britain, that ethnic density directly indicates a dangerous splintering of society. The perspective has different slants, some emphasising integration, others emphasising immigration as in this case.

Another perspective takes it that high concentrations of particular ethnicities represent aggregate needs of particular types perhaps regarding housing, diet, health, and searches for appropriate policies.

There are other approaches that would see high density of ethnic minorities representing greater discrimination and the locus of democratic struggles.

Many of the presentations today will have already placed themselves in relation to these perspectives or others.

So concentrations are studied in social science *because* they are a political topic: My point is that ethnic concentrations arise in the sense of being noticed, because they are politically salient. But the policy terrain is very divided and researchers will need to consider how their messages will be received in each camp.

[Slide: The impact of ethnic density]

I'll move on to another point.

Ethnic density in causal models

The conference sub-title, and three of the presentation titles refer to 'impact' or 'effect' of ethnic density, which suggests that 'living with people like us' has an impact on some or all of the people living there, impacts on social outcomes that are different from what they would have been had the same people been living in different ethnic densities.

[slide, arrow to crime, health, social capital, trust, unemployment, experience of racism]

Ethnic density relates to colour of skin and family origins in a part of the world, whereas outcomes are a result of beliefs, behaviours, and the behaviours of other people. Presumably a set of people defined by ethnicity are supposed to have, or to instil in others, on average a special set of beliefs or behaviours that affects social outcomes.

To establish an effect of ethnic density one must establish what the causal mechanism might be, and that the association does not arise from something else that has resulted in both a particular ethnic density and the social outcomes.

My mother's family arrived in Britain as asylum-seekers from Germany in 1934. They went first to London and not to North Wales, though that is where she ended up for some time later in life. London had more crime, more unemployment, than North Wales, before she got there. Similarly it is no accident that Bangladeshi density is higher in Tower Hamlets in inner London than in Essex outside London. The availability of inexpensive housing and an adaptive labour market is key to the location of large numbers of immigrants.

[Slide arrows of causal connection to ethnic density]

So when we see that the proportion of minority ethnic groups varies across Britain we may need to ask not only what impact does it have on X Y and Z, but what impact did X Y and Z or things closely related to them have on creating this pattern of ethnic density. And other things altogether may have created ethnic composition.

So now I'll move to the question of how do patterns of 'ethnic concentrations' arise.

Change in ethnic concentration

I won't be dealing with this question in the round, but it turns out that there are some basic demographic dynamics of changing ethnic density. These can help to understand why we live among people like us, and lead on to other useful research questions.

[Slide 1991-2001-2006 for ten cities with largest Minority populations in 2001.]

Greater concentrations 1991-2001. But not greater segregation: deconcentration on average.

Discuss ONS experimental statistics – show a different pattern of change since 2001, but these estimates could be wrong, wait for 2011 Census to be sure.

Continue as in other presentations:

[Diagram of change.] Non-racial processes of natural population growth, limits of housing stock, and aspirational suburbanisation create the change in ethnic composition that has wrongly been interpreted as racially motivated.

[Births and immigration, migration within UK, wards] Local data support the non-racial explanations: births a greater engine of minority growth than migration, and migration out of minority concentrations from both minorities and whites.

In summary, (a) natural change is a major, often the major, determinate of a change in ethnic diversity (b) ethnic groups are not pulling apart in where they live (c) young people of different ethnic backgrounds have very similar aspirations for living conditions.

[Summary slide]

Conclusions

Interpretation of ethnic density has to be clarified each time it is used, especially in relation to causal models

- categories are those of skin colour and national origin; not immigration or culture.
- What mechanisms can link ethnic density and social outcomes

Contradictory trends

- Larger concentrations (% minority has increased),
- De-concentration (the spread of % minority is less)

Ethnic concentrations arise from:

- changing area boundaries
- the political attention they receive
- the attraction of immigrant settlement, through pre-existing housing and economic conditions.
- continued immigration
- *in situ* natural growth of young populations.
- the aspirational movement towards suburbs of all groups

For discussion:

Name the issues, ethnic density etc is a cover for all sorts of issues. Participation, anti-social behaviour, illegal and badly paid labour market, ...