

‘Sleepwalking to segregation’? Challenging myths about race and migration

By Nissa Finney and Ludi Simpson, published by Policy Press

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Approximate transcript

Title slide



Parts of Holborn are 75% Jewish. Is that true? May be surprised at that. I have told you it so you may believe it. But it depends where you draw the line round those parts. The smaller the parts, the more likely it is that some part has a high proportion of a group. If you draw the boundaries around each person we are all in a ghetto of one, and there are some parts of Holborn, some parts of this room, which will be more than 75% Jewish.

It is not that the statistic is wrong but that its conditions were left undefined, so that you might have believed the ‘parts’ referred to were substantial, meaningful and worthy of public comment, but this was not in fact the case.

This is the way with any evidence: if it contains ambiguity it may support several interpretations. The role of science is to seek further evidence to clarify the matter. On occasion however an academic or government official may abuse their authority to

choose an interpretation that suits their theory or a policy. As we shall see there are also cases of unscrupulous politicians, and tired journalists, who will reproduce not just ambiguities but plain falsehoods in pursuit of what they feel is the right policy or story.

This book then simply attempts to use rigorous, careful statistics to investigate ambiguities in claims about race and migration, and reduce those ambiguities. It is in the tradition of the radical science movements. Recommend the Radical Statistics Group.

One characteristic of the radical science movements is their recognition of the social, economic and political context that research is created and reported in.

What is the context for claims of dangerous levels of segregation and of immigration, levels of ethnic diversity that threaten the governability of Britain's cities, and degrees of separation by religious affiliation or ethnic identity amounting to parallel lives and an unwillingness to integrate that encourages cultural conflict and terrorist organisation? These are the claims that our book addresses.

The context includes: A reduction in racist prejudice, helped by anti-discrimination laws but accompanied by deep continuing disadvantage in labour and housing markets for immigrants, and Black and Asian minorities.. Social inequality with a stark geographical divisions, such that many schools do not provide a good education for their pupils, many neighbourhoods are much more unsafe than others; unprecedented levels of trade and of migration world-wide, which this title slide nicely depicts. It was nearly the cover of the book. A political terrorism embodied in the actions of Al Quaida networks that has been matched by US and British war on Afghanistan and Iraq, with a return to violent and intrusive policing within Britain.

I will return to this context, as I am sure others will today, but my job has a different principal focus.

How does the claim of parallel lives match the evidence?

Before launching into the claims and the evidence I want to give the huge necessary credit to my co-author who cannot come for a reason that will be obvious when I say that this photo was taken last week.

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Nissa is the one who is not talking. She's in Bury with Freya and Alan the Dad.

Sample claims

Here is a sample of the claims that the book deals with.



Sample claims

- Sunday Times 2006: "Government statistics show that white and ethnic minority communities are becoming increasingly segregated"
 - "The CRE told us so"
- Head of EHRC 2008: "We know that White flight is accelerating, that schools are becoming more segregated than the areas they sit in"
 - "I really don't have the time to swap interpretations and footnotes"
- Director of Policy, CRE / ICoCo 2006: "Leicester will be minority White by 2011"
 - "Something I have seen widely reported"
- Sir Andrew Green, MigrationWatchUK: "Immigration is on an unprecedented scale".

The first in an authoritative newspaper is not true: government statistics show stable or decreasing segregation in every district of Britain.

The second by Trevor Phillips, the head of the government's equality commission is not true: as we shall see, there is little evidence for White flight unless one speaks of Brown and Black flight at the same time, and the research from government and Bristol University is that schools reflect the segregation in their neighbourhoods.

The third from the deputy of the Institute of Community Cohesion is not true. Perhaps by 2020, but not by 2011.

The fourth is true but it is also true of Europe and the World as a whole: immigration to Britain does not stand out in a global context.

What did the authors of these claims say when challenged?

First – not our fault gov.

Second – no time to discuss: but one would think that such a high-powered person has researchers who he could refer to, if he were interested.

Third – well I saw it in the newspapers. Nick Johnson gave nine sources of the claim that Leicester would very soon be minority White: three didn't make the claim, four gave no sources, the eighth referred to the school rolls not the whole population, and the final referred to the claim as 'an alarmist projection'. If you repeat a falsehood often enough it might be believed by many. But hardly good practice for a senior policy officer.

The fourth I have said is true but entirely out of context. The book has two chapters dealing with immigration statistics and the claims around them, but I won't say more as immigration is not the focus today.

Fairly easy for me to say that these claims are all wrong, and if we left it there you might think that this is a spat between an academic and government officials. Such disputes are after all quite common ways of both parties getting publicity.

I suggest that the impact of these claims is rather more central than this. The views of parallel lives and increasing segregation are damaging: they spread a flavour of danger and defeat which does no favours to community development or race relations. These claims have consequences and so should be addressed seriously.

And I am not alone in saying that the claims have no basis in evidence: not all but almost all those who have specialised in studying segregation or the settlement of

Britain's minority populations agree: geographers Dorling and Peach, sociologist Modood, for example.

My background: I worked for Bradford Council for 20 years as researcher. I have lived in Bradford for almost thirty years.

I well remember July 7th 2001, the start of what has become known as the Bradford riots. It was the last day of the Bradford Festival, immensely popular locally, but the finale had been cancelled because the police claimed they could not ensure safety after the National Front declared it would march in Bradford that day. Terry Rooney one of the local MPs called the decision to cancel the festival spineless. Several thousand people were in the central city square anyway, partly to enjoy the much smaller event that was put on anyway, and partly to prevent the National Front from marching. The National Front were reported to arrive, several fights occurred, and the police pushed them out of the city centre into Manningham, provoking anger that became 24 hours of destruction.

Bradford, 2001



Bradford July 2001



5 days later a report from Herman Ouseley about Bradford race relations began 7 of its 13 introductory paragraphs with the word 'fear': 'fear grips Bradford'. The report

coined the term self-segregation. It set the scene for an interpretation of the causes of the riots that was far from the nitty-gritty of the events that day. It was in fact written before the riots, but like much of the predominant government writing after them and since then, it addresses the real concerns over racism and inequality with a paternalistic response of ‘If only we knew more about each other, spoke the truth and shook each other’s hands more often, all this inconvenient inequality would be sorted out.’ The shift in emphasis from structural and political explanation to cultural and behavioural explanation of inequality was a core component of the reports following the riots that introduced community cohesion policies.

Note it was before 9/11. The link between segregation and breeding violence was made, but the extension to terrorism waited for Trevor Phillips in 2005 after the London bombings.

That’s a rather extended introduction. I will now look at some of the evidence on Britain’s ethnic diversity, where people live and how that is changing. Then I’ll look at the evidence on various versions of the claim that ‘minorities don’t *want* to integrate, to do with housing choice, friendship groups and school segregation. I’ll finish with some discussion of implications for policy, and warn that the claims of dangerous segregation are a new version of playing the race card, a bogey that distracts from real issues. Naming specific real issues is the antidote to the bogey.

Geographers’ indices of segregation

Geographers' indices of segregation



	Index of dissimilarity (evenness) The average difference in distribution across areas, group vs rest		Index of isolation (exposure) The group's average % in the areas where the group lives	
	1991	2001	1991	2001
White	61.4	58.8	95.3	93.5
Caribbean	68.9	67.0	7.6	7.3
African	71.1	70.6	4.3	8.2
Indian	65.3	62.1	15.6	15.5
Pakistani	75.1	71.7	13.9	17.4
Bangladeshi	74.2	71.6	10.9	13.8
Chinese	42.2	41.3	0.8	1.2

Electoral Wards, England and Wales

Here are two of the many indices which geographers use to measure segregation.

The first index (of Dissimilarity) would be zero if a group was spread through England and Wales the same as the rest of the population, and 100 if the group was only found in areas where there was no other group. There certainly is segregation – we don't need indices to tell us that some areas are more White than others for example.

There are many reasons why segregation might be expected to remain or to increase over time: hostility, new immigration to the cheaper housing in the same inner city areas, loyalty of immigrants' children to the place of their upbringing, disadvantage in the housing and labour markets, natural growth of immigrant populations through births, the claims themselves which label inner city areas as dangerous to those who don't live in them.

Despite all this, evidence shows that White and minorities are more equally spread than in the past – for every group their spread across different areas is *more* even than it has been in the past, and this trend between the last two censuses has accelerated since 2001 according to government statistics.

This evidence confirms what we know directly from migration statistics, that immigrants and their families once settled slowly disperse.

The second index here on the right is calculated differently and is the average proportion of a group, in the places where it lives, and has increased for some groups. It has been given the perhaps unfortunate name Index of Isolation. It shows very clearly that the White group is by far the most isolated. White people on average live in places which have more than 90% White population. Minorities have on average less than 20% of their own group in the places they live. This of course increases if you consider smaller places, but it still doesn't rise to 30% for areas as small as a couple of hundred people (the Census Output Areas).

For some groups 'isolation' increasing: African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese. But those are precisely the groups that have increased significantly in population. So of course their average proportion in the population has gone up a little, and would have gone up more if there hadn't been the dispersal that the other index shows. This growth in the index of isolation doesn't show retreat but simply a growing population.


That's the key message here. That growth of population has been misinterpreted as increasing segregation. Minorities are more noticeable and it is claimed that therefore minorities must have congregated together and whites scarpred. It is a wrong interpretation. The evidence says that minorities are more noticeable mainly because there are more of us – everywhere.

Misinterpretation is the most charitable explanation for so many politicians having adopted the view of increasing segregation. One purpose of stressing the evidence against segregation is to eliminate misinterpretation as a justification of the litany of segregation claims.

This evidence of greater even-ness of residence suggests that people are not retreating into ghettos. We can look directly at where people go when they do move.

Migration within the UK

Migration within the UK from minority White areas within local authorities



	Minority movement out	Minority movement in
White movement out	Minority out-movement greater than White out-movement Ealing, Newham, Birmingham, Blackburn & Darwen, Brent, Pendle, Tower Hamlets, Southwark, Burnley, Sandwell, Slough, Lewisham, Peterborough, Bolton, Derby	Harrow, Waltham Forest
	White out-movement greater than minority out-movement Redbidge, Luton, Hounslow, Croydon, Oldham, Haringey, Hyndburn	
White movement in	Leicester, Bradford, Wolverhampton, Coventry, Lambeth, Wycombe, Manchester, Merton	Trafford, Hackney, Preston

This is a list of the 35 local authorities in Britain which had minority white wards at the time of the last Census in 2001. It classifies the districts according to whether on balance more people moved into or out of the least White ward from other parts of the UK.

From the least White ward in most of these districts, both White and minorities were moving out on balance to other parts of the UK, that's the list at the top left. In most of these cases more minorities left than White residents. Nobody disputes this evidence. Most simply don't refer to it.

In eight districts including Leicester and Bradford, minorities were moving out of their concentrations within the district, but White population was moving in, the opposite of retreat: definitely more mixing. The supporting evidence shows that Indians are moving out of Leicester, Pakistanis from Bradford, Caribbeans from Lambeth, Bangladeshis from Tower Hamlets.

At the top right are the two districts where Whites are moving out and Minorities are moving into areas where they are already the majority. Are Waltham Forest and Harrow the ghettos of Britain? No, these are outer London Boroughs where Minorities are moving out to them from inner London, and Whites are continuing that suburbanisation to areas out of London.

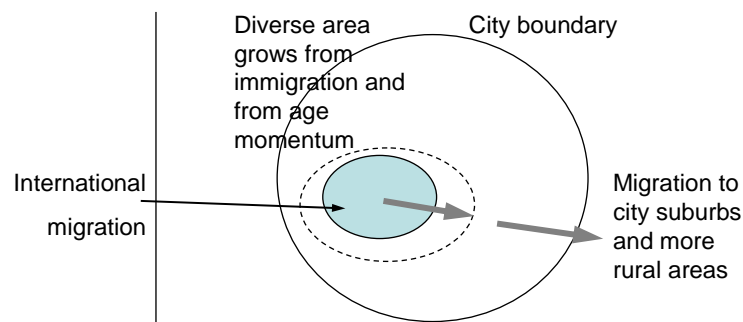
So don't let's talk about White flight, unless brown and black flight in same breath.

But this doesn't mean that the minority populations in Bradford, Leicester and all these other places are decreasing! There is immigration, and natural growth, that together increase the population in inner city immigrant settlement areas, in spite of the movement out to other areas.

Local population dynamics



Immigration, population momentum, and non-racial suburbanisation



Results: lower proportion White, more mixed areas

This is the picture of population dynamics in most cities in Britain! Think of one city you know.

Generally one area of the city with cheaper housing is a focus for past immigration and is most ethnically diverse, and more immigration makes its diverse population grow. It also grows very significantly from what we call in the trade 'age momentum': a young population (immigrants are generally in their twenties) grows because it has children but suffers few deaths for several decades.

Those children grow up and find that housing is limited locally and move outwards, enlarging the diverse area and creating more mixed areas further out. People also move to better environments if they can afford it. That same aspirational movement to better environments also means that the White population moves out, and because

more White people live closer to the city boundary, more often move over it into other Districts.

The results are clear in several ways: (1) every type of area has a reduced White population; (2) there is more mixing (at work, in friendship groups, and in intimate partnerships); (3) ethnically diverse areas are larger and more noticeable; (4) suburbs are a focus of change where inner city residents need to move.

Non-racial processes produce more mixing but also larger ethnically diverse populations, and this will continue.

Minorities don't want to integrate?



'Minorities don't want to integrate?'

- Cities gripped by fear?
- Same ethnicity friendship groups?
- Desire for residential segregation?
- School choice creating segregation?
- Segregation breeding terrorism?

The book goes into the evidence of population change in some detail, but now I want to move on to its chapter 5, which addresses the specific claim that is the centre of today's seminar, that minorities don't want to integrate.

It addresses these five variations on the same theme.

I won't spend time on the first of these, save to say that all the opinion polls and local authority surveys say that fear of diversity is greatest in the areas that are not diverse: those that experience diversity by and large get on with life without those fears.

How about the claim that friendship groups are too limited?

Friendship Groups



Is there an increase in same-ethnicity friendship groups?

- Alarmingly, we showed that young people from ethnic minorities were twice as likely to have a circle of pals exclusively from their own community as were older ethnic minority folk... younger Britons appear to be integrating less well than their parents.
- This year the figures show a marked turn for the worse ... even bleaker
- The 47% of ethnic minority Britons who last year said that most or all of their friends were white has now shrunk to 37%; and the proportion who have mainly or exclusively ethnic minority friends has grown from 31% to 37%. This is way beyond any statistical fluctuation.
 - Trevor Phillips, 2005, then head of Commission for Racial Equality
 - based on YouGov polls 816 minority Britons in 2004, 470 in 2005

Here is Trevor Phillips in part of his Sleepwalking to Segregation speech that has done such damage, claiming increasing and alarming exclusive friendship groups.

He does not tell us what this ‘alarming’ figure of young exclusively minority friendship groups is, but on the basis of a quota sample from a self-selected online sample says it has increased ‘way beyond statistical fluctuation’, appealing to authority of statistics again.

What he says is that 37% of ethnic minority Britons have exclusively *or* mainly ethnic minority friends. So the rest, most of ethnic minority Britons, have about half or more than half White friends. Is this cause for such intemperate language?

Statistical significance is not applicable to samples that are not random, and even it were with these samples of 800 in 2004 and a little under 500 in 2005 it would only just reach the level at which researchers say is statistically significant rather than ‘way beyond’ it.

Had Trevor Phillips wanted to, he could have referred to a much larger and properly conducted national sample in the government’s Citizenship Survey. It shows no change in the composition of minorities’ friendship groups from 2003 to 2005. It shows that minorities born in Britain are *more* likely to have White friends than

minorities born abroad, in spite of the fact that younger minority people have more of their own age and ethnicity than older minorities among neighbours and family.

There is a stronger measure of friendship groups in those of Mixed ethnic group, the product of the most intimate friendships. The Mixed ethnic group as it is now measured is the fastest growing in Britain. It is also the case that Muslims are as likely to marry out as White Christians.

In the book we suggest that Phillips “was using a judicious compound of alarmist language and false claim to scientific rigour to create a striking message about friendship groups, unsupported by the evidence, of dangerous inward-looking communities, harbingers of a bleak future for the UK.” (p99).

How about the claim that minorities want to live only among themselves?

Interviews in Oldham, Rochdale, Bradford



Interviews in Oldham, Rochdale and Bradford

- What is a desirable type of area?
 - *You can walk to the shop and everyone's like 'hello', but not like curtain-twitching.* (young White woman, Oldham)
 - *“Our generation is changing a bit... they're looking for a better house, a better environment – you know?”* (young Pakistani woman, Oldham)
- Mixed areas
 - *“ your life's a lot more richer because you obviously learn things that you just wouldn't in predominantly Asian areas.”* (young Pakistani woman, Rochdale)
 - *As you earn more you want to move into better area, but will always look for an ethnic or Asian mix.”* (Bradford, young Muslim man)

Phillips (2006), Simpson, Ahmed and Phillips (2007)

Similar results from Harries et al (2008) from Birmingham and Tower Hamlets

Here I hope I am not taking the thunder from Debbie who is talking later and has been the leader in interviewing young people about the housing choices. All her and others' research shows that, and I quote from one of the reports, that “The housing aspirations

and expectations of White and Asian young people are remarkably similar. High priority is placed on safe neighbourhoods with a good environment, an absence of anti-social behaviour and proximity to other family members and friends ... [which] ... were not expressed in racial terms”

Simpson, Phillips and Ahmed, 2007

One can ask whether young *White* people also want to live in ethnically mixed areas? Empirically, that’s what they do: Nissa Finney in her latest work confirms what we might know from experience, that young White people tend to move to inner city and diverse areas for a period of their young adulthood.

But things are not all calm dispersal to mixed areas.

Barriers to residential segregation



Barriers to residential integration

- Hostility and fear of hostility
 - *“Everything is here, our culture, our shops, mosque ... and the best thing about this area [Manningham]: no racism.”* (elderly man, Bradford)
 - *“If it means that you have to compromise on getting abused and having all these problems we won’t touch that”.* (young Pakistani woman, Rochdale)
- Income segregation
 - *“Rich white people and rich Asians – they escape to nice, posher places... I suppose that’s bound to happen: earn more, want more.”* (young Muslim man, Bradford)
 - *“We’re only living here because there’s nothing better that we can afford.”* (young Bangladeshi man, inner Rochdale)

Phillips (2006), Simpson, Ahmed and Phillips (2007)

The hostility of White areas and the security of familiar areas are important, especially for older people.

The limits of personal resources also means that the reduction in residential segregation though real is not as fast as it might otherwise be.

Now I want to look at school choice. Here are the claims.

School choice



Is school choice creating segregation?

- ‘Schools are becoming more segregated than the areas they sit in’
– Trevor Phillips, 2008
- ‘Revealed: UK schools dividing on race lines’
... ‘A majority of pupils in many areas of the country ... have little contact with children from different ethnic backgrounds, even though they live in close proximity’
– Observer main story, 27 May 2007

What’s the evidence?

I have already mentioned that Phillips did not want to discuss the evidence, he had ‘no time to exchange footnotes.’

The research team in Bristol including Simon Burgess and Ron Johnston, which has looked most at this question has concluded that, I quote, “there has been some increase in segregation levels in some cities, but only to the expected extent given the changing relative size of the minority populations there.” (p106). Their measures are based on that index of isolation, so the increase in segregation they talk about reflects the increase in size of the minority population.

What of this Observer headline? It is based on a report that said no more than that school’s ethnic composition varied greatly. eg. many schools have more than 90% White pupils while others have more than 90% minority pupils.

What of school choice: does it create ethnic segregation?

One would have to know where children go to school and where they live. The only study to do this directly is one published last year and discussed in the book, by what used to be called the Department for Education.

DCSF evidence



DCSF: segregation (ID) in England and Wales

	If pupils were in their closest school	Pupils in the schools attended
Segregation of Bangladeshis from all others	73	76
Segregation according to income (FSM)	33	39

Department of Children, Schools and Families, 2008

That department changes its acronym every couple of years, it's now the DCSF which you can always remember as the Department of Curtains and Soft Furnishing.

The first column uses that Index of Dissimilarity which shows how spread are pupils between schools on a scale of 0 to 100, if pupils went to their nearest school. Schools would certainly have very different ethnic compositions even if their pupils went to their closest school. This uneven spread of Bangladeshis between neighbourhoods is much higher than the uneven spread of income measured here by whether pupils are eligible for Free School Meals. Poverty is spread through neighbourhoods more than is ethnic diversity.


The second column shows the impact of school choice: where pupils actually go to school. It has some impact on ethnic composition, which is slightly more divided than if children went to their closest school, and it is about the same increase for other ethnic minority groups. But the separation increases more for income. School choice

sorts pupils more according to income than ethnicity. It may be that class is more important than ethnicity, or that the sorting by ethnicity is entirely because minorities are on average poorer. It may simply be that the way school ‘choice’ operates, some children or parents are more likely to get their choice than others.

Either way, school segregation is not the shock horror story that the headlines suggest.

Finally the book looks at whether so-called segregated areas are breeding grounds for terrorism.

Proportion of Muslims charged with terrorism



: Proportion of Muslims charged with terrorism according to local concentration of Muslims

District type	Number of local authority districts	Muslim population	Concentration of Muslims (% of local population)	Number of Muslims charged with terrorism
1 Lowest concentrations of Muslims	325	391,344	1%	16
2 Low concentrations of Muslims	30	381,933	6%	26
3 High concentrations of Muslims	14	356,025	11%	16
4 Highest concentrations of Muslims	7	432,418	18%	17

If areas with the largest concentrations of Muslims promote terrorism, and especially if the police are focussing their attention there, one would expect most of those charged with terrorism would live in the areas with high or highest concentration of Muslims. We divided up England and Wales districts into four, each containing about the same number of Muslims according to the latest census figures: so a quarter live in very many districts with relatively low proportions of Muslims, and a quarter live in just seven districts with the highest proportion of Muslims, averaging 18%.

Nissa then trawled through the media reports of those charged with terrorism over a period of two years, identified those with Muslim names, and recorded their district of residence. If segregation breeds terrorism, one would expect more to appear in the Districts with most Muslims.

Final column: in fact there was very little difference. The difference that there is, is not statistically significant. And what we know confirms this: often those who have been charged with plotting or implementing these terrible atrocities appear to be among the more educated and integrated citizens.

Now I want to conclude with some observations about what's round the corner, what policy implications there are, and why the claims are so persistent in spite of the lack of evidence for them.

What's around the corner?



What's round the corner? and what can be done about it?

- More ethnically diverse areas, with higher proportions of 'minority' residents
 - Indices of 'isolation' will go up for Asian populations
 - Not policy sensitive: we don't ask people not to have children
- More dispersal to other areas: common aspirations point to diversity and a residential mosaic
 - Increase labour market equality and economic prosperity
 - Remove barriers in the housing market
 - Recognise different housing needs (size; elderly care)
 - Improve environment of inner areas
 - Respond to pressure on housing and community in the suburbs

The demography tells us that all parts of Britain are becoming more ethnically diverse and that this will continue irrespective of immigration policy and neighbourhood policies. Those indices that measure the proportion of minorities in an area will go up. This is mainly a result of young populations having children and not suffering so many deaths. This will continue for decades yet, and unless Herod is re-incarnated

there is no point making targets of White moves to inner city poor housing, or of decreasing minority percentages. To do so is to demoralise and stigmatise. We have learned not to judge people by their colour. We should no more judge an area by its colour.

Instead social policy should encourage equality in the labour and housing markets. It should recognise common aspirations in housing and better neighbourhood environment, at the same time as respecting some real differences between groups' preferences in for example size of housing, on average.

In particular, social policy should recognise the housing pressure on suburbs outside the inner city. This is where growing minority populations want to move, but also where existing residents are most likely to be anxious about change, and where far right political groups target their divisive work. It is in the suburbs and housing estates that real community development work is needed to help new and existing residents of whatever background.

Final comments

Why are these myths of segregation, conflict and parallel lives so persistent?

It is unfortunately true that some of the main architects of community cohesion are not numerate. But their persistent lack of willingness to have their organisations look at the evidence amounts to what I would call 'institutional innumeracy'.

It is likely that fear of change, fear of inner cities, of poverty and of places of vibrant rebellion, as well as plain xenophobia and racism will continue, both at the top of political society and on the street.

In that atmosphere, the claims we have addressed constitute a new race card. To mention 'segregation' is these days to raise a bogey, an image of an alien culture which menaces and is beyond control. The dispiriting talk of ethnic segregation enlarges fear of foreigners to all minorities (more than half of whom were born in Britain), and to whole areas.

It draws fire off the issues of not only racism/discrimination but of community needs for good housing and employment. There is a need to counter the bogey of parallel lives by insisting that problems are named specifically.

Young people's friendship groups are not a problem, but anti-social behaviour might be.

Wearing of the Niqab or veil is not a problem, but women's rights to take part in the decisions that change their lives might be.

Immigration is not the problem (we should more fear it when people no longer want to come to Britain), but insufficient language support, and appalling employment conditions might be.

Choice of where to live is not the problem, but access to housing certainly is.

Is it school segregation that is the problem, or the lack of good schools everywhere?

I hope that the book has helped not just to clarify what *are* the ambiguities around the slippery words of segregation, integration and polarisation, but to *reduce* the ambiguity by showing some of the clear reality of increased ethnic diversity in people's lives. I hope that this clarity then helps to expose the myth-makers and to name social issues that do exist. This is the book's role within the radical science tradition.

I hope that another contribution has been to emphasise that politicians and journalists do have access to evidence, if they choose to look at it. One can hope that the media's uncritical adoption of MigrationWatchUK as a source of comment may be stemmed by their exposure for 'choosing the figures that suit their story'. If the falsehood and fabrication behind claims of growing segregation and accelerating White flight are sufficiently known, then government reports and representatives may be discouraged from making sweeping unsubstantiated and scaremongering claims in the future.

The detective work that lays bare trails of false claims repeated in newspapers, government agencies and academic reports may not prevent all shoddy reporting in future. The book will give ammunition to those sceptical of the litany and will help politicians and journalists who strive to combine integrity with deadlines.

And finally, by drawing poison out of the litany of negative claims about immigrants and minorities in Britain, we have hopefully performed a cultural service in rejecting the language of division, that better allows us all to think seriously about the communities we live in and how to improve our conditions.

