

## Ethnic Segregation in Bradford

There is a lively debate going on among academics about the issue of ethnic segregation in Bradford. Ludi Simpson, who worked for many years for Bradford Council, has recently published an article on the subject in *The Journal of Urban Studies*. Simpson's main conclusions are summarised <http://news.man.ac.uk/1079345491/index.html>

Alan Carling is sceptical of the claims made by Simpson, and responded as follows to an earlier paper of Simpson's that formed the basis of the article in the *The Journal of Urban Studies*.

### The Myth of Mythicality: Simpson on racial segregation in Bradford

Alan Carling\*

#### *Introduction*

Ludi Simpson has contended in a recent paper that 'in 2001 the phenomenon of racial self-segregation gained the status of a legend. It was coined in a review of race relations in Bradford (Ouseley, 2001), repeated in government reports and passed from one news report to another, becoming a popular explanation of observed residential patterns. .... The evidence of this paper does not support this legend. .... The legend of self-segregation can now be seen to be a myth.'<sup>1</sup> [23]

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\* The author is a member of the University of Bradford's Programme for a Peaceful City (PPC), which is a network of academics and local people who are interested in looking at the issues and challenges facing the Bradford District through sharing ideas of theory and practice. The work reported in this paper has been discussed within the PPC research grouping. Members of the PPC subscribe to a statement of aims and principles that includes a commitment to the accessibility and openness of the research process. The PPC takes no position otherwise on any views expressed in this paper, which remain the sole responsibility of the author.

<sup>1</sup> Ludi Simpson (2003), 'Statistics of racial segregation: measures, evidence and policy', *Occasional Paper #24* (Manchester: CCSR). Citations to this paper are enclosed by square brackets in the main text. The paper is available from [www.ccsr.ac.uk](http://www.ccsr.ac.uk). H. Ouseley (2001), *Community Pride not Prejudice, making diversity work in Bradford* (Bradford: Bradford Vision).

Simpson's paper raises a number of interesting points, and presents some important data. It is however compromised by some basic conceptual difficulties. It also draws conclusions of a polemical nature that are not warranted by the evidence presented (or, most likely, by *any* evidence yet available from any source). And it downplays important aspects of the data that point in directions different from the conclusion cited above. In short, Simpson does not establish that self-segregation is a myth, and he is in danger of creating his own myth, namely, that racial self-segregation in Bradford is a process of mythical status.

### *The Essence of Racism*

There are initial difficulties with the treatment of two general issues. The first issue concerns Simpson's view of racism, and is taken up in this section. A second issue, concerning the relationship between statistics and politics, occupies the next.

Simpson introduces his discussion of racism as follows:

The essence of racism is an assumption that people act on the basis of their measured 'race' or 'ethnic group'. Such an assumption leads to social policy differentiated by ethnic group. It is an assumption that cannot be sustained scientifically. Measured 'race' and ethnic group have no biological basis and cannot be seen as themselves a cause of social change . . . . . , although they are used as a proxy for culture, beliefs and behaviour. [3]

This paragraph invites a more detailed analysis, partly for the way it sets a symptomatic tone for Simpson's argument, and partly for the sheer quantity of conceptual difficulties it manages to encompass within its four sentences.

The first sentence of the paragraph appears to misdescribe the essence of racism, since it says that it is an *ipso facto* racist act to assume in any context that people are behaving on an ethnic or a racial basis. This leaves out of account the evaluative element that is surely part of the essence of racism. More properly conceived, the essence of racism would seem to consist in a differentially-negative attitude adopted by an individual towards

every member of a group defined by the individual in racial terms.<sup>2</sup> The usage of the term ‘racist’ is then commonly extended from racist attitudes (as described) to racist actions allegedly informed or motivated by the said attitudes.

‘Racism’ so conceived is an indelibly normative concept, but the normativity is applied in two layers, so to speak. The racist makes a negative evaluation of the hated race, and the person who ascribes the epithet ‘racist’ to the alleged racist makes a negative evaluation of the person, or at least the action, thus described.

Simpson’s definition of racism also equivocates between ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’. In my view, racism strictly speaking involves the ascription of a *biological story* of differential origins or descent to the members of the group identified as racially distinctive.<sup>3</sup> But the usage of ‘racism’ is conventionally extended once again to include similar kinds of motivation and/or action oriented to ethnic group memberships characterised by stories of differential *cultural* origins or descent.<sup>4</sup>

Racial and/or ethnic group memberships must certainly be *perceived* in order to become significant in social interaction. Whether they need to be ‘measured’ is uncertain, and it is unclear what work this qualification is doing in Simpson’s account. It is related in some way to his concern about the use of statistical categories that purport to measure race, and their deleterious role in reifying discourse about race and ethnicity. This concern is taken up in the next section.

The second sentence of the paragraph cited above is simply false, if it is interpreted as a general causal statement. Racist attitudes and/or actions may exist without making any impact on social policy. But the sentence nevertheless carries the implication that wherever policies are based on assumptions that lead to differentiation according to

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Attitude’ is intended here as a placeholder for a broader class of mental attributes, including preferences, motivations and so on. The definition allows that a person might belong to the group of which the negative attitude is held. i.e.) The definition does not exclude the possibility of self hatred.

<sup>3</sup> A. Carling (1991), *Social Division* (London: Verso), 331. I should further emphasise the word ‘story’ in this definition. That a biological story is told does not make the biological story true, and in fact such stories are almost invariably false.

<sup>4</sup> In the rest of the paper, I will tend to use either term to include the other.

ethnic group, then they are *ipso facto* racist policies. The usual term for ‘social policy differentiated by ethnic group’ is ‘Multiculturalism’, such as that practised for example in some areas of its work for about the past twenty years by the Bradford Metropolitan District Council. It is of course extremely controversial to say in effect that an organisation such as Bradford Council has been practising racism as an act of policy. I am unclear whether Simpson intended this conclusion to be drawn, or whether he created unforeseen difficulties for himself by failing to clarify the normative element in his definition of racism. A sensible route through the minefield might be to say that social policies differentiated by ethnic group are not necessarily racist, but will become so if they rest on racist assumptions as defined above. Thus it might be possible to envisage a benign Multiculturalism, which can target policy initiatives on particular ethnic groups without making thereby a negative judgement on either the target population or some other ethnic group(s).<sup>5</sup>

The third sentence is undoubtedly false, if taken literally. People do sometimes ‘act on the basis’ of their ‘‘race’ or ‘ethnic group’’ (whether ‘measured’ or not). Indeed, racism only becomes a problem because some people sometimes act in this way. In such cases of racist activity, the assumption that people are acting on a racist basis is the only scientifically-defensible assumption to make.

The sentence is perhaps trying to express a different proposition, which is explicated to some extent in the fourth and final sentence, where a challenge is issued to the general applicability of stories of difference based on biological ascription. Here it is undoubtedly true that conventional statistical measures of race, such as the Census category of ‘White’, by no means coincide with any measure of genetic difference. On the other hand, the statistical measures of race may not be totally unrelated to some underlying genetic factors, since most people self-classified as ‘White’ probably possess some combination of genes disposing them towards pale skin. Simpson may be aiming nevertheless at a different and important truth, namely that, so far as we can tell, the

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<sup>5</sup> I should make clear that I am neither advocating nor opposing multiculturalist policies at this point, but rather investigating whether they can in principle avoid the taint of racism.

combinations of genes that cause attributes like skin colour bear no systematic differential relationship to fundamental human attributes such as needs or capacities. It cannot therefore be the case that differential genetic endowments between racial and/or ethnic groups have social effects as a matter of fact, such as being 'a cause of social change'. To hold otherwise flies in the face of science.

But if it is true that biological differences of this kind do not in fact affect social relationships, it is manifestly false that *belief in biological difference* also exerts no effect. Such beliefs lay behind the Holocaust, and no doubt contribute to all manner of violence and, in the limit, genocide in other historical situations. We might suggest that Simpson was trying to make the valid point in his final sentence that race can exert its effects historically when the belief in racial difference is used inappropriately ('as a proxy') to express differences whose origins are non-biological, and concerned instead with 'culture, beliefs and behaviour'.

The purpose of this commentary is not just to gain greater conceptual clarity for its own sake. The point about 'racism' in contemporary culture is that it is amongst the strongest accusations that can be made. Such an accusation is polemically devastating, since almost no-one (even perhaps among racists) will publicly defend a position that is shown to be racist. Intimations of racism thus tend to settle arguments, and foreclose public debate. So it is important to be clear about the criteria any valid accusation of racism must meet, and such accusations are not to be lightly bandied about. The effect of Simpson's treatment is to broaden the definition of racism beyond its reasonable limits, and thus to extend the scope of utterances or actions that are vulnerable to the racist charge. The use of such a definition in political debate would tend to identify the wrong political targets, since it would cast the racist net too wide. It would also tend to devalue the verbal currency of racism, and so paradoxically take the heat off the discourse and the actions that really are racist. This strikes me as an unhelpfully counterproductive move.

*Statistics and Politics*

Simpson introduces a number of formulations suggesting that there are politically-acceptable and politically-unacceptable ways to go about the business of statistical analysis [3-5], and he returns to this theme with fierce emphasis in the concluding sentiment of the paper.<sup>6</sup> It is not entirely clear how far into the methodology this prescription is to extend. It is one thing to say that there are politically-acceptable and politically-unacceptable ways to *use* statistical analysis; it is quite another to say (or to imply) that certain statistical procedures are *ipso facto* unacceptable, and some of Simpson's formulations come uncomfortably close to the latter assertion: (eg 'Average statistics about individuals tend to encourage stereotyping, almost by definition'[5]).

A distinction needs to be introduced at this point between i) a given system of statistical categorisation (such as a classification of individuals into racial and/or ethnic groups) and ii) the arithmetical operations that are performed on the data categorised in the given terms (such as the calculation of the average of a distribution). In the latter case, there is strictly speaking no information contained in the average that is not already contained in the distribution of the raw data, since any average figure is just a logical (arithmetic) corollary of the data which it summarises. So the construction of averages is in this sense a neutral process. The neutral process could nevertheless lead to adverse (non-neutral) consequences (such as stereotyping) either if the *interpretation* of the summary statistic was technically misleading in some context, or *if the underlying categorisation was in some respects inappropriate*. In the latter case, the fault in the categorisation would have simply been transmitted via a technically-neutral process to cause the fault in the statistical usage of, say, a summary measure such as an average.

I will not dwell on the possibility of faulty technical interpretation, which is not necessarily a trivial matter, but does not seem unusually problematic in the current context.<sup>7</sup> The real difficulty lies with the underlying categorisation, and the uses to which

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<sup>6</sup> 'Through racially-conscious language and research directed at myth-busting and highlighting discrimination both individual and institutional, investigators play a part in making a just society in which racial differences no longer identify cumulative discrimination but one [sic] aspect of social description.' [25]

<sup>7</sup> The standard recommendation here is to read the small print, so that one understands the assumptions underlying the usage of any given statistical technique.

it is put. The difficulty results from the tension between the desire (and the need) on the one hand to address what one might call the social reality in the Bradford District, which includes in many contexts the ascription of ethnic and/or racial labels to persons and events, and the desire not to exacerbate or to overplay these phenomena by the descriptive language that is used. How do we adjust our language and our analyses to render them proportional to the phenomena we are attempting to describe?

Ludi Simpson is absolutely correct to draw attention to this problem in my view. Every categorisation of individuals involves discarding certain information about them that might be given prominence by some alternative categorisation. To describe persons in ethnic or racial terms is thus in a certain sense to prejudge their identities ('almost by definition'), and this could lead to, or be associated with, socio-psychological processes such as stereotyping, unhealthy group dynamics, and so on. We certainly do not want our statistics to make the situation worse, but neither do we want to misrepresent whatever the situation is, and that is the dilemma we face.

Simpson is right then to highlight the dilemma, but I think it is misleading to suggest that any easy resolution to the dilemma is available by the application of some approved anti-racist statistical technique. One obvious proposal, for example, is that a system of ethnic categorisation is acceptable if and only if it rests on *self-ascription* of the subjects of any analysis: essentially one goes by what individuals themselves say they are. It does not take much reflection to realise however that this proposal is too loose for some purposes of analysis and too restrictive for others.

Looseness first: just because a person volunteers in the context of some survey (e.g. the national Census) that they see themselves as a member of one ethnic group rather than another, it does not follow that they have ratified the self-ascription in some other context to which the statistics are relevant (e.g. residence, employment, housing, family structure etc. etc.).

Restrictiveness next: it is certainly a daunting demand, and probably an unreasonable one, to require of any analysis that all the subjects of the analysis have given an appropriate permission for their ethnic ascriptions. To give an example from the paper under review: Simpson relies for his major conclusions on a novel and ingenious method of detecting internal migration by sampling the names found on the electoral roll and patients' registers from the Health Services. [14] This is a useful source of information that would be denied under the self-ascription rule, since it is the investigator rather than the subject who has ascribed a categorisation on the basis of (an interpretation of) a name. There is also the point that self-ascription is ill-equipped to deal with situations in which a person regards themselves as an X but is regarded by others as a Y. The person's self-perception is no doubt a primary point of reference, but is it the sole point of reference? Does their view alone count, or can the rest of society (or a part of it) legitimately contribute a view?

It seems to follow that the principle of self-ascription is neither necessary nor sufficient for adequate ethnic categorisation, but then we are left without a clear statistical recipe to pursue. I have no quarrel with Simpson's rousing call that the statistics of racial demography 'should be used to understand and combat racial injustices, and the racial thinking that informs some social policy.' [5] My difficulty is to know in advance what forms of analysis are likely to achieve this result. It seems to me that every investigator is in pretty much the same boat, and prone to similar dangers, of underestimating real phenomena on the one hand, and on the other hand of deploying a form of measurement that 'not only identifies existing differences, but entrenches divisions' [4]. This general point applies equally to Simpson's analyses and to my own, and should be borne in mind throughout the following commentary on the central substantive issue: is ethnic and racial self-segregation occurring in the Bradford District?

### *The Process of Self-segregation*

Any analysis into an alleged process of self-segregation should begin from a clear definition of what 'self-segregation' is. Given that the exercise is aimed ultimately

towards policy matters, the factual issue of whether or not self-segregation exists gives rise quickly to two further questions: first, whether or not self-segregation (as defined) is a good thing or a bad thing, and, to the extent that it is deemed a bad thing, what steps might be taken (by the Council or others agencies) to allieviate it.

Simpson never says what he thinks self-segregation is, and so his analysis can hardly get beyond first base. In particular, it is difficult to know what credence to attach to the claim that ‘the legend of self-segregation is a myth’ when no clear idea is given of what Bradford would look like if the legend were true.

In what follows, I will first attempt to repair the definitional omission in his account, and then use the repair as the necessary basis of enquiry into the factual question.

In terms of definitions, it may be noted that ‘self-segregation’ is essentially a technical expression for the old adage ‘birds of a feather flock together’. Here then is an attempt at a technical definition: self-segregation is a recurrent pattern of choice by members of a given group which reflects a preference held by members of the group to associate amongst themselves in virtue of their group membership.

As such, self-segregation is a ubiquitous feature of social life, and it can hardly be a bad thing, taken in its entirety: no committee meeting, sporting contest or family gathering could take place without self-segregation. So the question becomes: *under what circumstances* is it a bad thing? My guess is that the relevant circumstances include bad motivations (e.g. racist or exclusionary motivations) and bad effects (e.g. the restriction of choices and opportunities for others, the encouragement of cultural narrowness, the creation of social patterns that are more likely to lead to unproductive future conflict, etc. etc.).

Although it is not the main purpose of this paper to pursue these issues in detail, it is worth noting their importance for the Bradford District, and especially the competing considerations involved in their resolution.

On the one hand, the people of the District are perfectly within their rights to make individual choices about their place of residence, the school for their children, their religious observance, patterns of leisure activity and so on without being interrogated too closely about their purposes and motivations. It is after all a free country. And there appears to be no justifiable reason why the population of Bradford should be especially subject to scrutiny in this respect, beyond their observance of the generally-applicable laws dealing with racial discrimination and so on. As Simpson himself notes, in relation to the historical experience of immigrants to Bradford: ‘mutual support between those with similar language, cultural and religious traditions, which are not well served by indigenous religious and secular networks, led naturally to very local concentrations.’ [2] The clear implication is that these forms of self-segregation are understandable (‘natural[.]’), and presumably therefore no bad thing.

On the other hand, it may be i) that freely-chosen life decisions, made either by recent immigrants or by others, do rest in some cases on indefensible motivations, or ii) that the cumulative effect of such decisions made by a large number of people over a long period of time (whether or not they are indefensibly-motivated) creates social patterns (of schooling, residence, employment and so on) that will prove unfortunate for the future of the District.

In the light of these considerations, the analysis cannot be expected to cover the entire universe of self-segregation processes occurring in Bradford, but only those giving rise to the latter concerns. The corresponding research question is whether these untoward forms of self-segregation are a major feature of life in Bradford. Simpson is confident that they are not, from which it follows that nothing needs to be done on the policy front to alleviate the possible effects of (the untoward varieties of) self-segregation. Or rather, what needs to be done at most is an exercise in ‘myth-busting’, to overcome the widespread, and in his view erroneous, perception that self-segregation is happening in Bradford. And his paper is implicitly self-conceived as a contribution to this noble effort. [25]

I have already mentioned one general reason why his confidence seems to be misplaced, namely that he has failed to provide a clear account of what it is whose occurrence he thinks mythical. A second general reason is that neither he nor anyone else seems to have the information that would be necessary to resolve the empirical issue one way or the other. And it is certain that aggregate statistical analysis, on which Simpson chiefly relies in this paper, could never supply the answer by itself.

To see this, consider what would be necessary to establish a claim of self-segregation. First, one would need to distinguish self-segregation from other patterns of choices leading to the dispersal of statistically-identified population groups. For example, a family might be motivated to sell a house in a certain area by the expectation of financial gain, or to move to a house somewhere else with a larger yard, or a better view. Self-segregation (as I have defined it) is only involved if the family is motivated instead to move by its desire to be surrounded by families of a similar type. And the issue is further complicated by the fact that families (or of course individuals) may have mixed motivations, some of which might be aspirational, say, and some segregational.<sup>8</sup> But even if this methodological hurdle were cleared, it would be necessary to distinguish further between politically-acceptable and politically-unacceptable varieties of self-segregation, given the common sense view, implicitly endorsed by Simpson in his comment on the immigrant experience, that some types of self-segregation, even on ethnic or religious grounds, may be acceptable.<sup>9</sup>

Since Simpson supplies neither the conceptual argument concerning segregation processes nor the data on the micro-foundations of behaviour that would allow him in principle to answer these questions, he is in no position to claim that ‘the legend of self-segregation can now be seen to be a myth’. [23] This then is my fundamental complaint about the paper: that it propagates a myth of mythicality, and that it asserts claims about

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<sup>8</sup> Simpson concedes that demographic data cannot distinguish between ‘voluntary and enforced segregation’, but then brushes this objection aside. [12]

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note, of course, that according to Simpson’s (too-broad) definition of the essence of racism, such patterns of choice are essentially racist. I presume that he did not intend this inference to be drawn.

what is or is not happening in Bradford that Simpson is not in a position to know, at least on the evidence presented in the paper. The proper resolution of these questions would require a more elaborate research design, in which the macroscopic approach of aggregate statistical analysis was married with special microscopic studies designed to elucidate behavioural motivations and effects.

In the remainder of this review, I will change onto a different tack, and ask what can be inferred nevertheless from the fascinating data that Simpson presents, granted all the procedural caveats mentioned above.

*(Self-) Segregation as Myth*

It will prove useful to list a number of distinct myth-busting claims, starting with the most general, and moving via a series of easy steps to the most specific:

Claim 1. ‘ ... self-segregation can now be seen to be a myth’ [23]

Claim 2. *residential* self-segregation can now be seen to be a myth

Claim 3. ‘*Increasing* residential segregation of South Asian communities is a myth’ [12, emphasis added]

Claim 4. The increasing *index* of residential segregation of South Asian communities is a myth.

The first and third claims are cited verbatim from the text; the second and fourth are missing links. Claim 1 encapsulates the headline message that the reader is intended to carry away from Simpson’s analysis. But the evidence considered in the paper largely concerns residential patterns, so that the most it could prove is Claim 2. And Claim 2 does not entail Claim 1, since even if Simpson were correct about *residential* self-segregation, there might well be segregation in education, say, or in employment that would render Claim 1 false.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See S. Burgess and D. Wilson (2003), ‘Ethnic Segregation in England’s Schools’ (Bristol: CMPO), 8 for evidence that Bradford is one of the five LEAs nationally with extreme ethnic segregation in schools. The others are Oldham, Blackburn, Birmingham and Luton.

Claim 3 changes the ground once again, because it speaks not of the *level* of segregation, but its *tendency of change* over time. This is a second-order version of the fundamental claim, and both analysis and policy should surely be concerned in the first instance with the first-order problem, namely the extent of segregation, not its rate of change. The truth of Claim 3 is evidently independent of the truth of Claims 1 or 2, since segregation might be either increasing or decreasing from any given level, either high or low. Claim 3 further shifts the ground by speaking of ‘segregation’ where Claim 1 deals with ‘*self-segregation*’. Simpson tends to elide the two concepts, which for the reasons given above should always be kept apart. There is no logical relationship between segregation and self-segregation, which can move independently.

Claim 4 is the narrowest of the claims, and it happens to be the only one that is true. Simpson applies the statistical Index of Segregation to ethnic residential data for Bradford at the Enumeration District (ED) level of the Census. He reports that the Index has remained remarkably constant over the decade 1991-2001, and actually decreased fractionally during the period, from 0.75 to 0.74, according to his Table 2 [16], which is reproduced as Table 1 below. But this is the *only* systematic direct evidence that he introduces for any of the claims. It seems then that he is involved in a kind of backwards induction process, according to which the truth of Claim 4 is used to infer the truth of Claim 3, which is used to infer the truth of Claim 2, which is used in turn to establish the truth of the headline Claim 1.

In fact, none of these inferences is legitimate. A closer inspection of the data suggests that the appropriate conclusions to be drawn on the basis of the evidence Simpson presents are the exact opposite of the ones that he puts forward. So far from being mythical, it seems most likely that ethnic self-segregation is a significant feature of the social landscape in Bradford, and that *the segregation of S. Asian populations in particular has tended to increase during the 1990s*.

It is easy to show first of all that Claim 2 is false. Although it is true that the index of segregation is stable, it has remained roughly constant throughout the 1990s *at a very*

*high value*, namely c. 0.75. It should be noted that a value in this index of 0.6 or above is one of the factors used in one US study to indicate the existence of a ghetto in urban residential space.<sup>11</sup> According to this measure, Bradford is therefore as thoroughly segregated in ethnic terms as some of the major US cities. And Simpson cannot have it both ways: if the use of this measure is sufficient for him to claim the *absence of change* in (self-)segregation over the 1990s, then it must be sufficient to establish the *high level* of (self-)segregation throughout the same period. But if Claim 2 is false, then so is his headline Claim 1, because of the logical relationship of the two claims.<sup>12</sup>

At first sight, it looks as if Claim 3 at least can be salvaged, and some consolation derived from the fact that even though S. Asian segregation remains high, it has not increased in Bradford during the 1990s. It turns out that this inference is wrong. For reasons that will be explored in the next section, the statistical *Index* of residential segregation applied by Simpson to the District as a whole has failed to capture the actual movements of residential segregation that appear to have been taking place on the ground during the last decade.

*Residential Segregation in the Bradford District 1991-2001*

Simpson's data are summarised as follows:

	<b>Exclusively S. Asian</b>	<b>Predominantly S. Asian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>	<b>Predominantly Other</b>	<b>Exclusively Other</b>	<b>Index of Segregation</b>
1991	0	29	152	129	617	0.75
1996	1	43	154	136	593	0.74
2001	0	77	163	134	553	0.74

Table 1: The Ethnic Composition of the Bradford District: Enumeration Districts (EDs) 1991-2001 *Source:* Simpson, Table 2.

<sup>11</sup> Burgess and Wilson (2003), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Claim 1 entails Claim 2 (though not vice versa), from which it follows that the negation of Claim 2 entails the negation of Claim 1.

These data record the ethnic composition of the 927 EDs in Bradford, as between South Asian residents and 'Other' residents, the latter including all those not classified as South Asian. Each ED represents a mini-neighbourhood containing 150-200 households and about 500 individuals. 'Exclusively S. Asian' EDs contain more than 95% from S. Asian ethnic groups; 'Predominantly S.Asian' contain between 75% and 95 %; 'Mixed' EDs contain between 75% and 25% of each of the two groups, 'Predominantly Other' EDs contain between 75% and 95% Other residents, and 'Exclusively Other' EDs more than 95% Other. Simpson remarks that 'for this paper's context, the "Other" group can usually be safely interpreted as "White."' [14] I will follow Simpson in this respect, and speak of 'Others' as 'White' in what follows, mindful that for many other purposes a more refined ethnic categorisation would be required.

The data presented in Table 1 chart two kinds of change in the ethnic distribution of the population during the decade.

The first type of population change, on which Simpson focusses his commentary, is the decline in the number of EDs with exclusively White populations, from 617 in 1991 to 593 in 1996 and then 553 in 2001. This no doubt reflects a process in which S. Asian Bradfordians are dispersing out of the inner city areas towards the previously all-White suburbs. A factor in this movement may be increasing affluence of some S. Asian families, who are thus participating in a general outward population movement of 'middle class flight'.

It is Simpson's treatment of the second type of population change that is however problematic. He points out that there are fewer 'mono-racial' areas in Bradford, because there are hardly any areas that are exclusively Asian (none in 1991 and 2001, and just one in 1996), and there are, as we have seen, fewer that are exclusively White. [16] So it is true that the number of mono-racial areas has declined, but the emphasis on this point provides a tendentious interpretation of Table 1, because it overlooks the second column of the Table, where salient action also occurs.

The second column records the fact that the number of *predominantly* S. Asian EDs has increased very sharply over the decade. In fact the number has almost tripled, from 29 to 77. Although this change has affected a relatively small number of EDs, the population numbers are by no means insignificant. In 1991 some 14,500 Bradfordians were living in predominantly Asian EDs.<sup>13</sup> Ten years later, the number had increased to about 38,500. Interestingly, the estimated S. Asian share in this increase (20,000) is not far short of the *total* increase in the S. Asian population over the decade, from the combined effects of net inward migration and natural increase (25,703, from Table 3b). It is as if the experience of Bradford for its ‘new’ S. Asian population has been an experience of highly segregated living, *for about 80% of this new cohort*.

Another way of looking at this change is as follows. In any given year, S. Asians are living in a variety of different EDs, some of which are ‘Predominantly S. Asian’ (with on average 85% S. Asian populations), some of which are ‘Exclusively White’ (with on average 2.5% S. Asian populations) and so on. It is then possible to ask the question: what is the average experience of S. Asians, in terms of the ethnic composition of their immediate neighbourhood? More technically, what is the mean ethnic composition of EDs among S. Asian residents? The same exercise can then be performed for White residents: what is the average ethnic composition of *their* immediate neighbourhood? Table 2 reports the results for both groups for the three years.

Year	S. Asian Residents	‘No segregation’	Other Residents
1991	46.0%	13.6%	9.2%
1996	49.4%	-	9.8%
2001	55.1%	18.9%	10.9%

Table 2: Estimated Mean Proportion of S. Asian Residents in Resident’s ED, by Ethnic Group 1991-2001. *Source:* Simpson, Tables 2 and 3<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This estimate is derived by simply multiplying the number of EDs by their mean population, which is estimated at 500.

<sup>14</sup> These calculations assume that the grouped data in Table 1 are uniformly distributed within each category. That is, the mean proportion of S. Asians in ‘Predominantly S. Asian’ EDs is 85%, and so on. It

Table 2 confirms the general impression of high levels of segregation. The middle column records what might be expected on the assumption of ‘no segregation’, in which the ethnic composition of each ED, and therefore the experience of every resident, exactly mirrors the ethnic composition of the entire District. This changes over time because the proportion of S. Asians is increasing, from 13.6% in 1991 to 18.9% more recently.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the period, S. Asians are living in EDs with much higher proportions of S. Asians than would be expected on the ‘no segregation’ assumption, and White residents similarly in areas that are considerably more ‘White’ than the assumption would predict. But it is the *movement* of the figures over time that is the most interesting. White residents in 2001 are living on average in areas that are at least a little less White than a decade previously, although it is a moot point whether this change is sufficient to keep pace with the change in the overall ethnic balance that was happening simultaneously.

S. Asians on the other hand are living on average in areas that are unambiguously more ‘Asian’ than they were a decade before. In fact, the average experience is to move from a ‘minority’ situation in an ED (with 46% S. Asian population) to a ‘majority’ situation (with 55% S. Asian population). Moreover, this is occurring beyond what might be expected on the basis of a changing overall proportion in the population. The latter has increased by 5.3%, but the change in the composition experienced on average by S. Asian residents is 9.1%. Along with the other evidence, there is thus a clear basis for concluding that S.Asian communities are tending to become more segregated by residence over time, not less segregated.

Turning to Simpson’s Index of Segregation itself, the last column of Table 1 records that the Index remained constant during the period, regardless of the various changes

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is also assumed that each ED has the same population. Comparison of the population figures estimated on this basis with the true figures suggests that the assumptions are reasonable.

<sup>15</sup> See Simpson’s Table 3 [17]. The figure given here for the year 2001 refers to 2000, and the data for 1996 were not recorded separately.

discussed above. How has this occurred? To answer this question definitively would require detailed analysis of the full data set summarised in Table 1.

Inspection of the summary data suggests nevertheless that the *Index* has remained unchanged because the two basic types of population change have exerted counterbalancing effects on its numerical value.<sup>16</sup> Roughly speaking the White areas have become slightly less segregated (whilst remaining highly segregated) whereas the Asian areas have become more segregated. Claim 3 is therefore invalid, because it denies that the latter has occurred, which is of course consistent with the fact that segregation has arguably decreased in the White areas. The answer to the question “has ethnic residential segregation increased in Bradford over the last decade?” would seem to be “it all depends upon where in the District you look.”<sup>17</sup> At all events, one of the most significant developments of the last decade – the increased segregation of S. Asian populations – seems to have fallen below the radar screen of Simpson’s summary technique. And this development deserves particular attention, because it runs counter to any easy optimism that the levels of segregation are declining naturally over time.

*Why has the number of Predominantly Asian EDs increased?*

This is a complicated issue, and like all the most interesting questions, the data required to answer it are not yet available. The factors emphasised by Simpson are undoubtedly important. The S. Asian population is younger on average than the population at large, and this will lead to a higher rate of natural increase regardless of what is happening to birth rates at the same time. It may be that the non-Asian populations remaining in predominantly S. Asian areas are older than average, with higher death rates. And there will be non-Asians who are participating in the outward movement of rising affluence towards the suburbs, given that the predominantly S. Asian EDs will tend to be in the

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. ‘the index of segregation for Bradford as a whole has been stable, but this lack of change is the balance between several different trends’. [22]

<sup>17</sup> This is actually the most charitable conclusion to be drawn from the data regarding Simpson’s position. It would be quite possible to argue on the basis of Table 2 that segregation has increased for both S. Asian and White populations, since both are further away from the central expectation in 2001 than they were in 1991.

inner city areas of either Bradford or Keighley. As always, the principal segregation of urban residential space operates by means of social class through the various markets in different kinds of housing. As Simpson observes: ‘Much of the movement by all groups is dependent on the means to move rather than racially motivated – it is the migration of the relatively affluent from all groups.’ [12] It is a fair question why we should be so concerned by ethnic segregation in this field, when we tend to take for granted the overarching reality of segregation by social class. And given the association between ethnicity and deprivation, any measure of residential segregation by ethnicity is likely to reflect by proxy substantial inequalities in class position by income and wealth.

Simpson is not to be criticised in my view for emphasising these factors, which must figure prominently in any balanced appraisal of the processes occurring in the District. Where I think criticism is warranted is the failure to give an appropriate weight to other factors, which point more towards self-conscious self-segregation.

He recognises that ‘there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to say that many families describe their current and their preferred residential areas in racial terms as well as in terms of relative prosperity, and may move (or not move) with both in mind’ [23], but this awareness does not seem to trouble his conclusions unduly. He also notes at one point that ‘three of the inner city wards stand out as having lost between 20% and 25% of their White population through migration during the 1990s – the inner city wards of Toller, Bradford Moor, and Little Horton’. [21] I very much doubt that population changes of that order of magnitude over such a short period of time can be made consistent with the hypothesis of ‘middle class flight’.

There are two issues in particular to raise: a) is there a self-segregating tendency for non-Asians, or possibly of non-Muslims, *to move out of* predominantly S. Asian EDs (or predominantly Muslim EDs), when the families concerned would otherwise have remained within the ED, b) is there a self-segregating tendency for such families *not to move in to* such EDs, where they would otherwise have contemplated making such a choice. And this concern must be coupled with an equal and opposite concern for the

reasons why S. Asian families might not be moving at a greater rate into the 'White' areas of the District.

*Conclusion: Investigate and Debate*

It might be thought that the conclusion of this paper is rather negative. I have argued that Ludi Simpson has signalled failed to establish his leading contention. There is no evidence that ethnic self-segregation is a mythical process. On the contrary, the indications are that ethnic self-segregation forms one significant component of a complex set of social changes going on within the Bradford District.

I hope however that the implications of this judgement are not negative, but help to keep open a necessary debate. I believe that both ethnic self-segregation and the associated possibilities of ethnic conflict are here to stay for the foreseeable future. The key question is whether to address this reality now, at a relatively early stage, and to seek actions that will help prevent it dominating the Bradford scene in uncontrollable ways in the future, or whether to let things take their natural course, and not to take the risk of stirring up difficult issues, in the hope that everything will turn out well enough in the end.

Before the riots of 2001, I would have been much more sympathetic to the second of these options, but now I am more inclined to the first. And this choice appears to require attention to at least three areas.

First, it is important to know in greater detail and in greater depth how social segregation is developing in Bradford. In particular, we need to know more about the relative contribution of ethnic factors within a complicated mixture of class and demography, age and gender. And we need to know more about how the processes of residential, educational, economic and religious segregation interact with one another.

## The Myth of Mythicality

Second, it seems important to encourage a debate about the normative issues surrounding segregation. When is it a bad thing? What is it to be a good neighbour, or a good citizen, in the midst of difference?

Third, it seems important to open out the political issues. Even if segregation is a bad thing, can or should the local authority and other agencies intervene to do anything about it? Where does the balance lie between individual rights and collective responsibility in this area? What policies might be pursued to help bring about the needed changes? And is multiculturalism as practised to date part of the solution in Bradford, or part of the problem?

Alan Carling, 2/12/03, revised 16/5/04.