Theories and Methodologies of Ethnic Residential Segregation

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Abstract:

  The causes and consequences of ethnic residential segregation are a very complex web of social, economic, cultural and political factors. The literature on segregation, its causes, effects and explanations is a large one. This article surveys the various theoretical and methodological issues in urban residential studies in relation to race relations in Britain. It argues that residential patterns of ethnic minorities in general and British ethnic minorities in particular reflect different layers of choices and constraints in relation to various aspects of cultural, social, economic and political parameters. Thus, arguably, urban residential studies have to go multidisciplinary to cover the multidimensional traits of the residential patters of ethnic minorities. Finally, this article suggests that more ethnographic meta-studies are needed in relation to residential choices of ethnic minorities given the ever changing socio-political and cultural realities of contemporary British society. Thus within the context of globalization, "War on Terrorism", devolution and continental relations, more attention needs to be paid to British ethnic minorities and notably to their geographical residential distribution.

Key words: Residential segregation, choices, constraints, "comfort zones".

Since the end of WWII, and with the consequent arrival of great numbers of immigrants from the New Commonwealth, British

social scientists have examined residential segregation in urban centres, the ethnic concentration of the newcomers and the need to assimilate them in the British socio-economic cycle. Thus, ethnic residential patters have been identified as both markers and makers of British ethnic minorities' advantages/disadvantages within the host mainstream society. Within urban residential studies, three strands in the field can be identified. The first is the conceptual analysis of social distance and geographical space in urban centres. Robert Park's seminal work 'The Urban Community as a Spatial Pattern and Moral Order' (in Peach, 1975) paved the way for the Chicago School of Sociology and Human Ecology to hypothesize about the link between the social process of assimilation and the spatial pattern of dispersal. The post-WWII period witnessed the development of increasingly sophisticated statistical measurement of segregation, from the Cowgill index to the Index of Dissimilarity (ID). Such statistical measuring of segregation was done to check the empirical validity of Park's theory (which will be discussed on the following page). The second strand was the micro-modeling of the process of the development of segregation at a local level. The last one was the creation of an analytical framework (choice-constraint framework) to observe and weigh the different factors that cause and maintain racial segregation.

Nevertheless, segregation, as the different indexes of its measuring showed, was not an easily measurable phenomenon. There is a multifarious cluster of factors which hamper the production of a description and analysis that is commonly accepted. These factors include the problems of ethnic categories, segregation measurement and scale and spatial unit (Boal, 2001).

1- MAJOR STRANDS IN SEGREGATION RESEARCH

As mentioned above, segregation research can be divided into three distinct strands within a continuum of segregation

research literature. These are the Chicago School conceptual strand, the micro-modeling of segregation development and the choice-constraint argument.

1-1: The conceptual strand (the Chicago School)

With his work "The Urban Community as a Spatial Pattern and Moral Order" (1926), Robert Park was credited with founding the 'human ecology' approach to studying the urban geography, which first linked spatial and social processes together in the urban setting. Park noticed that socio-economic changes and their impact on urban zones and populations produced changes in the urban environment. He pointed to the "importance of location, position, and mobility as indexes for measuring, describing, and eventually explaining social phenomena" (Park, 1926: 27). Thus, the central argument in the study of residential segregation is that there is a direct relationship between the social process of assimilation and the spatial pattern of dispersal:

> It is because social relations are so frequently and so inevitably correlated with spatial relations; because physical distances so frequently are, or seem to be, the index of social distances, that statistics have any meaning whatsoever for sociology. (Park: 18)

This, conceptual strand equated the statistical levels of residential segregation of ethnic minorities to their levels of assimilation within the wider society. High levels of segregation were equated with non-assimilation; low levels with high levels of assimilation. The key process was social interaction; cultural behaviour was modified according to whether one interacted more with one's ethnic group or with the mainstream society. Such interaction was governed by proximity to, and intermingling with, the receptive group. Consequently, residential segregation was hypothesized to minimize social interaction with outsiders while promoting social interaction and cohesion within the group. Such in-group interaction was

theorized to reinforce the group's identity, language maintenance and in-marriage.

According to the Chicago School, ethnic residential isolation and cultural difference were only temporary phenomena. They were, to use Frederick W. Boal's phrase, "transitional phenomena" (Boal: 8). Thus, ethnic segregation was a changing and dynamic process and a short-term characteristic of multiethnic cities. The assumption was that all multiethnic cities move gradually from ethnic fragmentation (symbolized by ethnic segregation) to assimilation (symbolized by ethnic demographic dispersal and mixing). Lieberson (1981) defined that targeted assimilation as "when it is no more possible to predict anything about an individual or a group on the basis of their ethnic origins than it is for any member of the population as a whole" (quoted in Peach, 2001: 2). Ceri Peach (2001: 3) conceived of such an assimilatory Chicago hypothesis as a three stage cycle. The first generation of immigrants clustered together in high residential concentration in the central city (or rather where their initial jobs were). They were unassimilated, few of them spoke English, and they maintained their traditional practices, i.e. marriage arrangements. The second generation was less segregated, moved a little way from their ethnic ghetto or enclave, a higher proportion spoke the host community language and greater numbers married out of the community. The third generation suburbanized, spoke English and intermarried fully. Ethnic identity seemed to vanish completely or simply kept some of its symbolic aspects. Assimilation was now complete. It was the dynamic, inevitable destiny of all ethnic minorities. Assimilation was only a matter of time; all possible punctuations were temporary phenomena. To check the empirical plausibility of such assimilatory theories, a number of segregation measurement methods were developed. The aim of those methods was mainly to trace the temporal development of segregation and desegregation within multi-ethnic urban communities.

Yet, the Chicago School's theoretical analysis of ethnic segregation was not criticism-free. The dynamic change proposed by the Chicago School seemed to be a unidirectional process from fragmentation to assimilation; change was perceived to be an inevitable outcome of ethnic interaction within the urban environment of any given city. Boal suggested that the claim of unidirectionality of ethnic residential and social development was not a tenable one. Not all urban segregation in the US case seemed to have an assimilationist end-point. Black ghettos and Jewish residential clustering seemed to be persistent urban phenomena. Boal stated:

> Here the black ghetto clearly suggested that assumptions about change in segregation levels and about the unidirectionality of such change were, at best, only part of the story. Indeed similar continuities in segregation could be observed with the Jewish community, though here the high levels were retained even during inner city-suburban relocation. (Boal: 8)

Peach (2001) also criticized the Chicago School for its failure to "recognize that the unidirectional transition from highly concentrated inner city to suburban dispersal was not an inevitable process nor was it the only process" (p 4). He added that the Chicago School did not distinguish between the melting pot (assimilation) and the mosaic (integration). They even, Peach stated, thought of integration as a step towards assimilation. Central to Peach's criticism was the Chicago School's failure to distinguish between the ghetto and the enclave. Answering our question, put in May 2004, about the success of the Chicago School in conceptualizing ethnic residential segregation, he replied: "They made a fundamental error in conflating the idea of the ghetto and the ethnic enclave" (e-mailed interview, May 2004). Thus, the Chicago School seemed to miss important aspects of residential concentration of ethnic minorities. According to Peach, the for-granted nature and interchangeability of terms such as ghetto and enclave

promoted a "falsified" perception of the "ethnic history of long settled groups" (p 4). 'Ghettos' are enforced and 'enclaves' are chosen. That mis-distinction could be explained by the Chicago School's interest in the dynamics of change in ethnic segregation over time rather than the choice or constraint factors that lay behind such urban phenomena. Yet, the failure to distinguish between the concept of ghetto and that of enclave has had, to use Peach's phrase, a "pernicious effect" (2001: 18) on the depiction and understanding of ethnic groups and ethnicity in US sociology. Unlike the Chicago School's belief, ghettos were not a temporary phenomenon. The ghetto proved to be permanent. Moreover, the belief that socio-economic improvement was the mechanism for destroying the ghetto was not always the norm. Peach stated that just like poor blacks rich African Americans were segregated from rich whites. Also, such terminological confusion created a fiction of homogeneity of historical residential experiences of various ethnic minorities. In contrast to the general belief that early (say) Irish, Italian or other ethnic enclaves were homogenously made up of the same ethnic group, Peach stated this had never been true. Finally, that mis-distinction promoted the belief that all segregation was bad and superimposed. "In reality, for those groups who choose it and for whom it is not enforced, concentration has many benefits" (Peach: 19).

To argue that assimilation was not the only model of residential segregation, Peach presented diagrammatically a number of different spatial models of assimilation and integration or multiculturalism (2001: 16). The diagrammatical representation of the models showed that assimilation was not the only possible model of the ethnic presence in urban areas; there were other models ranging from Involuntary Plural High Segregation to Voluntary Plural Relocation.

1-2: The micro-modeling of segregation development

A number of segregation researchers focused on the construction of models that try to capture the evolution of residential ethnic segregation. Almost all the research was based on the axiom that segregation is a dynamic, evolutionary process (see the Scenario Spectrum of Boal below). Model-builders were mainly influenced by the teachings of the Chicago School. Immigrants were thought to follow a well-determined process starting from complete residential and social segregation to full assimilation over time. Thus, the methodology employed by model-builders was to engage in long-term scrutiny of local areas to observe the evolution and extent of segregation and desegregation. Classically, the development of ethnic residential segregation was seen as the product of two opposing demographic trends. The first was the centripetal flow of immigrants into central inner areas, and the second was the centrifugal flow of the native population to suburbia. Such opposing demographic processes were referred to in terms of neighborhood invasion and succession. This would lead to the emergence of 'zones of transition' in which the former area of wealth and economic prosperity sank into economic and physical deprivation.

Another model, suggested by R.L. Morrill and H.M. Rose, concentrated on the development and expansion of the black ghettos in the USA. Such a ghetto expansion model relied on block-by-block analysis relying on the laws of probability. It predicted the direction, distance, and time dimension of the expanding ghetto. A third model relied directly on the principle of the Chicago School. It perceived the ethnic residential segregation as a dynamic and temporary phenomenon. It was, as was shown above, perceived as an inevitable process that started as soon as immigrants arrived. Immigrants become fully absorbed into the mainstream society after gradual upward social mobility, symbolized and measured by their residential dispersal.

A further model type was taken from the local study of Birmingham done by Rex and Moore (1967) which was more representative of the British context and attempts at measuring and modeling the process of residential differentiation. They focused their study on the ward of Sparbrook, drawing on a Weberian notion of class conflict (the politics of defensive confrontation). They argued that the market competition between what they called five distinct 'housing classes' for available housing was "the central process of the city as a social unit" (Rex and Moore, 1967: 283). The Rex-Moore model tends to be a powerful explanatory tool within the context of Birmingham (Sparbrook ward), but seems to lose much of its relevance within other urban contexts. It was a Sparbrook-bound model. Lee (1977) has shown how the Rex-Moore model could not effectively work for London since tenure patterns differed considerably from those of Birmingham.

The last (and most recent) model is Frederick W. Boal's Scenarios Spectrum model (2001). Following the Chicago School's transitional conception of ethnic segregation as a dynamic process from complete fragmentation to full assimilation, Boal managed to schematically provide a spectrum that seems to capture the various assimilatory and segregationist situations according to which any city can be classified. Boal thinks that the temporal change is as varied and context-governed as the interpretations of the function of segregation (good or bad). In Belfast, Boal shows that segregation or desegregation are two urban phenomena that can be highly varied and dynamic, thus "segregation is a very varied and, again, a context-specific phenomenon where we can find rapid increase on the one hand, rapid decrease on the other with slow change (or even stability) in–between" (2001: 9). The two processes seemed to be present in Belfast temporally, i.e. Belfast could be less segregated in certain circumstances and very segregated in other ones. Thus, Boal distinguishes between two types of residential mixing: 'stable mixing' which

lasts for a long period of time and 'transitional mixing' which is a mere stage between two highly segregated conditions.

Boal builds his Scenarios Spectrum on two city categorisations: the Polarized City of Meron Benvenisti (1987) and Joel Kotek's Frontier City (1999). In the late 1980's Benvenisti (1987) outlined the socio-political conditions in an imagined composite city he called JEMOBESIA (Jerusalem, Montreal, Beirut, Belfast, Berlin and Nicosia). In such a city micro-conflicts over service delivery are intensified and aggravated by national macro-conflicts. When local affairs are directly and enormously intensified by transnational concerns, the divided city becomes polarised. Thus, governing takes place without a consensus on the overall issue of sovereignty. This creates intolerable situations where two or more groups function as neighbours and enemies at the same time (e.g. Sarajevo's Muslims and Serbs, and Jerusalem's Palestinians and Israelis).

Researching out of Brussels, Joel Kotek (1999) created a new descriptive label for the cities already categorized as polarized by Benvenisti: frontier cities. A frontier city is a city for two or more dreams (drawing on the 'American Dream' and 'Frontier'). These cities are disputed spaces because of their location on fault-lines lying between ethnic, religious or ideological wholes. Kotek concludes that "as it is, above all, a question of sovereignty, one can understand why the notion of frontier city cannot be mistaken with the notions of multicultural, pluri-ethnic or multi-ethnic cities" (Kotek, 1999: 229).

As shown above, the two categories refer to highly segregated and divided cities, yet, Boal – being aware of the transitional nature of segregation and ethnic residential dividedness – provides a somewhat comprehensive spectrum of possible future scenarios including Assimilation, Pluralism, Segmentation, Polarizing and Cleansing. A city is under assimilation (e.g. Chicago) when inter-group differences and antagonism disappear; it is pluralistic (e.g. Toronto) when

differences are accommodated in a fruitful and positive unity; segmented (e.g. Leicester) when difference is sharply retained and displayed but there is a consensus on issues of sovereignty. A city is polarized when differences are retained and sovereignty is highly disputed (Bradford **can** fit into this scenario), and is under cleansing (e.g. Sarajevo) when 'the persistent' difference disappears through usually violent and bloody elimination and removal.

Obviously, Boal's Scenarios Spectrum remains only a predictive and descriptive model of the degree and state of assimilation and non-assimilation of different groups in different cities and at different times. As the model was originally initiated to locate the city of Belfast along this transitional process of assimilation, it seems that it is not exclusively a description of ethnic urban and social immobility or mobility. It seems to deal with urban segregation in all dimensions, not only its ethnic and racial ones. The urban segregation in Belfast is mainly one of religious difference (Protestantism versus Catholicism). However, there are some questions which Boal's Scenarios Spectrum leave unanswered. Boal does not show the starting point of his spectrum. We are left with a circular view that fails to determine the starting point and the arrival point of the spectrum (the same is true for the linear one) (see Boal, 2001: 11-12). This can be explained by the transitional and dynamic nature of the spectrum itself. It seems to be a dynamic spectrum for describing a dynamic phenomenon (urban segregation). Also, Boal does not provide an analytical framework for the various scenarios. His Scenarios Spectrum is only a descriptive model in line with the other above-stated models.

Generally speaking, the above-mentioned models seem to be only predictive and descriptive. They can predict and describe the extent, distance and development of ghetto expansion and segregation patterns, but they do not help pinpoint the reasons and determinants of ethnic residential segregation. Also, they do not provide a causal framework

within which to decipher the multifarious factors that shape and govern ethnic minority concentration and clustering. They focus on the elements of segregation *per se*, without considering the processes that shape the segregation experiences of different groups; i.e. they stress the pattern – rather than the nature – of segregation outcomes. Such a failure to determine the reasons and effects of ethnic residential segregation can perhaps be attributed to the 'strict' scientific empiricism that model-builders try to respect in their research. Focusing on the causes of such segregation, they risk losing their scientific objectivity and may reach biased conclusions. However, there is a line of segregation research which tries to focus on the causes and functions of ethnic residential segregation, notably the choice-constraint argument.

1-3: The choice-constraint argument

The third major strand of residential segregation research constructs a causal framework in order to account for the origins and persistence of ethnic segregation in metropolitan urban areas. Researchers feel a need to go beyond the strict empirical description and prediction of the above-stated models to shed light on the economic, social and cultural forces that shape ethnic minority residential patterns. Deborah Phillips and Valerie Karn advise us that

> [I]n discussing segregation it is vital therefore to emphasise both the positive attractions of ethnic clusters as well as the constraints experienced by many wishing to move away, such as the fear of racial harassment, low economic status and internal cultural pressures to stay. (1998: 152)

The research focuses largely on the choice-constraint argument. Such an argument posits that current residential clustering is the outcome of internal, self-ascriptive forces (such as the needs, preferences and choices of the ethnic minorities themselves) and external proscriptive forces (like the host community's discriminatory practices, legal exclusion and

barriers posed by socio-economic status) (Peach, 1978: 8-9). Choice and constraint seem to be two faces of the same coin. While constraint theorists show the forces that limit and constrain minority residential patterns, choice theorists highlight the positive aspects of residential segregation. Segregation seems to be at the same time good and bad.

Choice theory was articulated by Dahya in his work 'The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain' (in Cohen, 1974). He argued that choice factors were the most important determinants of ethnic urban segregation. According to him, there is an ethnic tendency to self-segregate. Such a propensity, Dahya continued, is "voluntary and rational and irrespective of whether racial discrimination occurs or not" (Dahya: 112). The Pakistani self-segregation seemed to be a voluntary option in order to preserve Pakistani cultural practices and identity:

> …the immigrant community's ecological base serves several important functions, which are related to the community's need to create, manifest and defend its own identity. During the early stages of the community's settlement, the ecological base is closely interwoven with immigrants' participation in ethnic socio-economic institutions and mutual aid, and with the community's need to define its identity both for its members and outsiders. Reinforced by endogamy, the ecological base with its concomitant institution serves as an instrument for the transmission of the community's culture to the second generation and for maintaining ethnic boundaries and for avoiding (or minimizing) ambiguities with regard to ethnic diversity. (Dahya: 95)

As Dahya stated, cultural identity plays an important role in determining the ethnic minority's residential and social segregation and cluster. To preserve their cultural identity, ethnic minorities tend to recreate their home culture in the host society. They preserve strong ties with the homeland via a number of cultural practices such as chain migration, (Anwar,

1998); developing a 'Myth of Return' (Anwar, 1979), and arranging transnational marriages (Anwar, 1998).

Such a process of creating and sustaining intra-community social cohesion and cultural sameness was theoretically captured by the concept of the 'Diaspora'. Steven Vertovec of Oxford University defined this as the "term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritorialised' or 'transnational'– that is, which has originated in a land other than that in which it currently resides, and whose social, economic and political networks across the borders of the nation-state or, indeed, span the globe" (1999: 1). The term, originally used to refer to the Jewish experience of alienation and exile, has gained widespread popularity and is used to refer to all communities that are dispersed and share certain cultural specificities that link them together. Robin Cohen provides in *Global Diasporas* (1997) the features that are common among groups that can be categorized as sharing a diasporic existence. Those features are:

1. dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2. alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search for work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambition;
3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievement;
4. an idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5. the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;
6. a strong ethnic consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7. a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least, or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;

8. a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and

9. the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance of pluralism. (Cohen, 1997: 26)

Vertovec identified emergent meanings of diaspora among South Asians in Britain. They are diaspora as a social form, a type of consciousness and a mode of cultural production. As a social form the concept of diaspora has been used by dispersed immigrants to construct social relationships by creating a sense of collective identity and belonging which are reflected in economic lobbies created within host societies to serve their immediate needs there as well as those of their homeland. Also, it is constructed politically through their loyalties and political orientations, divided between their country of residence and their homeland. Second, diaspora can be interpreted as a type of consciousness. It is so since it accelerates the process of identity formation and maintenance. Being aware of "multi-locality" (Vertovec, 1999: 8), immigrants develop malleable diasporic identities and hyphenated identities which stimulate and are stimulated by a need to be both here and there. Finally, diaspora can be read as a mode of cultural production within the context of globalization, thus it can be depicted as "involving the *production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena*" (Ibid: 19; italics are in the original). The process of cultural production and reproduction is syncretised and developed from more than one heritage. Such a multiplicity of heritage is reproduced in the host society, seemingly as a cultural equivalent and alternative to the mainstream culture. It is within this theoretical framework that South Asian (and mainly Muslim Pakistanis') multiple identities are to be understood.

The above-analysed diasporic experience seems to capture some, if not most, of the Pakistani cultural experience in Bradford. Pakistanis have developed a 'myth of return'. They

still practice chain migration, and arranged marriage (being a means to keep the ethnic-religious 'purity' of the community intact) is still a preferred alternative (see Anwar, 1979 and 1998). Importantly, they seem to recreate and tailor their community according to their conceptions of the imagined homeland, Pakistan. Such practices are likely to urge Pakistanis to reshape the host society's public space to reflect their cultural needs. Residential segregation, thus, can be a good strategy to realize those diasporic aspirations.

The preferential dimension of ethnic residential segregation can be backed by the fact that ethnic minorities tend to segregate even among themselves in response to different social, economic, cultural and religious parameters. Intra-community segregation can be seen as a powerful argument for the 'voluntary segregation' thesis (see Chapter Four, Section 2). What constrains, say, Indians to self-segregate from Pakistanis in local areas? Perhaps religion and transnational disputes (the question of Kashmir). But what segregates the Muslim Bangladeshis from the Muslim Pakistanis? Maybe linguistic and national factors. But what creates segregation between Pakistanis themselves? Obviously, residential choices are a dynamic process and a continuous negotiation of differences across different and diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

While the choice side of the argument highlights the positive side of ethnic residential segregation (being a chosen, voluntary one), the constraint aspect is a blend of discriminatory practices on the part of individuals, organisations and government. The 'recently discovered' institutional racism (*Macpherson Report*, 1999) from which ethnic minorities now suffer in Britain can be a good example of how their alternatives can be constrained (Mason: 9).

Historically, as the post-war immigration increased, the need for housing increased, which created inter-ethnic social strain. Some Conservative politicians played upon white people's fears to gain their electoral votes. That could be clearly

seen in Birmingham in 1964, where these contributed to the successful election of the Conservative Member of Parliament, Peter Griffiths, for Smethwick in the General Election. It was widely believed that this success (in that usually safe Labour seat) was the outcome of conflict surrounding housing and the slogan employed by the local Conservative Member: "If you want a nigger for a neighbour vote Labour" (Layton-Henry, 1992: 77-78; Saggar, 1992: 76-77). Such electoral calculations seemed to produce inter-ethnic tension, expressed in residential segregation. Also, there is evidence that ethnic residential segregation was a planned process, perpetrated by local authorities, building societies, estate agents, private landlords and the local authority housing department. Those agents were referred to as urban gate-keepers (Karen *et al*, 1985: 119-120; McKay, 1977: 85-91). They were promoting ethnic residential segregation by inner city policies, in particular programmes of urban slum clearance, the slums seeming to actively sustain black over-representation in the poorest segments of housing stock (Smith, 1989: 55-56). Although not all government urban policies have been universally detrimental, the outcome of some housing programmes has been the perpetuation of ethnic residential segregation.

Housing policies and urban policies cannot alone explain ethnic residential segregation. There is a line of research that focuses on socio-economic dynamics as important determinants of ethnic residence patterns. The geographical location of ethnic minorities was in part "a product of the demand for labour in the early days of migration" (Mason, 2000: 87). Ethnic minorities clustered around the traditional industrial units in inner cities. Thus, the persistence of urban segregation seems to be the outcome of the geographical aspect of the economic and industrial restructuring of post-war Britain. When economic change accelerated, notably in the 1970's and 1980's, ethnic minorities found themselves blocked in the previously prosperous inner cities. Susan Smith (1989) demonstrated that

the post-war economic changes hit inner cities more severely than other urban units:

> The inner cities themselves have lost jobs – in all areas of employment – at a greater rate than have suburbs, small towns or rural areas… Testifying to the force of this statement, employment fell by 55 per cent among residents of the inner cities between 1951 and 1981 (this compares with falls of 7 per cent in the outer estates and 15 per cent in free-standing cities, and an increase of 20 per cent in towns and rural areas). These same areas have lost employment in manufacturing industries at an accelerating rate since the 1950's, culminating in a loss of 37 per cent between 1971 and 1981 (when the national average was a decline of only 25 per cent). (Smith, 1993: 49)

Such economic restructuring hit the economically vulnerable ethnic minorities severely. The economic changes resulted in the decline of the industrial sectors traditionally associated with the mostly unskilled migrant labour. Coupled with residential segregation, it intensified the ethnic disadvantage. Thus, ethnic residential segregation seemed to reinforce economic deprivation and vice versa.

Constraining factors are not only those related to economic or housing policies. The racial harassment that considerable sections of ethnic minorities seem to undergo contributes to their decision to avoid certain urban areas generally perceived as white territory. In 1990's Britain, with the emergence and intensification of anti-Muslim sentiment (referred to as Islamophobia) a large number of Muslim Pakistanis retreated into their ethnic enclaves to seek security in their togetherness in the face of increasing anti-Muslim feeling (intensified by race riots like those of 1995 and 2001 in Bradford and international events like the 1996 Oklahoma bombing and the September 11, 2001 events). Thus, racial harassment seems to be an important constraint upon ethnic minorities' residential choices. According to the *British Crime Survey* (1992) 89,000 crimes involving some racial element were

committed against Asians and 41,000 against Black Caribbeans. Karn and Phillips state that

> [T]he effects of racial harassment and violence and fear of them have to be particularly stressed in explaining housing patterns. Ethnic minority groups have limited safe choices of locations, reinforcing the positive attractions of core settlement areas and restricting movement beyond them. Fear of racial harassment, and the 'managerial problems' associated with it, also prompt housing managers to make allocation decisions which minimize the potential for ethnic group conflict and violence. Racial equality of outcome cannot be attained while the fear of racial harassment pervades people's lives and housing decisions'. (1998: 149)

However, an important question remains unanswered about the causes of ethnic residential segregation: where can the boundaries between choice and constraint be drawn? Segregation scholars found it almost impossible to disentangle the positive (choice) and negative (constraint) forces that govern and shape distribution pattern. When choice and constraint factors are examined together, it seems that a choice can turn out to be a 'constrained choice', i.e. 'voluntary segregation' of ethnic segregation can easily be seen as a reaction to a prior constraint from the host society. Boal warns that what might be a positive factor of segregation can be negative in a wider context:

> However, sometimes positive functions are responses to negative contextual factors – in this case segregation appears positive at one level but negative when a broader view is taken. For instance, we have noted the utility of the defensive function, but we must query the negative environment that makes such defence necessary. Likewise with avoidance. (2001: 7)

Choice factors, then, do not always reflect ethnic preference. Likewise, constraints are not always externally-imposed. It seems to be difficult to distinguish between the overlapping

choice-constraint factors. Choice can be stressed by constraint and constraint may generate choice. There are what we may call 'constrained choices' (external proscriptive) and even 'chosen constraints' (internal self-ascriptive). Thus, the distinction between choice and constraint can be a mere methodological categorisation of the overlapping, interactive set of factors that have generated and still generate ethnic residential segregation with all its negative connotations and consequences. As mentioned above, the choice and constraint factors seem to be two faces of the same coin. Choice factors tend to stress the positivity of ethnic segregation from an ethnicity-oriented approach whereas constraint factors stress the negative dimension of that residential experience. To use Peach's phrase, they are respectively "good and bad segregation" (title of essay, 1996: 379-398). Though such a distinction (good and bad) is a normative one, it raises an important question: how can the same issue (segregation) generate two different outcomes when interpreted by different groups and cultures? What seems to be urban disintegration for the majority of white people in Bradford and elsewhere in Britain is 'comfort zones' for the majority of Pakistanis.

To overcome the 'double-faced-ness' of the ethnic residential causes, some segregation research scholars (Byron, 1994; Sarre, 1986) tried to use the 'structuration theory' with its focus on the interaction and interplay of human agency and social structure. According to structuration theory, people (social agents) "reconstruct structures during their experiences and actions within the social system, and reproduce them through their actions" (Sarre, 1986: 74). Being knowledgeable social agents, ethnic minorities are responsible for their actions and choices, yet they consciously reproduce the social constraints in their social behaviour.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that, though 'structuration theory' was conceptually attractive, it did not go beyond the give-and-take logic characterizing the choice-constraint argument. The interplay of choice and constraint is

still workable. Due to the complexity and ambiguity of the choice-constraint framework, researchers can only conclude that in housing decisions, ethnic minorities, like all human actors in all walks of life, constantly evaluate and re-evaluate their choices and options in the light of their preferences as well as the generally imposed constraints of their context.

To conclude, discussion of the above-mentioned strands in ethnic segregation research has shown how interlocking and complex the causes and forces that shape patterns of urban residence in Britain are. The urban segregation literature is diverse, but it is noticeable that much of the methodological and conceptual innovation in the field has gone into the task of describing, not explaining, levels of residential segregation. This may be due to the impact of the Chicago School researchers, who tried to keep objective and value-free. Social geography and the social sciences in general must obey the norms of empirical investigation and free themselves from generally perceived unscientific explanations such as cultural forces. Yet, the analytical framework (choice-constraint argument) has evolved to fill in gaps in understanding the causes of residential segregation. The analytical literature focused mainly on the interaction of human agency and the contextual structure. Such interaction and processes, if considered in the aggregate, could provide clues to the forming and maintenance of ethnic residential segregation. There are additional questions related to the choice-constraint argument: how instrumental is segregation, either chosen or forced, and what negative marginalizing effects it is likely to bring about?

2- FUNCTIONS OF ETHNIC RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION: "CONCENTRATION OR SEGREGATION"

We have so far probed the causal framework that has shaped and maintained ethnic residential segregation. What can be a **reason** for ethnic empowerment can be a **cause** of host community marginalization and vice versa. The terms 'cause'

and 'reason' are not used synonymously here. By 'cause' we mean the push factors, whereas 'reason' refers to the pull factors. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Fourth Edition, 1989) provides us with the literal difference between the two words; "A **cause** (of something) is what makes something happen…**Reason** (for something) has a wider use. It can be the explanation that people give for why something is done" (p 1046).   There are pure (or at least internally constrained) choices that can be made with minimum constraint (see Dahya above). Obviously, no one constrains Pakistanis in Britain to live like sojourners (in sharp contrast to other South Asians, who preferred to fully assimilate into British mainstream society though they originally faced and still face the same bulk of host community constraint).

Building on the semantic difference between the two words, 'cause' and 'reason' the functionality of ethnic residential segregation can be examined**.** While the term 'cause' describes the negative constraining factors that produce ethnic residential segregation, the term 'reason' highlights the positive choice factors. As Peach (1996) showed, ethnic residential segregation can be good and bad at the same time. It seems to be good when considered from an ethnicity-oriented perspective, and bad when seen from a host community-oriented one.   A basic question arises when considering the functionality of ethnic residential segregation: to what extent are the residential patterns observed a consequence of the desires/beliefs/actions of the segregated group, vs. the desires/beliefs/actions of others (host community)?   For any particular setting, segregation will have both negative and positive effects. People may be victimized by space or they may utilize space, and this can change with time. Specific accounts of residential segregation must negotiate and explain the tension between the marginalizing and empowering impacts of segregation. That is, how and when segregation can be a source of power, independence and success, and how and when it is a

prison that entails deprivation, dependency and marginalization.

2-1: Negative functions (bad segregation)

In his essay "Good segregation, bad segregation" in *Planning Perspectives* (1996) Ceri Peach states that though ethnic residential segregation might have some positive functions, it is mostly a physical reflection of the socio-economic inequalities that exist between the various classes in British society. Residential segregation has been referred to as both cause and consequence of urban disintegration and urban violence. Literally, the noun 'segregation' and the verb 'to segregate' are defined negatively; the verb is defined as "segregate (esp a racial or religious group) from the rest of the community and treat them unfairly" (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 1989: 1146). Though the definition of the words 'segregation' and 'to segregate' in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* are literal and simple ones in that they are not problematized, we used them to show how 'conventional wisdom' depicts the issue of segregation. The dictionary provides easy, non-technical terms; however, such terms are the first to be detected by the general reader. Thus, as soon as the general reader checks the meaning of the term 'segregation' in the dictionary, s/he will associate segregation with unfair treatment, which is not always the case.

Also, segregation means isolation; such segregation and isolation, according to the literal definition, are negative and, importantly, other-imposed. The segregated or isolated religious or racial groups seem to be forced to hold such a position. Thus, when segregation is constraining and externally imposed it is negative and thus 'bad'.

Though the term 'bad' is a normative one, it reveals how the segregated groups feel and describe their experience of forced segregation and isolation. It remains a useful term (like its opposite 'good') to describe the meaning of ethnic residential segregation for both the segregated and the segregating. The

lack of choice confronting many residentially segregated groups means that those groups are trapped; thus segregation is a 'bad' experience. The segregated groups' socio-economic situation seems to be shaped and governed by their geographical location. Thus, urban immobility seems to be a reflection and a cause of social immobility.

Being placed in the least well-serviced locations and in the poorest segments of the housing stock, segregation – though it has positive functions – must also be interpreted and understood as a product and an expression of British socio-economic inequality and racism. Susan Smith (1993) shows how the geographical location of ethnic groups can be detrimental in shaping their life fortunes:

> Segregation itself helps to perpetuate the marginal economic position and poor housing circumstances experienced by many black people. This is because *where* people live, within cities and regions, has a bearing on their access to services and employment; and the quality, condition, tenure and location of dwellings can prevent people moving to take advantage of new jobs and benefits in a spatially restructuring economy and in a shrinking welfare state. (Smith, 1993: 128, italics are in the original)

Smith thinks that the problem of residential segregation lies in its very interpretation. Thus, residential segregation becomes more decisive and divisive when it is politically constructed as a problem. A political discourse that 'criminalizes' ethnic residential segregation creates powerful images of racial segregation as a problem. She thinks that "the ideology of racial segregation informs the legislative process in ways which further undermine the status of racialized minorities" (p 129). Also, it leads to what she called "the racialization of immigration, of settlement and culture" (p 129). The process of racializing ethnic minorities' residential patterns leads to the creation of racial categories that determine who they are or where they come from, where they live, and how they act or what they are supposed and presumed to think. Thus,

racialized residential segregation tends to be an index of the attitudes, values, social norms and even individual behavioural inclinations of those who live within a certain geographical space.

Smith's account of ethnic residential segregation implies that, when racialized, ethnic residential segregation can be a source of racial stereotyping. This would inform social policy on race relations. And there lies the problem: what is built upon normative and political calculations may provide 'quasi-solutions' that are likely to become the problem itself.

Ethnic residential segregation is 'bad' in that it entails socio-economic disadvantage. This can be proved locally in a city like Bradford. In 1992, Bradford Council produced a document, *Areas of Multiple Stress*, which indicated that while 14% of the white population was living in the socio-economically deprived areas, 25% of Indians, 42.7% of African-Caribbeans, 53.2% of Pakistanis and 82% of Bangladeshis were living in those inner city areas (Karen and Phillips, 1998: 151 and Singh, 2001: 7). The inner city in which the majority of the ethnic population was clustering seemed to suffer from the highest degree of multiple stress and deprivation, which means that ethnic residential segregation was either the cause or the consequence of socio-economic deprivation, and in both cases was negative (no-win situation). Such multiple stress (high unemployment, high crime rates and educational under-achievement) led to the emergence of a new identity for the ethnic minorities: the underclass. The comparatively disadvantaged ethnic minorities in Bradford and elsewhere in Britain were referred to as an underclass, or more accurately an underclass-to-be. Obviously, being referred to as an underclass conferred a new, largely negative identity on the residentially segregated ethnic minorities. This meant that residential segregation became an index of social exclusion and marginalization.

The concept of 'underclass' had first originated in the USA to describe the largely residentially segregated and socially excluded African-Americans (whether it categorized them correctly or not has been a debatable issue). By the end of the 1980's the American sociologist Charles Murray was brought to Britain to decide whether Britain had an underclass similar or at least comparable to that which existed in America. He concluded after a decade of study (1989-1999) that "what had been a nascent underclass in 1989 had by 1999 become one that increasingly resembled, in behaviour and proportional size, the underclass that we have learned to live with in America" (2001: 2). Murray defined the underclass as not people

> [W]ho are merely poor, but people at the margins of society, unsocialised and often violent. The chronic criminal is part of the underclass, especially the violent chronic criminal. But so are parents who mean well but who cannot provide for themselves, who give nothing back to the neighbourhood, and whose children are the despair of the teachers who have to deal with them. (Ibid: 2)

This is how Murray envisaged the concept of underclass. Yet he also referred to the high rate of idleness (not unemployment) among the young population coupled with their lack of "norms of self-control, consideration for others, and the concept that actions have consequences" (Ibid: 9). Murray explained such a youth tendency to idleness and violence by the weak family structure in British society. Youngsters are as they are simply because they were not "raised by two mature, married adults" (Ibid: 9). The high rate of illegitimacy was a central factor, according to Murray, in explaining the underclass. Lone mother or father families were more likely to produce unsocialised children. Murray believed that "…the problems of the underclass are driven by the breakdown in socialization of the young, which in turn is driven by the breakdown of the family" (Ibid: 13). To sum up, the source of the underclass lies in the breakdown of family values and ties.

What is remarkable is that Murray's definition of the underclass did not refer exclusively to the ethnic minorities. He did not even mention the word 'ethnic'. Murray's definition, thus, concerned all British society. It seemed to be more relevant to British whites and some of ethnic minorities (notably Black Caribbeans) than to South Asians, particularly Muslims. If illegitimacy is the major cause of the production of unsocialised misfits, this would not be relevant for Muslims (at least the majority) for cultural and religious considerations. Yet the term 'underclass' was used to refer to the residentially segregated South Asian minorities in Bradford (Mahony, 2001 and Singh, 2001). Once again, it seems that residential segregation is interpreted in a negative way and thus is 'bad'.

So far this analysis seems to have focused on the negative functions of ethnic residential segregation. Nevertheless, as was mentioned before, the same residential patterns can be of great importance and help to both the segregated and the segregating groups.

2-2: Positive functions (good segregation)

Just as residential segregation has its drawbacks it has its advantages. According to Boal, residential segregation "may have positive functions" (2001: 3). One major advantage of ethnic segregation is to cluster in order to provide a basis for defence against external attack. Thus, residential segregation allows the 'alien' ethnic minorities to mobilize against real or perceived mainstream community hostility. Geographical clustering enables ethnic minorities to organise their defence and avoid isolation from similar ethnic fellow men. Residential segregation can be seen as a strategy to cope with a threat, Boal shows how such spatial concentration may provide the segregated group with a base for either peaceful or violent action. The big number of ethnic groups within a certain locality can empower them politically by having a demographic majority that can be transformed into political power through elections (peaceful). Violently, spatial concentration may

provide a fertile milieu for the development of ethnic militancy, which produces urban riots or guerrilla warfare. Such ethnically concentrated areas will be the context in which "the guerrilla is the fish and the sympathetic population is the sea" (p 5). In a word, residential segregation viewed from this perspective can strengthen the group's bargaining power in its confrontation with mainstream society.

Another positive function of residential segregation, from an ethnic minority-oriented angle, is the possibility of preserving cultural practices. As was mentioned above (Section 1-3), choice factors are enhanced by an ethnic anxiety to preserve its culture, religion and way of life from what is perceived as the alien and corrupting host society's values. Residential segregation seems to provide an ideal milieu for socializing the immigrants' offspring into the values and norms of their cultural heritage. Geographical proximity promotes and is promoted by certain cultural practices such as marriage (endogamy), since the potential partners live within relatively the same socio-cultural background, epitomized by segregated patterns of residence. Also, spatial concentration allows the demographically dominant group to maintain its culture by creating culturally homogeneous schools. However, residential segregation can also function instrumentally since it can help set up mutual aid networks and promote group solidarity. Yet it is of paramount importance to show that cultural preservation is not only an ethnic preoccupation. The host community itself is concerned with the 'purity' of its cultural heritage. Residential segregation, thus, seems to be a mutually practiced pattern for almost the same cultural maintenance claims. At this point residential segregation seems to be good for both.

A third advantage of residential segregation is the idea of what has come to be called "ethnic entrepreneurship" (Boal: 6). Ethnic space provides a context for the development of ethnic businesses which provide for specific needs compatible with the cultural constraints of ethnic minorities' cultures and religious prescriptions (for instance, interest-free loans for

Muslims). Such "ethnic entrepreneurship" led to the emergence of 'protected ethnic markets' in the form of ethnic enclaves. The ethnic enclave pattern meant that immigrants settled in areas on religious and cultural lines and made a living by serving the 'protected' ethnic market. "Its main feature is a body of migrant workers engaged in manual work, but in association with a substantial number of community members running business heavily dependent on fellow ethnics for custom" (Ward: 116). So ethnic residential concentration seems to provide a strong base for the entrepreneurs to flourish in their ethnic-based businesses. Looking at this 'ethnic entrepreneurship' from a diasporic and/or transnational economic perspective, Roger Ballard (2001) showed how the South Asian presence in Britain served certain transnational economic networks. Such networks relate the local (British locality, say Bradford) context to a wider one (South Asia) through what Ballard called "mobilisation 'from below'" (counter-globalisation) (p 3). Such economic networks require a specific network of kinship community organisation that seemed to necessitate geographical proximity and togetherness, realizable through residential concentration.

To conclude, though ethnic residential segregation can have negative functions for the segregated groups as well as for the wider community, it can also provide both with positive functions like those outlined above. Yet, as Boal mentioned, positive functions can be negative if considered in a wider context: residential segregation can create internal cohesion but that could be at the expense of the general cohesion of the wider community. Moreover, the coping-with-a-threat function presupposes the prior existence of an external threat, which makes us inquire – like Boal – what made that function a necessity? Once again it is difficult to distinguish the positive from the negative in considering residential segregation functionality. Nevertheless, debate on ethnic residential segregation suffers from a number of methodological problems. The subsequent section considers those problems and shows

how the very existence of ethnic residential segregation has been contested.

3-QUESTION OF MEASURING SEGREGATION

An important question remains unanswered. If residential segregation is the physical reflection of the ethnic minorities' extent of assimilation and non-assimilation and the product of the choice-constraint continuum, is segregation itself a tenable and easily measurable phenomenon?

The issue of ethnic segregation raises a number of serious questions as to the measurement of segregation: the initial question to be asked about ethnic segregation is how much? The size of segregation and the degree of residential segregation that exist between the host community and the ethnic one must be discovered. Yet, though it is the first question to be asked, it is not by any means the most important. There are other questions which can be in certain cases more important. Those questions concern the issue of ethnic categorisation and the measuring tools used to generate such results of ethnic segregation. The numerical representations of ethnic spatial segregation are interpretations which, as the historian William Cronon (1992) puts it, "become covert exercises in power – sanctioning some voices while silencing others" (p 135). Three aspects of this segregation required attention: categorising, measuring and scale.

3-1: The problem of categorisation of groups
Vital questions should be asked about the issue of ethnic segregation in Bradford. Some of them are: Is Bradford's population to be divided into whites and non-whites? And within those binary categories, are they homogeneous in their residential segregation? Such a binary division can create a fiction of homogeneity. There is also the question of ethnic identity and how to classify it. Identity, to use Avtar Brah's

phrase, is a "contested space" (1996). The intensity of identification changes over time and space. This identification may be highly situational in that group membership may be instrumental for individuals at one time and only of minor practical value at another. Accordingly, Richard Jenkins (1996) shows in his book *Social Identity* that identity is a prerequisite for social life just as is individual identity, yet he stresses that identity formation – whether in its social or individual form – is an "ongoing" process of "*internal-external dialectic of identification*" (Jenkins: 20) (italics are in the original).

Richard Jenkins shows that collective (social) as well as individual identity formation cannot be a unilateral process. It is a process in which collectivities or individuals identify themselves (what he calls group identification) and also are identified by others (social categorisation). The former is referred to as self-image or internal identification, the latter is called public image or external identification or rather categorisation. Those two processes are related dialectically, i.e. they represent the basic constituents of any identity either collective or individual (see Jenkins: 19-28).

> Equally important is the attitude of the sociologist Kobena Mercer, who thinks that though identity has become a central keyword in contemporary cultural theory, it seems to lack clarity and preciseness. Consequently the concept of identity (and that of identification either group-initiated or categorical) "has taken on so many different connotations that sometimes, it is obvious that people are not talking about the same thing" (cited in Mercer 'Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Postmodern Politics' in Rutherford, 1990: 43).

Within the context of migration from the ex-colonies, with all the fragmentation and ambivalence that this experience entails even for the 'well-established' immigrants, the notion of identity is even more problematic. Hall pointed out such a displacing experience when he said that

[C]ultural identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past…cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories, but like everything which is historical, they undergo context transformation… Far from being grounded in a mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall in Rutherford: 224)

Clearly, the elusiveness of the concept of identity and identification seems to turn them into problematic concepts. As Kobena Mercer's essay suggests, the concept of identity has become a 'jungle' that allows all interpretations and readings even when these are antithetical. Thus, ethnic categorisation cannot be taken for granted. And any interpretation built upon such categorising should be treated with caution. However, according to Boal, the data available for measuring segregation seems to over-generalize those subtle facts and nuances, which are likely to yield results that are at best partial and at worst misleading.

3-2: The problem of segregation measurement

The second challenge for urban segregation researchers is how to measure it, that is, what index or set of indices to employ. Working within the theoretical framework of the Chicago School, segregation researchers like Duncan and Duncan (1975), Lieberson (1981) and Massey and Denton (1998) were trying to measure the extent and transitionality of ethnic segregation. They produced a number of sophisticated tools to measure the intensity of segregation in a given locale. Park and Peach provided theoretical foundations for such empirical segregation measuring tools, whereas the above-mentioned researchers tried to prove empirically, through focused and long-term research, certain facts. A number of measuring tools were produced, each with its own terms of reference and

mathematical formula. To use Peach's phrase, segregation researchers were waging an 'index war' (Peach, 1975: 3) over which measuring tool was the best for understanding the intensity of segregation.

There were different measurement methods. Among these were the Cogwill Index, the location quotient, the P* measure and the Index of Dissimilarity (ID) (for detailed analysis of these methods see Duncan and Duncan in Peach 1975). Nevertheless two methods were popular among urban segregation students and researchers. The first was the P* measure (Lieberson, 1981), and the second was the Index of Dissimilarity (ID). Since they were frequently used in the empirical investigation of urban and ethnic segregation, these two measuring tools will be briefly described. The P* measure of isolation came into more use in the 1980's. It is an asymmetrical measurement. It recognizes that the degree of exposure of a small group to a large group is different from the exposure of a large group to a small group. According to Peach (2001: 2), its use tended to be descriptive rather than analytical in segregation intensity and in correlation regressions. The Index of Dissimilarity (ID) measures the percentage of the population which would have to change its area of residence in order to replicate the distribution of the population with which it is being compared. The ID measures the distribution of two different populations over the same sub-set of residential areas, including boroughs, wards, enumeration districts, blocks, and census tracts (see Peach, 1978: 1-17). However, the Index of Dissimilarity (ID) was criticized as being a blanket measurement, unable to grasp specific distribution patterns that may exist in metropolitan areas. Thus, it is likely to produce misleading results when the minority numbers are very small, since it uses a single numerical expression to capture city-wide segregation levels (Duncan and Duncan, 1975; Peach, 2001). But, unlike other methods, the Index of Dissimilarity (ID) remains very popular in segregation measurement among researchers.

It is clear from the above exposure and consideration of the different segregation measurement tools that there is no consensus among researchers about the best measuring tool. Though the Index of Dissimilarity (ID) seems to be preferred, it is so simply because there is no better alternative yet. The 'indexes war' and the different theories underpinning them is a further example of the difficulty of deciding on segregation measurement results and categories.

3-3: The problem of scale and spatial unit

Closely related to the measuring tools is the problem of scale and the unit used to measure and analyze ethnic segregation. The segregation indices tend to be scale-dependent; the smaller the size of the spatial unit (census tracts, enumeration districts, electoral wards, neighbourhoods etc) used, the higher the resultant indices, and vice versa. The question is how large are the boundaries to be defined? Also, what is the extent of the overall spatial analysis unit – the inner, 'central city', the central city and suburbs, or the whole metropolitan area? Once again the decision made could have a profound effect on the degree of segregation observed. Segregation is an inherently scaled phenomenon. Segregation can exist at several levels simultaneously, ranging from specific households to neighbourhoods to nation-states to the world. Methodologically, scale affects how segregation is measured and/or represented. Moreover, the very nature of segregation – the forces that create and maintain it, as well as the material and cultural consequences of it – differ across scale. In addition, the very definition of scale is contested (see for instance, the contested definition of the notion of 'inner city' in Bradford, *Bradford Commission Report*, 1996).

An adequate understanding of segregation requires a framework that explicitly recognizes its inherently scalar nature. Even if segregation is viewed on a single scale in a particular study, understanding of segregation needs to be scaled. As one scale of geographical resolution is changed for

another, even if context and group are kept constant, the understanding of segregation will change.

4- CONCLUSION

Ethnic residential segregation has been seen as one of the most important aspects of ethnic minorities' experience in Britain and other western industrialized nations. It was suggested by Robert Park (1926) in "The Urban Community as a Spatial Pattern and Moral Order" that the geographical spatial distribution of ethnic minorities was indicative of their degree of assimilation into mainstream society. Following his analysis, the Chicago School elaborated different models to describe and predict the evolution of such residential dynamics which, according to the Chicago School theorists, reflected the 'inevitable' process of total assimilation of the immigrants. Such a process could differ from one group to another, yet all groups would assimilate. However, the uni-dimensionality of the Chicago School's conception of the process of ethnic assimilation was criticised by some critics (Boal, and Peach, 2001), since assimilation was not the only alternative that ethnic minorities might resort to or be pushed to adopt (e.g. ghettoization). Peach criticised the failure of the Chicago School to anticipate the diversity of ethnic minorities' residential experiences and alternatives as well as its failure to identify the difference between a 'ghetto' and an 'enclave', missing important dimensions of the experience of ethnic residential patterns (2001 and our interview, May 2004). The weak point of the Chicago School and its followers seemed to be their focus on empirical description and prediction of ethnic residential segregation. They failed to provide causal explanations of such segregation. That was the task of a different strand in segregation research, done by researchers who focused mainly on the interplay of choice and constraint factors as determinants of ethnic residential segregation. Choice factors (such as the tendency to preserve one's cultural practices and

the ambition of setting up an ethnic market) seemed to provide powerful reasons for residential clustering. Equally, constraint factors (like housing policies and discriminatory practices) seemed to push ethnic minorities into their "comfort zones" (Ouseley, 2001: 3) and make them develop a strategy of avoidance. Such choice-constraint factors seem to serve certain instrumental functions; they are chosen when they seem to be functionally good and avoided when they are deemed negative. In both cases they seem to produce the same spatial distribution of both white and non-white populations. Nevertheless, the binary division of the causes of and reasons for such residential segregation into choices and constraints seems to oversimplify the true dynamics of residential segregation. There are constrained choices and chosen constraints. Also, residential segregation cannot be reduced to choice – constraint factors; Giddens's structuration theory shows how agents' behaviour cannot be a pure choice since it is a structure-governed one.

Methodologically, residential segregation has not been easy to measure. There are problems of the group to be identified (categorisation), the tool to be employed (segregation index) and the spatial unit and scale to be measured. These methodological problems are of vital importance since they can produce different outcomes to the same phenomenon. Claims of residential segregation might be justified or challenged when different categories, methods and units are used. In British cities like Bradford or Oldham, there are claims of residential segregation, but also counter-claims of residential de-segregation which is indicative of the relativity of such urban phenomenon.

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