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Exploring the migration of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in Birmingham by ward concentration and deprivation

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Abstract

This paper explores the migration within as well as migration to Birmingham of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. It provides analysis and reflection on the relationship between migration, faith group concentration and deprivation. The findings demonstrate how Muslim, Hindu and Sikh migration trends differ for specific wards characterised by contrasting levels of both socio-economic disadvantage and faith group clustering. Hindus are shown to migrate to more affluent areas, however this does not necessarily translate to moving away from wards where there are clusters of the same faith group, as discussion on Hall Green illustrates. Muslims, on the other hand, displayed a greater propensity to move away from wards with high concentrations of the same faith group, yet this did not also result in moving to more affluent wards.

Keywords: *Birmingham; deprivation; ethno-religious clustering; Hindus; internal migration; Muslims; segregation; Sikhs*

Introduction

In 2001, 'race riots' in northern Britain highlighted concerns regarding minority groups living 'parallel lives' (Cantle, 2001). Muslim communities, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshis, were presented as the least successfully integrated, and continue to be framed this way within wider public policy narratives (Phillips, 2005; Cameron, 2014; Casey, 2015). Anxieties regarding British Muslims expanded from a lack of integration to a threat to national security, when government strategies as part of the 'war on terror' were implemented after the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks (Kalra and Kapoor, 2009).

Amid such concerns, policy makers became increasingly interested in examining the residential clustering of ethnic groups (Phillips *et al.,* 2006). Concentrations of minority communities at neighbourhood level were assumed to negatively impact ethnic relations within British cities, despite no definitive link between spatial segregation and integration (Bolt *et al.,* 2010). Nevertheless, ethnic and religious clustering has been used to evidence a desire for Muslims, in particular, to self-segregate (Finney and Simpson, 2008; 2010).

There is now a substantive body of work exploring residential patterns of Britain's minority groups (Peach, 2002; 2006; Munoz, 2006; Finney and Simpson, 2008; 2010; Becares *et al.,* 2011; Gale, 2013). This is driven in part by what Phillips (2007: 1146) describes as an 'appetite for "scientific" measures of segregation', which involve the use of official government statistics. Studies exploring ethnic separation frequently employ techniques such as the indices of segregation, isolation and dissimilarity (Simpson, 2005; Peach, 2006). Others however provide analysis on the internal migration of minority groups to demonstrate whether

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dispersal from ethnically clustered neighbourhoods into predominately white suburbs takes place (Catney and Simpson, 2010; Stillwell and Hussain, 2010).

Within such analysis, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are discussed simultaneously with 'Muslim', given the two ethnic groups are overwhelmingly affiliated with Islam (Hussain and Sherif, 2015). Yet comparatively less analysis on spatial patterns has been conducted using data derived from religious categories. Gale (2013:888) writes, 'Indeed, segregation related research has remained committed to the use of ethnic categories, despite the manifest efforts of segregation researchers to respond to public discussion of religious residential patterns.' He describes how although there was a reduction in residential segregation among Pakistani and Bangladeshis between 1991 and 2001, they remained the most segregated groups after white British in 2001. Furthermore, using data on internal migration by religion, he found that Muslims were the most likely of all minority faith groups to remain within the same ward when changing address. Yet when relocating from one ward to another, Muslims demonstrated a greater propensity to move away from areas with the highest concentrations of their own faith group.

Using the same dataset, this paper also explores internal migration in Birmingham. In particular, it uses Location Quotients to measure the relationship between internal migration and ward level concentration and deprivation. In addition to within-district migration, the paper also analyses data available on the migration of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs from the rest of Great Britain and overseas locations to Birmingham's wards.

Context

Sparkbrook in Birmingham is home to one of the country's largest concentrations of British Pakistani populations. The ward was the subject of a seminal study by Rex and Moore (1969) during which issues of racial discrimination in Britain's housing market were first highlighted through academic research. Some thirty-five years later, during debates on 'parallel lives', Birmingham was flagged up once again, however this time for the self-segregation of Muslims (Abbas, 2006; Karner and Parker, 2010; Awan, 2014). In 2008, Alum Rock - an area within Birmingham characterised by a large Muslim (also predominately British Pakistani) population - was described as a 'no-go' area for white people, after two Christian evangelists handing out leaflets were allegedly threatened by local residents (Harris, 2008). Karner and Parker (2010:519) describe how the neighbourhood was portrayed as one of 'urban decay and religious ghettoization'. Birmingham's Islamic schools, also viewed as sites for segregation, feed into narratives on how the city's Muslim population actively opposes integration through spatial separation (see e.g. Awan 2014 for discussion on 'Trojan Horse' affair).

As well as being home to the largest number of Muslims in the country, Birmingham also has the largest number of Sikhs in the UK, and the second largest number of Hindus outside of London (Hussain, 2008). However, the policy focus on Muslim integration has resulted in comparatively less research on Sikhs and Hindus, who have been 'notably absent' within such discourse (Howard and Hopkins, 2005: 73). This paper compares the internal migration of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs who form the three largest minority faith groups in Birmingham. In addition, more than 90% of the three faith groups in Birmingham are of South Asian heritage. Points of both similarity and contrast among the residential profiles of British South Asian groups (namely Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian origin) and Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs have been highlighted in previous studies (Peach, 1994; Munoz, 2006; McGarrigle and

Kearns, 2009). Peach (1994) and Munoz (2007) state that the majority of Pakistanis and Indians are owner occupiers, however Pakistanis were more likely to live in older terraced houses and Indians more likely to own semi-detached properties. Data from the 2001 Census demonstrates that Bangladeshis had a higher propensity to live in rented accommodation compared with both Pakistanis and Indians; on the other hand, Muslims were more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation and disadvantaged neighbourhoods compared with Sikhs and Hindus, regardless of owner occupancy (Hussain, 2008). Such points of similarity and contrast add to the importance of exploring internal migration propensities by faith group and how, alongside same-faith concentration, deprivation may feature in migration trends.

Methodology

The analysis presented in this article employs Special Migration Statistics (SMS) from the 2001 National Census for Population for England and Wales. It uses a Specially Commissioned Table CO757, produced by the Office for National Statistics. The data provides aggregate counts of residents in Birmingham by faith group who moved address between 2000 and 2001. It also provides aggregate data on migrants to Birmingham from the rest of Great Britain and overseas locations. There is no data available on those who migrated from Birmingham to destinations outside the district, and therefore, it is only possible to explore migration within and to Birmingham. The data has experienced small cell adjustment (SCAM) and this is a major consideration when commissioning special tables in which flows are likely to be small. For a discussion on SCAM and its impact on analysing migration data see Duke-Williams and Stillwell (2007).

Adding to other studies that have explored spatial patterns and the internal migration of faith groups in Birmingham (e.g., Gale, 2013), this paper uses Location Quotients (LQ) as a measure of group concentration which are correlated with migration rates to further discuss Muslim, Hindu and Sikh clustering and dispersal. Group LQ are defined as $(P_{ie}/P_i)/(P_e/P_{**})$, where P_{ie} is the population of each of the three faith groups e in ward i and P_{**} is the total population of Birmingham. A LQ of 1 is equal to the average group population of the total Birmingham district, a score lower than 1 demonstrates a lower concentration than the group district average and a share greater than 1 represents a higher concentration than the group district average. Alongside ward LQs, ward deprivation will also be analysed in order to explore its relationship with migration trends. The Townsend Deprivation Score (TDS) is a measure of material deprivation based on variables from the 2001 Census (for discussion on how the TDS is calculated see Norman 2016). A positive value indicates deprivation and a negative value indicates affluence. Therefore, the higher the positive value, the higher the level of deprivation.

Although the data used for this analysis was generated in 2001, it is worth revisiting as within months of its collection, debates regarding Muslim spatial separation emerged and gained significant attention. The analysis presented in this article demonstrates how neighbourhood dispersal did not merely occur due to policies on community cohesion, but had already commenced prior to political concerns around Muslim clustering and separation.

Findings

According to the National Census for England and Wales, in 2001, Birmingham's Muslims comprised of more than 50% of the population in three wards, Small Heath (62%),

Sparkbrook (59%), Sparkhill (54%); and over a third of the population in a further four wards, Washwood Heath (46%), Nechells (44%), Handsworth (45%) and Aston (38%). Almost a quarter of the population of Sandwell belonged to the Sikh faith, and in Soho (15%), Ladywood (9%), Handsworth and Hall Green (both 6%), the Sikh population was higher than the Sikh city average. Sandwell, Soho, Sparkhill and Hall Green were also wards with the largest percentages of Hindus (10%, 9%, 6% and 5% respectively).

In order to explore internal migration within Birmingham, Table 1 shows the wards with the highest and lowest percentage shares of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs and plots the corresponding net migration rates against them. By doing so, it is possible to see that the wards with the six largest Muslim population shares experienced net migration losses. However, there was a mixture of net losses and gains for the wards with the largest Hindu and Sikh population shares, such as Sandwell and Hall Green - which experienced small net gains; and Soho which experienced net migration losses. Among the Birmingham wards with the lowest concentrations of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, Kings Norton was found to have gains for all three groups through migration. Interestingly, the highest Muslim in-migration occurred in Kingsbury, which has one of the lowest Muslim population shares in Birmingham. It is also noted that there was a simultaneous out-migration of Hindus from this ward.

Table 1. Highest and lowest net migration rates by highest and lowest group ward percentage

Muslim	**Ward %**	**Net migration rates**	**Sikh**	**Ward %**	**Net migration rates**	**Hindu**	**Ward %**	**Net migration rates**
Highest			Highest			Highest		
Small Heath	62	-0.9	Sandwell	24	0.1	Sandwell	9.7	0.1
Sparkbrook	59	-2.1	Soho	15.1	-2.0	Soho	9.5	-1.1
Sparkhill	54	-0.1	Ladywood	8.9	-0.1	Sparkhill	5.7	-0.8
Washwood Heath	46	-0.3	Handsworth	5.8	-1.7	Hall Green	5.0	4.1
Handsworth	45.4	-0.5	Hall Green	5.8	5.4	Handsworth	4.3	-5.0
Nechells	43.7	-0.1	Edgbaston	4.2	-1.1	Fox Hollies	3.4	-2.8
Lowest			Lowest			Lowest		
Northfield	0.6	3.1	Bournville	0.7	0.6	Bartley Green	0.4	0.0
Oscott	0.7	-12.1	Weoley	0.4	-5.6	Kingsbury	0.3	-5.8
Kings Norton	0.7	2.6	Longbridge	0.4	-3.5	Longbridge	0.3	13.4
Longbridge	0.8	-0.8	Shard End	0.3	10.1	Kings Norton	0.2	6.1
Sutton Four Oaks	0.9	4.3	Northfield	0.3	0.0	Northfield	0.2	-30.6
Kingsbury	0.9	9.5	Kings Norton	0.2	13.5	Shard End	0.1	0.0

Using LQs, it is possible to further explore the relationship between group concentration and internal migration. Table 2 below shows that there is a significant negative correlation between migration and ward concentration for Muslims. In other words, wards experiencing lower levels of net in-migration are wards with higher concentrations of Muslims. Therefore, the data demonstrates a greater propensity for Muslims to move away from wards with high concentrations of the same faith group, as well as a lower propensity to move to wards with a higher concentration of the same faith group. In fact, all three faith groups presented a significant negative correlation for migration to the highest concentrated Muslim wards when moving within Birmingham. The analysis found this to be more significant for Sikhs than for Hindus and even Muslims themselves.

Table 2. Internal migration by group Location Quotient and Townsend Deprivation Score

Faith group	Correlation coefficient	Muslim LQ	Hindu LQ	Sikh LQ	TDS
Muslim migration	Pearson's *r*	-.328*	-0.258	-.231	-.223
	P Value	.021	.057	.078	.086
Hindu migration	Pearson's *r*	-.333*	.040	.025	-.310*
	P Value	.019	.405	.441	.027
Sikh migration	Pearson's *r*	-.609**	-196	-.127	-.529**
	P Value	.000	.116	.220	.000
TDS	Pearson's *r*	.846**	.262	.193	
	P Value	.000	.054	.120	

*Correlation significant at 0.05 ** Correlation significant at 0.01

Deprivation and migration

Deprivation is commonly defined as greater observable disadvantage within a physical environment relative to other locations within the same city or country (Townsend, 1987; Norman, 2016). It is well documented that areas in the UK with higher concentrations of ethnic minority communities also tend to be among the most deprived (Owen, 1994; Platt, 2002; Lenton and Mosley, 2012). This is also the case in Birmingham where residential patterns can be understood against the backdrop of industrial decline, which disproportionately affected some ethnic groups (Cangiano, 2004) similarly experienced in other parts of the country (Rex and Thomlinson, 1979; Radcliffe, 1981; Peach, 1994).

When looking at socio-economic disadvantage and residential patterns by religion, Muslims are overrepresented in areas across Britain that are characterised by 'low to moderate level deprivation' (Attwood *et al.,* 2003: viii). This adds to the importance of exploring internal migration propensities by faith group and how alongside same faith concentration, deprivation may play a role in understanding migration trends. As described, TDS is a measure of material deprivation based on variables from the 2001 Census. A positive value indicates deprivation and a negative value indicates affluence. As such, the higher the positive value, the higher the level of deprivation.

Using the same Pearson correlation technique employed in the previous section, analysis shows a significant correlation between high Muslim concentrated wards and the highest scoring wards for deprivation in Birmingham using the TDS. This is not the case for Hindus and Sikhs. The analysis also demonstrates that there is a significant negative correlation between in-migration and the most deprived wards using TDS for all three groups, however this is only significant for Sikhs and Hindus.

The two Birmingham wards with the highest net migration gains for Hindus were Hall Green and Perry Barr (TDS of 0.58 and -0.35 respectively) which are far more affluent in comparison to the two wards with the highest net migration losses, Handsworth and Soho (TDS of 13.54 and 12.35 respectively). The fact that Hall Green and Handsworth have similar Hindu population sizes suggests that the motivation for relocating is to move to more affluent wards, rather than away from same faith group members. Further analysis of LQs and inter-ward migration shown in Table 2 certainly supports this view. Sikhs and Hindus show a significant correlation for moving away from geographical deprivation to affluence, which may explain the mixture of both gains and losses within wards which have high concentrations of their faith groups (shown in Table 1).

Wards in Birmingham showing the highest Muslim gains through internal migration, such as Fox Hollies and Hodge Hill, did not score as highly on affluence using the TDS (6.02 and 3.85 respectively) when compared with the highest gaining Sikh and Hindu wards, Hall Green and Perry Bar described above. The analysis therefore can be summarised as a significant negative correlation between Muslim in-migration and concentration, but not deprivation. In other words, Muslims were less likely to move to the wards with the highest concentration of their own faith group. Nonetheless, Muslim were not less likely to move to Birmingham wards that were less deprived than the wards they had moved away from. Conversely, the findings show a significant negative correlation between Hindu and Sikh in-migration and deprivation, but not same faith group concentration. In other words, Hindus and Sikhs were more likely to move to Birmingham wards that were more affluent than the wards they moved away from. However, they were not more likely to move to the wards with lower concentrations of their own faith groups (see Table 2).

The findings highlighted here provide interesting insight for discussion on minority group clustering. Battu and Mwale (2004), Phillips (2007) and Bolt *et al.,* (2010) for example discuss how clustering is frequently viewed in terms of communities remaining in poorer inner-city areas due to limited purchasing power. This is exacerbated by such areas being characterised by higher rates of unemployment, as the case with Alum Rock (Karner and Parker, 2010). As described above, Muslims, although shown to move away from high concentration wards, were less likely to move to Birmingham's more affluent wards and, as a result, the motivation was not as clear as relocating to more socio-economically 'desirable' suburbs.

Other influences for inter-ward migration could include more affordable housing, or moving to Birmingham wards where it is possible to purchase larger accommodation for less. This supports observations by Phillips *et al.* (2006: 228) who write, "Given the strong preference amongst British Asians for home-ownership, options for purchasing beyond the inner areas are constrained by both disposable income and the widening gap between inner-city and suburban prices". Furthermore, Cole and Ferrari (2008) discuss how housing processes such as market pressures and opportunities can impact a buyer's ability to relocate to particular neighbourhoods. However, even despite economic constraints, migration away from high concentration Muslim wards contradicts the self-segregation thesis further still.

Scholarship has increasingly challenged the assumption that as immigrant groups become wealthier, they relocate to more prosperous white suburbs (Wei Li, 1998; Peach, 2002; Maloutas, 2004). Interestingly, the findings from the internal migration of Hindus and Sikhs presented in this paper shows that relocation to affluent wards did not simply lead to moving to more desirable white neighbourhoods, but that new concentrations of minority groups may form in affluent wards. As the substantive literature on 'white flight' points out, an increased presence of ethnic and religious minorities can result in an out-migration of white British residents, which leads to subsequent opportunities, in terms of available housing for sale, leading to even greater in-migration by minority communities into particular wards (Pais *et al.,* 2009; Kaufmann and Harris, 2015).

Migration from the rest of the country and overseas

In addition to within-district migration, the paper also analysed data available on migration from the rest of Great Britain and overseas locations to Birmingham. After Birmingham, the largest share of Muslim migrants came from London. More than half of Sikh migrants came

from the surrounding West Midland region compared to just over 20% of Muslims and almost 30% of Hindus. Further analysis using LQs shows that there is a correlation for Hindu and a significant correlation for Muslim and Sikh migrants from the rest of Great Britain to move to same faith group high concentration wards in Birmingham (see Table 3). Therefore, the data does clearly demonstrate a propensity for those migrating from outside of the district to move to wards in Birmingham with high concentrations of the same faith group.

Table 3. Pearson's correlation between group Location Quotients and in-migration from Great Britain and Overseas

Migration from	Correlation coefficient	Muslim LQ	Hindu LQ	Sikh LQ
Rest of GB	Pearson's *r*	.894**	.347*	.739**
	P value	0	0.015	0
Overseas	Pearson's *r*	.905**	.379**	.813**
	P value	0	0.009	0

*Correlation significant at 0.05 ** Correlation significant at 0.01

This supports Phillips *et al's* study (2006) which found that when South Asians moved city for employment, they tended to relocate to areas with higher concentrations of the same ethnic group. There may be various explanations for this, including cheaper property prices within these areas or migrants having already established networks prior to migrating to Birmingham, thus leading to a process of chain migration occurring, but from within the UK (Peach, 2006). However, this may also simply be a function of new migrants seeking out neighbourhoods where they share cultural backgrounds with residents, described by Krysan (2002:680) as 'neutral ethnocentrism'. Bolt *et al.* (2010:170) discuss how such trends, 'may be a sign of community strength and strong bonding social capital, or as a mark of social exclusion, or as an indicator of self-segregation and the reluctance of ethnic minorities to integrate'. Nevertheless, it is not possible to explore whether these components of population increase are being counterbalanced by net outward movement outside Birmingham.

Numbers of overseas migrants differed greatly for each of the three groups. Between 2000 and 2001 only 83 Sikhs from outside of Great Britain migrated to Birmingham (0.3% of the district's Sikh population). This compares with 327 Hindus (1.7%) and 2,155 Muslims (1.5%) demonstrating that the numbers of overseas migrants are in no way proportional to the already established communities in the district. The data on immigration therefore found proportionately more Hindu overseas migrants coming to Birmingham than Sikhs and Muslims. As with migrants from the rest of Great Britain, a significant correlation was found between overseas migrants and high concentration wards for each of the three groups (see Table 3).

Some areas stood out as relatively high receiving wards, despite relatively low group population concentration. One such ward is Selly Oak, which is home to one of the city's university campuses. This suggests that higher immigration to this ward is likely to be student led. Immigration to high same group concentrated neighbourhoods is also often due to spouses or relatives joining settled residents (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007; Ballard, 2008; Charlsey *et al.,* 2016). The variation found in the proportions of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim overseas migrants raises questions regarding differentiation in terms of rates of overseas marriages occurring from 'back home' within these communities. For example, it would be of interest to explore whether Sikhs were more likely to marry British-born Sikhs from neighbouring towns and cities (see Sehmi, 2019 for further discussion on British Sikh marriage preferences)

or Muslims more likely to take spouses from overseas (Shaw 2001); and whether Hindus were more likely to migrate to the UK as students, or to take up employment, and how far this could further our understanding of the differing immigration profiles identified here.

Another consideration for overseas migration is a change to the UK's Asylum and Immigration Act in 1999, which led to housing more asylum seekers within cities such as Birmingham (Zetter *at al.*, 2015). It may be that such migrants were deliberately housed in wards with higher concentrations of the same faith group as a way of providing them with greater social support and access to culturally appropriate facilities and services.

Conclusion

Analysis presented in this paper found that Muslims in Birmingham demonstrated a greater propensity to migrate away from the highest concentrations of their faith group when they relocated to another ward. However, this was not as clear-cut for Hindus and Sikhs. When moving to another ward within Birmingham, all three faith groups were less likely to relocate to areas with the highest Muslim concentrations, and this was most significant for Sikhs. Yet when looking at migration from both the rest of Great Britain and overseas, there was a higher propensity for migrants to locate to wards with high concentrations of their own faith group.

Areas of higher social status or growth attract new migrants as a result of employment opportunities, as well as overall general appeal of areas in terms of housing types, schools and environment (Battu and Mwale, 2004; Finney and Simpson, 2008). A closer look at deprivation demonstrated a greater propensity for Hindus and Sikhs to move away from deprived areas in preference for more affluent Birmingham wards. However, this did not necessarily lead to moving away from high concentrations of their faith groups – as illustrated by in-migration to Hall Green, which had a higher percentage of Hindu residents than the city average. Yet for Muslims, moving away from areas with high concentrations of the same faith group did not show a trend for relocating to Birmingham wards that were more affluent than the wards they left.

The data presented on immigration and migration from the rest of Great Britain however showed a clear propensity for new migrants to locate to wards with high concentrations of their own faith groups, rather than neighbourhoods defined by socio-economic prosperity. Yet it is a different kind of capital, defined as 'faith capital' (Nottingham Inter-Faith Council, 2007) that may have attracted overseas migrants. Karner and Parker (2010) highlighted the value placed by residents in Alum Rock on networks and organisations which were both informed by religious teachings, as well as reinforced a sense of religious belonging. This was also described by Abbas (2006) in relation to Sparkhill and Small Heath.

The findings discussed above therefore both support and challenge understandings of religious group clustering and dispersal trends. Building on existing work (e.g. Gale 2013) this paper provides additional analysis and reflection on the relationship between faith group concentration (using LQs) and ward deprivation (using TDS). It demonstrates how Muslim, Hindu and Sikh internal migration trends differ for specific Birmingham wards, characterised by contrasting levels of both deprivation and faith group clustering. The analysis thus illustrates that when relocating to another ward within Birmingham, the Muslim self-segregation thesis was unsupported, even in light of apparent financial constraints which impeded relocation to more affluent neighbourhoods. By revisiting the 2001 data, this paper

adds to scholarship which argues that despite subsequent policy decisions regarding spatial separation, there was in fact existent evidence of Muslim residential dispersal before such concerns were even highlighted.

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