

# Class segregation

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## Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the causes, outcomes and implications of social and geographical segregation by class, using the example of how social geography has changed in Britain since around 1968, and putting these changes into a wider geographical and historical context. (Northern Ireland is not included for numerous reasons, not least because it has a special and very different recent history of segregation.)

Here I argue that the antecedents of the current growth in class segregation in Britain can be seen as early as the mid-1960s especially in voting records from around that time onwards. Figure X.4, below, shows the first tiny increase in this form of segregation to have occurred in 1964. Compared to 1960s racial segregation and rioting in the US, what was happening in the UK was almost imperceptible change, but it was slow and steady change in one particular direction. By the end of the 1970s economic polarisation was following that earlier rise in political segregation. This led to rising social polarisation, seen most clearly in rising spatial segregation between tenures and within the British housing market during the 1980s. The same occurred in the US. Poorer areas became residualised, while in rich areas house prices began to soar upwards, stumbled briefly in 1989, and then took off again.

During the 1990s wealth inequalities continued to grow, and next came consequential and huge rises in health inequalities. In the UK, this is what increasing class segregation resulted in. In the US, race may have been more important. In mainland Europe no similar great rises in segregation were measured, and in some rich nations, processes of equalisation were taking place during this same period (Dorling, 2012). In the UK for a few years in the early 2000s, it looked as if the rising segregation might be ending, but that again was just a stumble. The overall outcome has been increasingly 'different strokes for different folks' growing up in different neighbourhoods.

In Britain, and it can also be argued in the US, the implications of this rising segregation have been a growth in ignorance across the board: ignorance of poverty for the rich, ignorance by the poor of the true value of riches held by the few, and more and more people seeing themselves as average, while fewer are near to average. But that could be about to end, not with a bang, but with the hiss of wealth slowly but surely escaping out the value of assets, which themselves depend on segregation for their value: housing and land.

## The geography of class segregation

To be segregated is to be separated for part of the time. There are many ways in which such separation is possible, but it must always involve physical separation at some point to be geographical segregation. Boys can be segregated from girls in separate schools, even if it is almost impossible for them not to mix in families (Fuller et al, 2005). Servants and the upper classes can be segregated between floors of a country house, even if they must mix in that house for the service to occur. If people are completely segregated, between living in Myanmar and Thailand, for example, then they may be considered not as segregated, but as simply living in completely separate areas. For another example of where separation is not segregation: men on Mount Athos are not segregated from women, they are completely separated – no women are ever allowed on to the land of Mount Athos (see della Dora, 2011).

Conversely, people who are taught together at school and who play together out of school are only segregated into different families, not castes or classes. Segregation is about mixing only part of the time, enough for the lack of mixing the rest of the time to be of lasting importance. In very mixed neighbourhoods children play after school with other children outside of their families. Here, there is even less segregation than in areas where almost all children do not go to the nearest school to their home. The same can be true if adults from otherwise different social groups mix in workplaces, but also during recreation outside of work, on holiday or through where they shop. Segregation tends to be least at the start and end of life. In Sheffield, UK, there is only one maternity unit where almost all babies are born, and one city mortuary for any bodies to be held where anyone who has not been in the care of a doctor is taken.

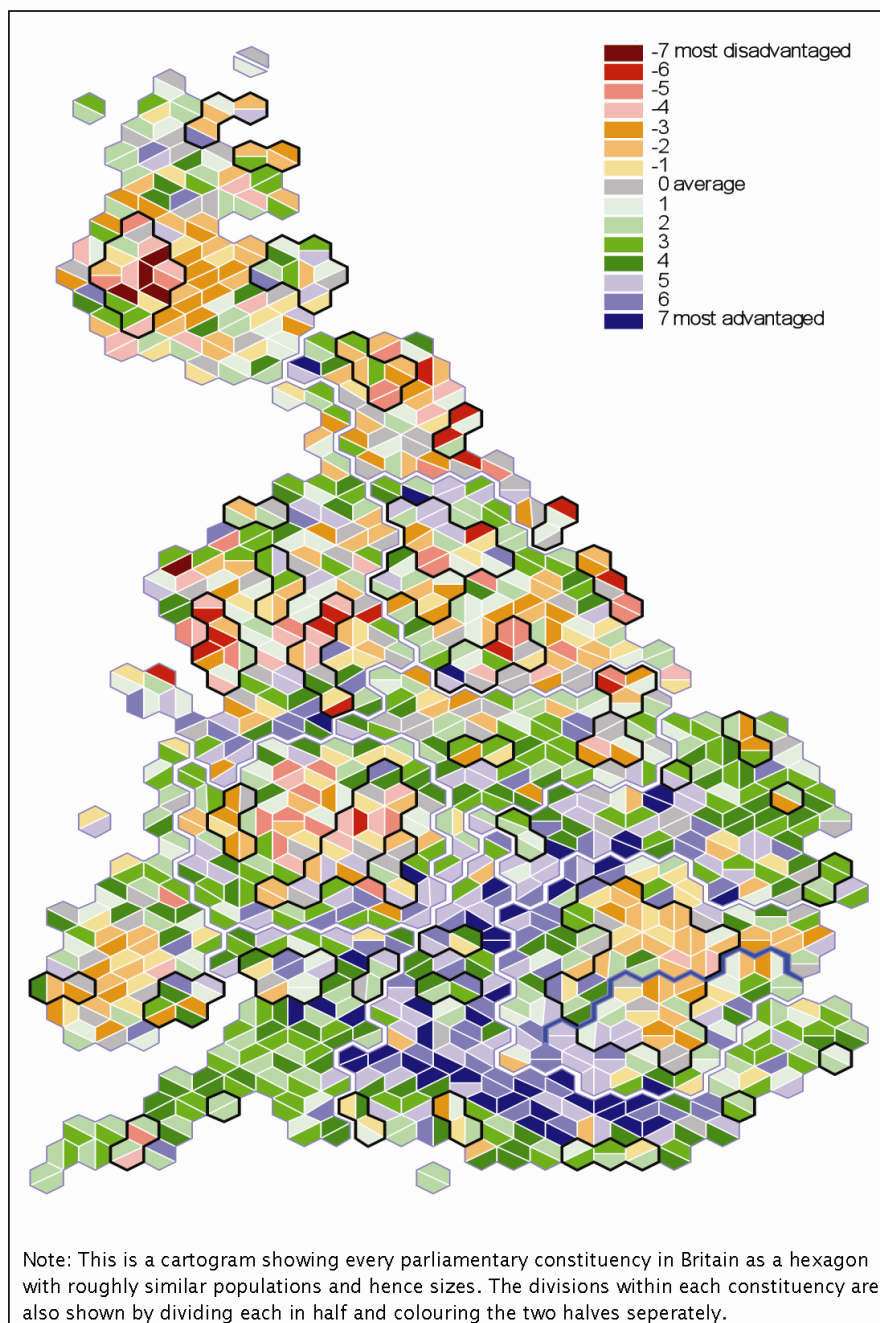
The time during which people are segregated can be very long, and the amount of mixing that occurs can be very slight, but still enough for the segregation to be evident. People have only to mix ever so slightly to know that they are segregated. For example, people can spend almost all of their childhood living in areas where other people (*not* like them) do *not* live. They might only occasionally come across someone from a different social class, for instance, when a dignitary visits their estate, or they go to the doctor's. Alternatively, the farm labourers on the country estate of a very rich child might be the poorest of people that child ever sees, she rarely mixes with them, but she knows she is different because she sees them and occasionally hears them talking. While these two are extreme examples, it is worth asking much more generally just how differentiated lives in Britain and similar countries are today (Wilson and Keil, 2008). In the US, race plays a larger part again. This further complicates the pictures of geographical segregation. Elsewhere, one religious group may see itself as above another, even if it is not always economically more prosperous.

Britain (excluding Northern Ireland) is useful to study because social class is so much more important than most other factors such as race or religion. Figure X.1 (below) makes one attempt to show just how much the norms of British society alter by where people in Britain live. It is based on 2001 Census data. When the 2011 Census is released it will be possible to determine the extent to which the polarisation shown in Figure X.1 has risen or fallen. Later in this chapter the changes since the 1971 Census, and from a little before even that time, are discussed. For now, Figure X.1 divides the country into 1,282 areas of equal population size and colours each area by one of 15 shades. The shading of the areas is done according to what is normal in each place. The two extreme places are described below: first, the worst-off place, and then the best-off, and then the average place. In each case the number of disadvantages and then advantages are counted up using the following numerals in brackets: (1), (2) ... to (7). That is why these seven numbers appear oddly placed in brackets in each of the next three paragraphs – you need to count them up. You have to count to appreciate the depths of segregation.

In the worst-off places in Britain, most (1) infants live in a family where there is no car, and that is the case for all children living in these areas under the age of five. Most (2) children of school age live in families with almost no spare wealth, they would inherit almost nothing if their parents were to die, and this is the case for the majority of children in all the streets around them – it is simply normal. Here (3) less than a fifth of young adults will go to university, often as few as one in ten. If they go, they will rarely return. Of those adults who work (4), the majority work in a job that is described as either unskilled or semi-skilled. Often these jobs require a great deal of skill, for instance, making lunch for 200 youngsters at a school, but this is given the understated title 'dinner lady', with an equally understated pay packet, belying the skill required in the job. Between the ages of 40 and 59 in these areas (and also for people much older and younger), most (5) people live in housing owned by the council or a housing association and rent. Between the ages of 60 to 74, most (6) describe their health as poor, because it is poor. Most (7) die under the age of 80. All the areas where all seven of these conditions are true are coloured darkest red.

In contrast to the most disadvantaged areas just described, in the many areas coloured darkest blue, the very opposite is most often the case. If you are reading this chapter – and you are British – you are likely to have grown up in the kind of place about to be described, a very unusual place, but one where what is nationally unusual is locally usual. If you are not British the same still applies, unless you are from a very equal country such as Norway, Japan, Denmark or the Netherlands, places where we can guess so much less about you from just knowing within that country where you come from.

**Figure X.1: Social Class Residential Segregation in Britain, all ages, 2001**



Source: Fair Play, Colour Plate 3 (Dorling, 2011)

In the best-off places in Britain *most* (1) infants live in a family where there are two or more cars and that is the case for all children living in these areas under the age of five. Most parents can almost always just hop in the car with their toddler. *Most* (2) children of school age in this type of area live in families with so much spare wealth that they would each inherit £54,000 and usually a lot more, if their parents were to die. This is the case for the majority of children in all the streets around them – it is simply normal to be rich here. Here (3) *more than* 40 per cent of young adults will go to university by age 19, often almost all go by age 30, especially the young women. When they go they then tend to move to London before returning to areas like these to have their own children. Of those adults who work (4) *the majority* work in a job that is grandly described as professional or management. Inflated salaries at the top end of the labour market means that some workers are overvalued. Many of those in the professions and management are seen, for instance, as receiving good remuneration for talking tough about 'leadership' over long paid-for lunches in an expenses-paid culture. In contrast, many workers whose jobs demand considerable skills, responsibility and commitment are undervalued and are not understood as possessing skills. *All* work requires some degree of skill, but what is currently labelled as highly skilled and low skilled may in future be seen as rather arbitrary. Between the ages of 40 and 59 in these areas, and much older and younger, *most* (5) people are living in homes they by now own outright – they hold property. Between the ages of 60 to 74, *most* (6) describe their health as good, because it is good. *Most* (7) die well over the age of 83, the women often in their nineties. All these areas where all seven of these conditions is true are coloured darkest blue.

So what is it to be 'normal', to live in a 'normal' area? Well, there is nothing normal about being normal in a highly class-segregated society. Most people are not normal but it is normal to be either better-off than average or worst-off – polarisation is the norm. Should you want to check whether the neighbourhood you live in is normal, then ask around and ensure that: (1) *most* children live in a family that has just one car; (2) *most* children of school age live in families with a little spare wealth so that average inheritances on sudden death of both parents would be £20,000-54,000 – here, (3) *between* a fifth and two-fifths of young adults will go to university. Of those adults who work (4) *the majority* work in a job that is described in a 'levelling' way as either skilled manual or lower professional. Between the ages of 40 and 59 in these areas, (5) *most* people are renting privately and after that, the next largest group are paying a mortgage. Between the ages of 60 to 74, (6) *most* describe their health as fair. The average life expectancy (7) is around 80, 81 or 82 in all of these areas, although individuals in these areas are, of course, more varied in exactly when they die. Where all seven of these conditions is true, those areas are coloured grey. If you happen to be British and this fits your area and you also fit these boundaries, you are very unusual – you are normal. If you are not British, ask someone you know where they come from in Britain, and whether it mattered in terms of who they are now.

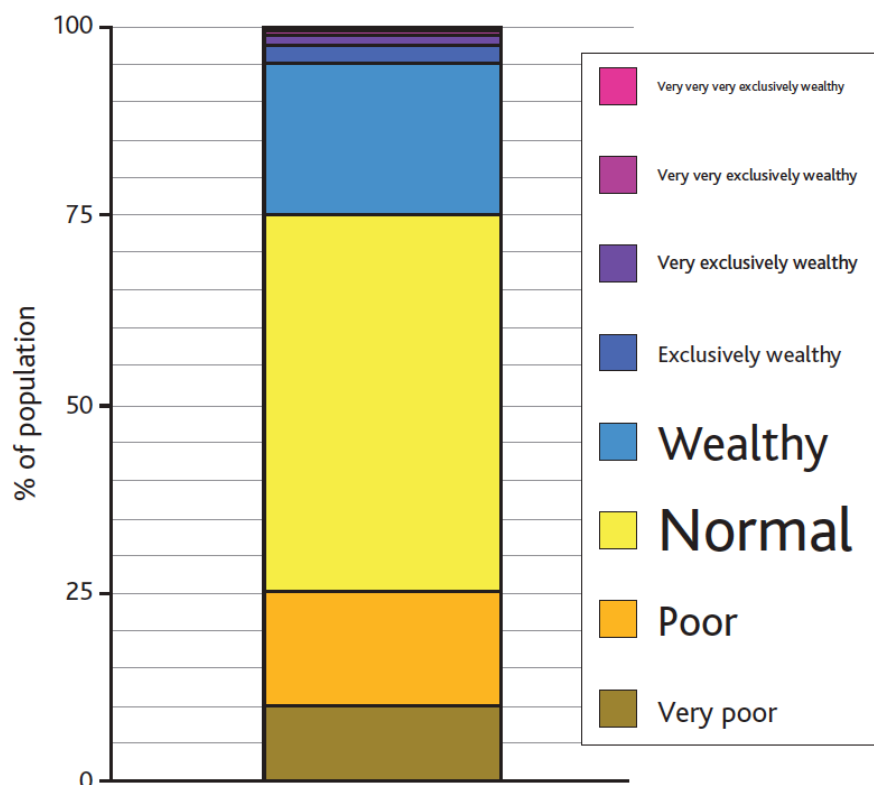
Figure X.1 is a map of the spatial manifestation of growing social class segregation. In countries where car use is determined much more by need than by wealth, car users are more often found in the countryside, not among the affluent. In a highly class-segregated society you have access to many cars if you have much money. Your home has many rooms if you have much money, not if you have many people who need to sleep there. In Figure X.1, each hexagon is a Westminster parliamentary constituency. These are the areas used to elect Members of Parliament (MPs). Each has been placed in the map so as to be as close to its original neighbours as possible. Each is also split in half along a line that best divides the poorer half of each constituency from its richer half. Often these two sides of each area will be quite similar. When that is the case the two halves tend to be coloured the same shade. However, sometimes there are great differences within a parliamentary constituency and this

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 mapping technique helps to reveal some of that, as well as give the more populous cities the space they deserve in the overall impression gained.

Next, in Figure X.2, is a non-geographical image of British society. All but one of the figures in this chapter are taken from the book, *Fair play*, which allows me to avoid having to go into details about the sources or give many references to data and explanations of the statistics behind the figures. If you want to know more, go to the source. Carry on reading here if you want to hear an argument not interrupted by too much detail. So let's consider this particular image of British society, and ask how we got here.

Is this image fair, is it true, and are only half the population normal? Well, the figure for a quarter being poor and a tenth being very poor is very commonly quoted. About a quarter of people, especially children, do not have what most people consider as essentials. They are unable to afford to take a holiday once a year, unless they stay at a family (such as grandparents') or friend's home. However, the image shown in Figure X.2 is not based on actual numbers; it is more indicative than empirical, but it may well ring true. That is because just as about a quarter of us are poor (and rising), and a tenth of us are very poor (and rising rapidly), so, too, about a quarter of us are asset rich (and today will be much more so if we brought a home in the South East or London before 2005) and about a tenth are exclusively rich.

**Figure X.2: Social class financial segregation in Britain, 2011**

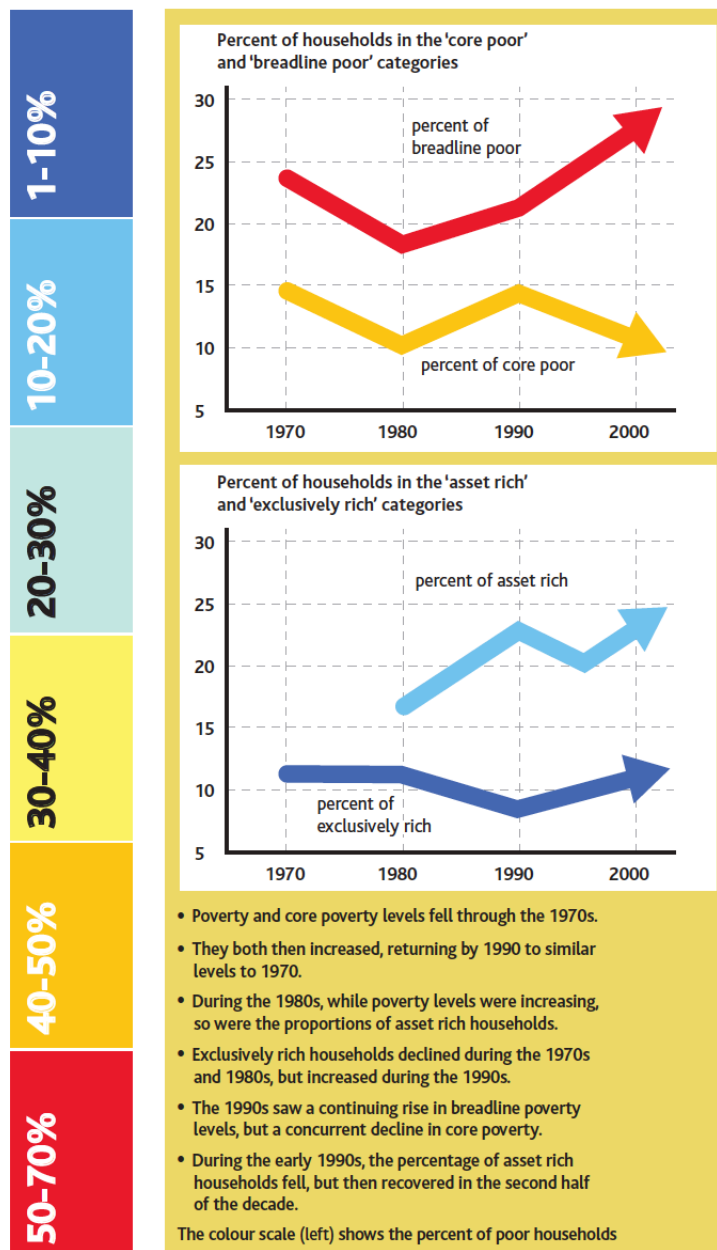


Source: Dorling (2011, p 162)

The statistics just quoted can simply be read off the chart below – Figure X.3 is based on actual data rather than being schematic. But whether the numbers are based on reams of survey data, or are just how an academic says they see the world as being, the extent to which you believe the pictures you are about to be presented with might well depend as much on what you bring to this chapter as on what is within it. That is because, in a highly divided class system, we all tend to have quite different but often firmly held views.

As inequality has risen in Britain, it has closed down much of the concern for others. One newspaper headline writer got it spot on in 2008: 'As the middle classes feel the pain of comparison with the super-rich, we lose all enthusiasm for the common good' (Russell, 2008). Then, in late 2011 it was revealed, using data from the British Social Attitudes Survey, that as British class segregation rose further: 'Private education perpetuates a form of "social apartheid" and has given rise to a political class drawn from a "segregated elite" that does not understand or share the views of most people, the annual British Social Attitudes Survey warns on Wednesday' (Ramesh, 2011). When the differences between people's life chances were falling, from the 1920s through to the late 1970s, these apartheid attitudes became less chilling. Only the last decade of these falls is shown in Figure X.3 below.

**Figure X.3: Changes in financial segregation in Britain 1968-2005**



Source: Dorling (2011)

The poor in Figure X.3 are people excluded from the norms of society, with 'excluded' being as defined by the majority of the population. The exclusively rich are also defined in this way. The asset rich have substantial monies. If they were to drop dead today they would be liable for inheritance tax. In fact, less than a third of them ever pay that tax as they tend to spend most of their assets before death. In contrast the 'core poor' will hardly ever have held assets of any value. They are people seen as poor whether their assets, income or their own views are taken into account. They are poor by any definition.

How did we come to be so divided and why did the arrows shown in Figure X.3 start to separate from 1980 onwards? One suggestion is that the separation in living standards followed another separation – an economic separation in life chances – and that separation itself followed a separation of beliefs and prejudices. Figure X.4, shown next, provides data that back up this point.

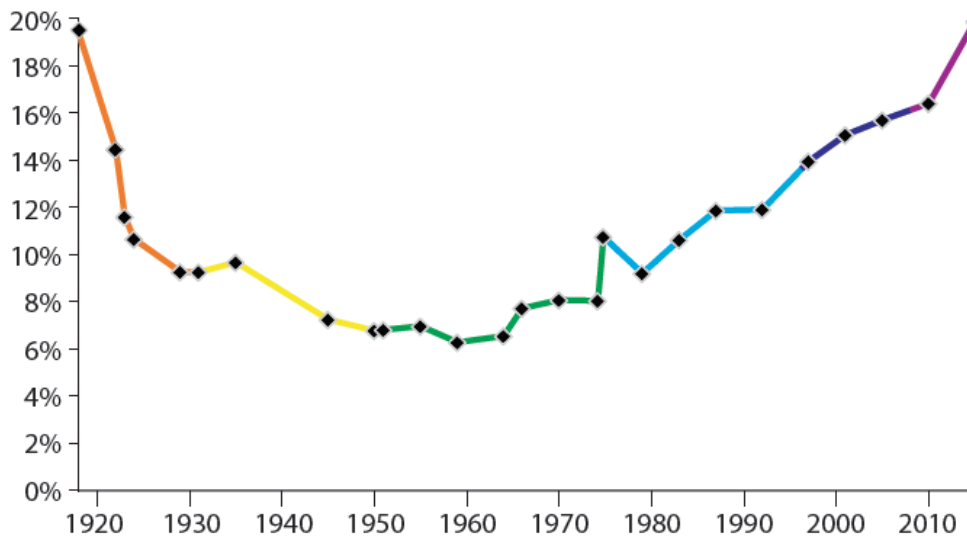
To understand Figure X.4 you need to know that the Conservative (Tory) Party is Britain's most successful political party, the party that has held office the most times since 1920, and the one that has not much changed its identity. You also need to understand that a segregation index measures how geographically concentrated a group is, irrespective of how large that group is. Were Tory voters spread in the same way as the rest of the voters, so as to be found in equal proportion in every area of the country, the index would be 0 per cent. Were they all to be found in areas exclusively occupied by them (that is, other areas occupied exclusively by other groups), then the index would be 100 per cent. The index is the proportion that would have to move to other areas to spread the Tory voters around in the same way as the other voters. The areas used here are Westminster parliamentary constituencies, the smallest areas for which votes are revealed.

Figure X.4 shows the minimum number of Tory voters who have to be moved between parliamentary constituencies for an equal number to be allocated to every area. It is a segregation index. Tory segregation was at an all-time high in the strange 'Khaki Election' of 1918.<sup>1</sup> That segregation rate then fell, stumbling upwards only slightly in 1935 before falling again, right through to 1959. Where one lived in Britain mattered less and less for how one voted, but then something changed.

In 1963 Bob Dylan's worldwide hit 'Blowin' in the Wind' was released, and became one of the theme tunes of the American Civil Rights Movement. However, and in hindsight, things were blowing in another direction than that which Dylan imagined, in both the US and the UK. In 1964 there was a tiny rise in Tory voting segregation. It jumped up two years later in 1966, jumped again in October 1974, fell back with Margaret Thatcher's landslide in 1979, but then rose and rose and rose. South East England became progressively more and more Conservative as the rest of Britain went the other way. That political polarisation began before the other forms of polarisation we can measure by diverging health outcomes or rising economic inequalities. And it is hard not to think it is important that these events occurred in this order. By 2015 political segregation in the UK was greater than it had been at the previous 1981 peak.

Class segregation can rise as other forms of segregation fall. Civil rights were won in Britain as well as in the US from the mid-1960s onwards. Partly to try to mitigate some of the shame of imposing greater immigration controls Race Relations Acts of Parliament were passed to try and ensure greater fair play. More importantly, societal attitudes changed from extreme racism being very normal in the 1970s to it being a social gaff to be obviously racist by the 2000s.

**Figure X.4: The segregation of political belief by area in Britain 1981-2015**



Note: The statistic being measured is the segregation index of Conservative votes across all British seats at each general election. The proportion is the minimum number of voters who would have to be moved across constituency boundaries to ensure that within each parliamentary constituency the Conservatives received exactly the same share of the vote.

Source: Drawn initially in Dorling, D. (2006) 'Class alignment renewal': *The Journal of Labour Politics*, vol 41, no 1, p 849, showing the spatial segregation index. Updated in Dorling, D. (2013) *Crisis and turning points: the pivots of history*, *Renewal*, 21, 4, pp11-20.

**The Segregation Index of Conservative voters in Britain\*, 1885–2015**

Election	Concentration	Election	Concentration
1885	7.11%	1951	6.77%
1886	5.53%	1955	6.93%
1892	5.81%	1959	6.24%
1895	4.70%	1964	6.51%
1900	4.39%	1966	7.69%
1906	6.67%	1970	8.04%
1910 Dec	6.24%	1974 Feb	8.01%
1910 Jan	7.91%	1974 Oct	10.72%
1918	19.30%	1979	9.17%
1922	14.44%	1983	10.59%
1923	11.57%	1987	11.84%
1924	10.62%	1992	11.88%
1929	9.24%	1997	13.94%
1931	9.23%	2001	15.05%
1935	9.65%	2005	15.69%
1945	7.21%	2010	16.40%
1950	6.74%	2015	19.89%

\*Northern Irish seats are not included.

Source: Dorling (2015)

Table X.1, below, illustrates how class is many times more important than race in influencing one set of life chances, the chance of any individual child entering medical school. Someone from Social Class I (professional) parents is  $6.76/0.28 = 24$  times more likely to go to medical school than someone whose parents are unskilled. Someone who is Black and of Social Class I has  $6.20/4.93 = 25.8$  per cent higher chance than someone who is White. There are, of course, far fewer Social Class I Black children. Class differences are almost 100 times higher than race differences, as 24 times is 2,500 per cent.

**Table X.1: An Example of Segregation by Race and Class in Britain: Medical School**

Standardised admission ratios for UK medical schools 2000

Ethnic group	% of UK population	% of all medical school admissions	Selection ratio*	% of admissions from social classes I and II	Standardised admission ratio by social class <sup>+</sup>						
					Overall	I	II	III non-manual	III manual	IV	V
Asian	4.2	25.5	0.55	60.5	6.07	41.73	5.41	3.83	3.29	3.56	5.15
Bangladeshi	0.5	0.9	0.40	48.0	1.80	9.82	1.27	1.89	NC	1.93	6.00
Indian	1.7	13.8	0.63	74.0	8.12	72.32	7.96	3.17	4.68	2.78	0.18
Pakistani	1.3	4.5	0.62	39.0	3.46	NC	5.29	3.71	2.71	2.25	3.08
Chinese	0.3	2.0	0.45	68.0	6.67	54.55	6.01	NC	9.02	2.86	NC
Other	0.4	4.3	0.51	73.6	10.75	127.05	3.63	6.96	NC	4.76	NC
Black	2.0	1.9	0.36	82.8	0.95	6.20	1.75	0.16	0.64	0.07	NC
African	0.9	1.4	0.34	70.0	1.56	12.25	1.63	0.24	1.83	0.37	NC
Caribbean	1.0	0.3	0.44	78.3	0.30	0.78	0.75	0.10	0.25	NC	NC
Other	0.1	0.2	0.39	100.0	2.00	18.18	3.92	NC	NC	NC	NC
White	92.2	67.6	0.52	79.5	0.73	4.93	1.22	0.27	0.32	0.13	0.05
Other	0.6	3.0	0.6	72.6	5.00	53.64	2.67	2.38	4.71	1.21	NC
Not known	0.2	2.0	0.40	NA	10.00	9.82	1.27	1.89	NC	1.93	6.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>6.76</b>	<b>1.38</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.20</b>

\*Selection ratio = admissions as a proportion of applications.

<sup>+</sup>Some ratios are high as the ratios are based on very small denominators.

NA = Data not available. NC = Not calculable because there were no pupils in this subgroup.

Source: Dorling, 2011 (*Fair Play*), page 124.

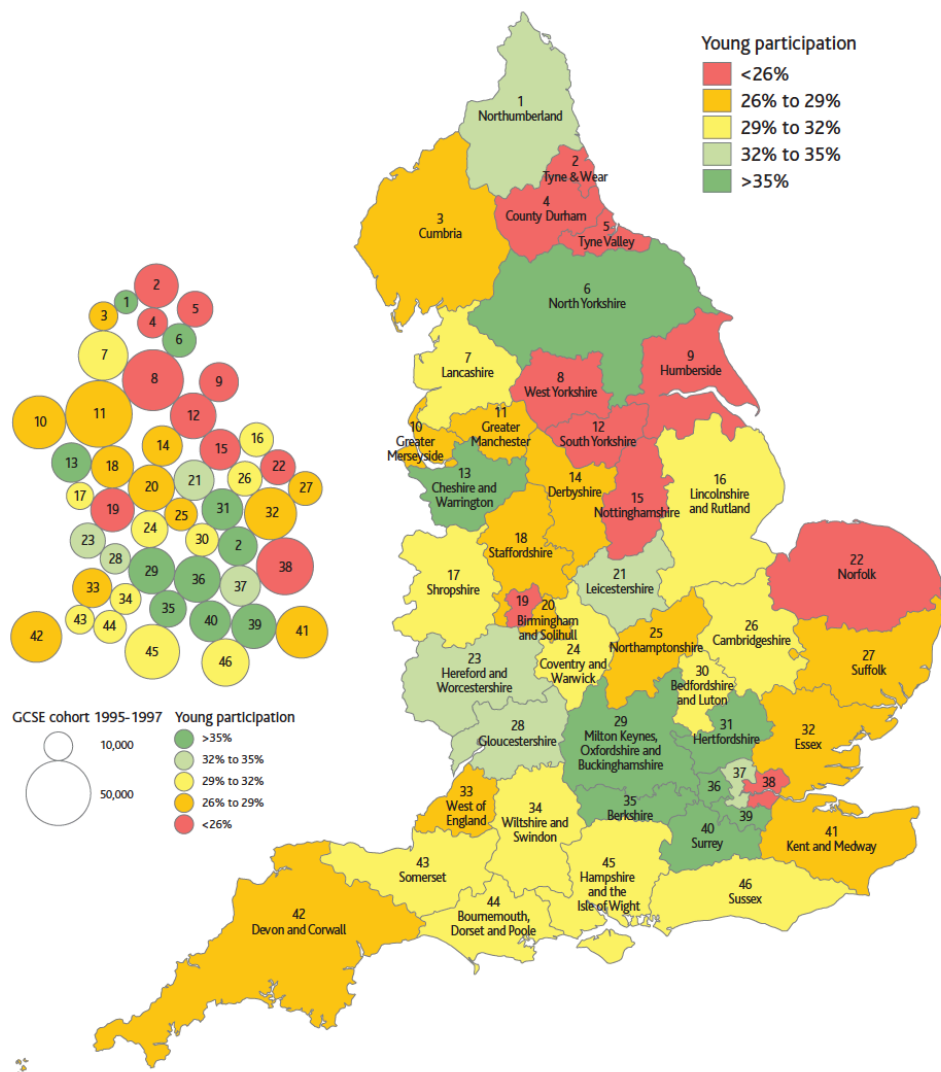
The class segregation involved in access to higher education is huge, with these multiples of thousands of percentages at the extremes. In contrast, the geographical inequalities can appear much less, as shown in Figure X.5 below. However, this figure includes everyone going to university, not just those going to medical school, and it also includes everyone from every class, not just the two extremes. The metropolitan North, the Black Country (an area of the English West Midlands north and west of Birmingham and south and east of Wolverhampton), the East End of London (within area 38 shown in the figure) and the Norfolk coast fair worse, while the golden bowl of the North Western Home Counties (including Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey), coupled with parts of Cheshire and North Yorkshire, fare best. Underlying the map in Figure X.5 are class differences in educational chances, but also other effects, such as a low number of immigrants harming overall chances for particular areas. Immigrants tend to have more 'get up and go', and so areas such as London do better despite more poverty at its heart.

Figure X.5 contains both a normal map showing the rate at which people aged 18 and 19 go to university from each county in England, and a population cartogram, inset, of the same areas showing the same rates, but with the circles drawn in proportion to population, not land

Author accepted manuscript 'Class Segregation' to appear in *Considering Class: Theory, Culture and the Media in the 21st Century* (Chapter Author: Danny Dorling) *Studies in Critical Social Sciences*, Volume: 113, January 2018 DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004319523\\_006](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004319523_006) area. A relatively small area in population terms, such as North Yorkshire (area number 6) is over-emphasised on the normal map.

The large majority of those going to university from each area shown in Figure X.5 are middle class before they go. Almost all are middle class once they have gone, although many continue to identify with working-class origins long after having passed through the middle class-making machine – that is the modern university.

**Figure X.5: The English geography of class segregation in education, 2005**



Source: Dorling, 2011 (*Fair Play*), page 143.

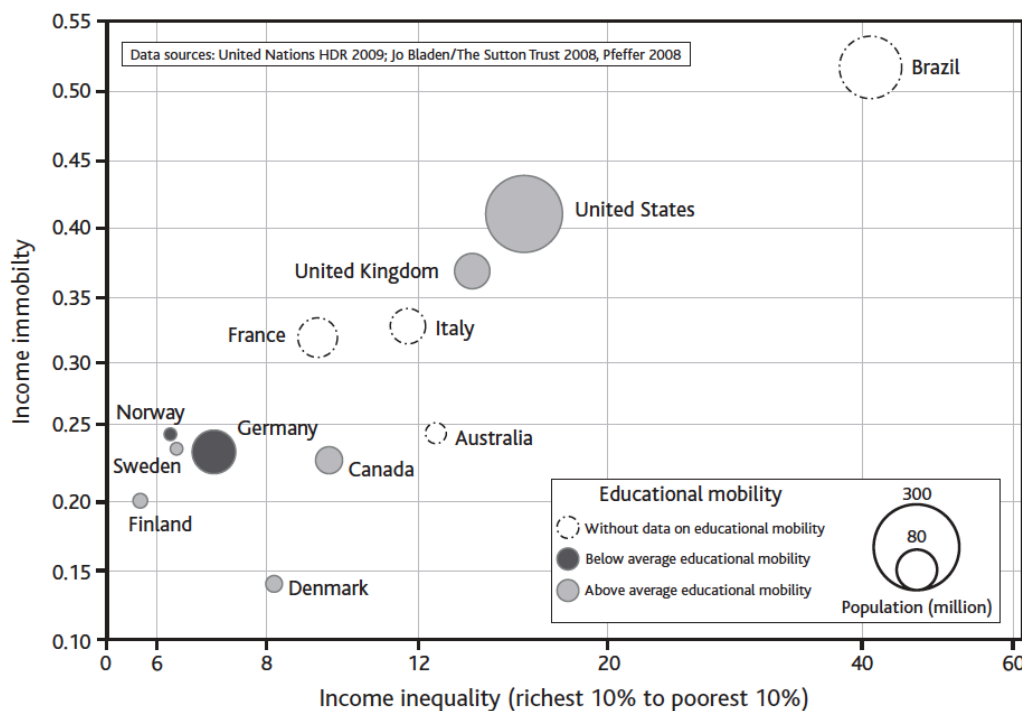
Before taking too seriously the idea that universities provide social class changing opportunities, it is worth noting that, on average, from the poorest 20 per cent of wards in the country, only 4 children out of a class of 30 used to go to university. The New Labour government did improve that statistic, by a (deceptively) massive 25 per cent. That rise appears high in per cent terms but is small in absolute effect, because it amounted to only 1 extra child in each class of 30 children from poorer areas going to university by the time Labour left power. They invested a huge amount of money across the country's schools, some

Author accepted manuscript 'Class Segregation' to appear in *Considering Class: Theory, Culture and the Media in the 21st Century* (Chapter Author: Danny Dorling) *Studies in Critical Social Sciences*, Volume: 113, January 2018 DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004319523\\_006](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004319523_006) of which did improve the services provided to children in those schools in the worse-off areas. They started an Educational Maintenance Allowance scheme, much more of which found its way to those areas, and helped young people stay on at school at ages 16 and 17. Most importantly they encouraged universities to become less discriminating to working-class children.

As a result, by 2010, instead of 4 out of 30 children from the poorest fifth of areas going to university, 5 out of 30 went. Although a 25 per cent increase on a low number is not necessarily a huge influx, New Labour claim this as one of their greatest achievements (Dorling, 2011, p 147). It certainly angered some people on the political right who thought that too many of these children were being allowed into universities. The right-wing press was often claimed that 'dumbing down' was occurring. Only in a country as socially divided as the UK could the provision of an additional university place for the 5th most able child in a class of 30 children be seen as dumbing down. But before becoming too caught up in these slight changes in slight chances, it is worth sitting back and considering how the UK compares to other countries when it comes to income inequality, social mobility and educational mobility.

Figure X.6 provides a summary that essentially implies that the UK has a very rigid class structure, high income inequality and little mobility between income groups, but that all this is not the fault of its education systems (the education system actually provides more mobility than that in Norway or Germany). It is just that children in Britain start off far more unequal in the first place, and the education system can, in general, only do a little to alleviate that. The axis labelled 'income immobility' in the figure is a measure of social mobility that compares how easy it is to predict the income of an adult from that of their parents when their parents were the same age. Brazil has the lowest social mobility and Denmark the highest.

**Figure X.6: Social mobility, income inequality and education mobility, selected countries, 2008-9**

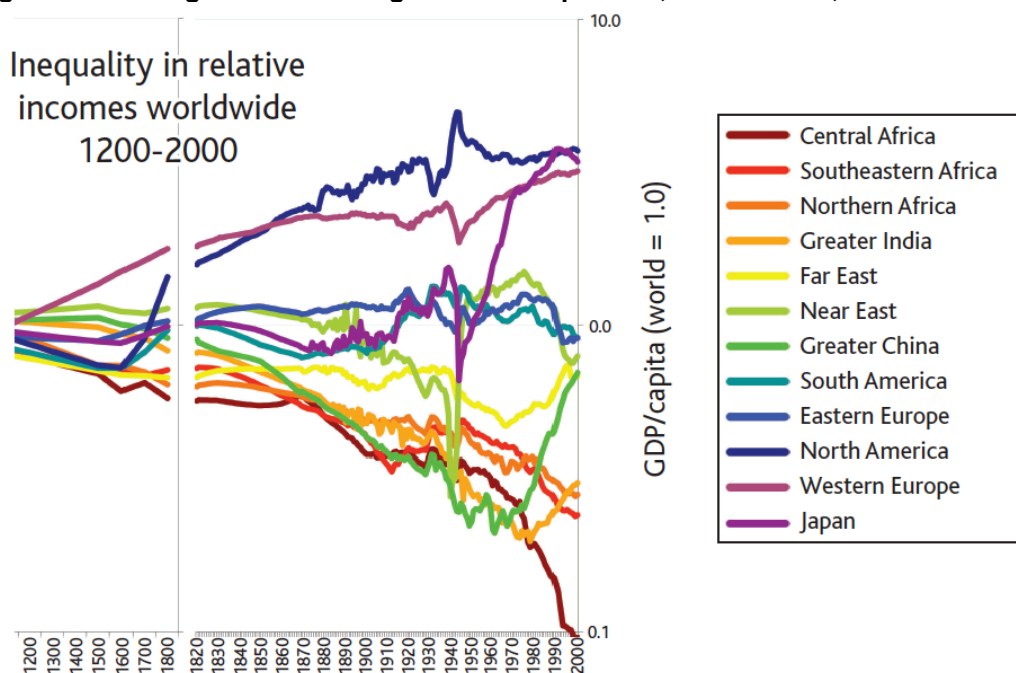


Source: Dorling, 2011 (Fair Play), page 158.

The rigidity of the UK class system is thus comparable to the rigidity of society in the US. Social mobility is even lower and income inequality even higher in the US than in the UK. Because in the dim and distant past (about 150 years ago and more) these inequalities were much lower in the US for people who were not slaves or their children a myth of opportunity emerged in the US which has remained. This was also substantiated by the US being an actual destination of great upwards mobility for people emigrating from Europe at the time, and for a few decades later. The US high school system, a largely comprehensive and nationalised state education system, also helps maintain a sense of some fairness in a land of very low opportunities. However, what Figure X.6 also shows is that in comparison to the only non-rich world country shown, opportunities for more equality in income and social mobility are far higher in the US than in Brazil.

Worldwide income inequalities have been growing, creating a new kind of global class divide. This is illustrated in Figure X.7 which shows how, compared to world average household income, incomes in first Europe and then North America and then Japan pulled away and upwards, leaving the Near East, South America and Eastern Europe behind the average. In recent decades the Far East and China have seen average incomes rise to join this average group, leaving Northern and South-eastern Africa behind, areas joined by a rising but previously more impoverished India (made relatively much poorer from 1800 onwards with colonialism and continuing to rise). Central Africa continues to plummet in relation to the world average, incomes falling to a tenth of that average by the turn of the millennium, in contrast to nearer 10 times the average in the most affluent places.

**Figure X.7: Rising and then falling income inequalities, all countries, 1200-2000**

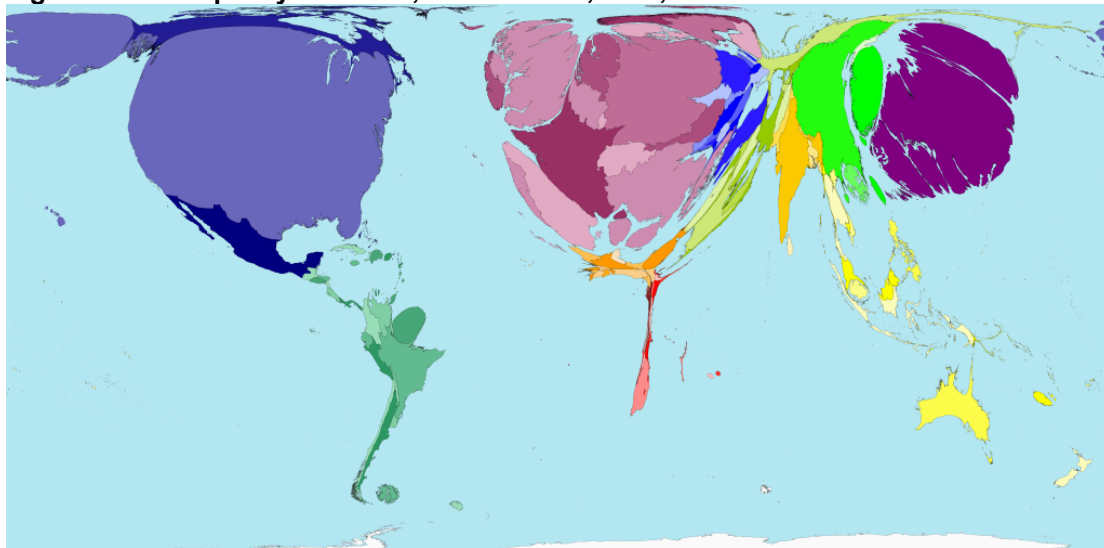


Source: Dorling, 2011 (*Fair Play*), page 323

One trend worth pointing out in Figure X.7 is the lost decade for the Japanese at the very end of the period (the big dip in the line for Japan). This has now become two lost decades, and it looks as if North America and Europe may also be about to lose decades. In terms of worldwide class/income divides this is a reduction in global inequality. The extent to which the world is currently unequal in terms of income distribution is illustrated in Figures X.8a and X.8b below.

These global inequalities are now having a great effect on class segregation within Britain. As the income gap between continents and regions has grown over time, for instance, between Greater India (India defined according to its 1900 old borders) and Western Europe, people migrating into Western Europe from many parts of the Indian subcontinent would, on average, find themselves entering British society at a lower and lower initial entry point. In contrast, as North America rose from being well below the global average income earning economy in 1600, surpassing Western Europe in the 1850s, immigrants to Britain from the US from then on would tend to enter far higher up in the British class hierarchy. The greatest concentration of American-born children in Britain is now found around Hyde Park and Mayfair in London. Figures X.8a and X.8b illustrate why the relationships between particular groups of people entering Britain from particular countries tend to be as they are.

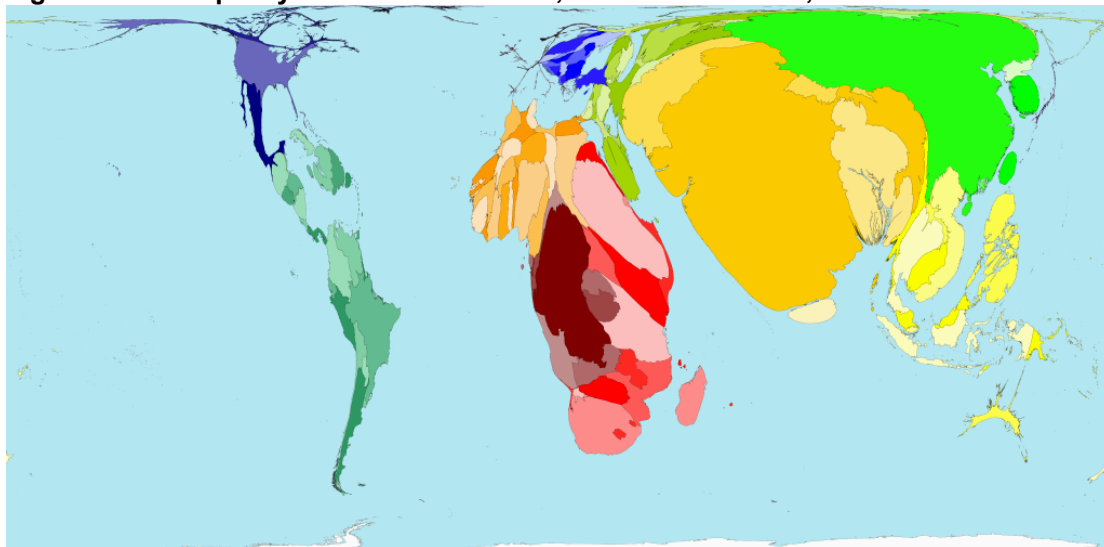
**Figure X.8a: Inequality in wealth, international, GDP, 2002**



Source: Dorling (2011, p 135)

There is great inequality within many countries, and so just because someone arrives from one particular country, this does not directly imply that they are either rich or poor, but in aggregate, different immigrant groups tend to be slotted into the class structure at particular points because of these (until recently) growing global divides. The two figures that make up Figure X.8 (a and b) are both population cartograms. Each country is drawn with its area made to be proportional to the values being mapped.

**Figure X.8b: Inequality in food international, undernourishment, 2002**

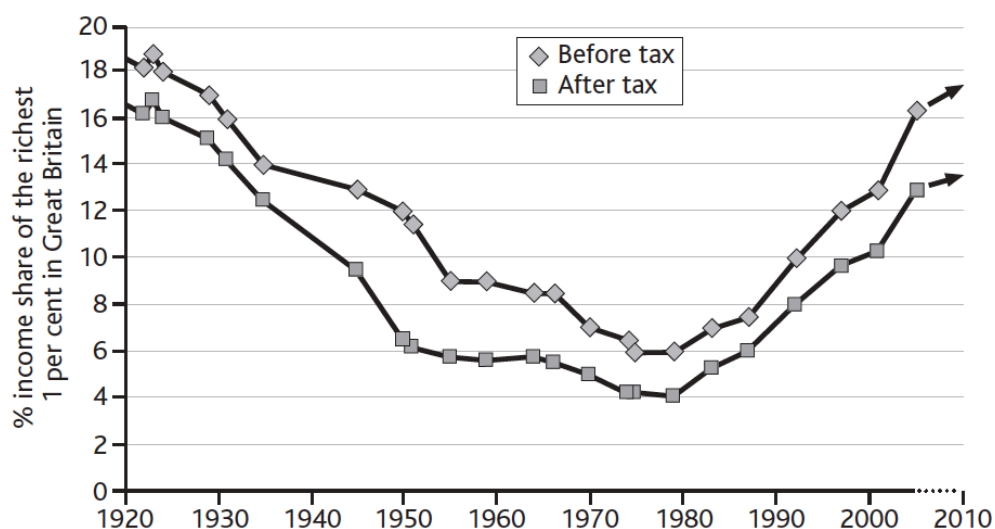


Source: Dorling (2011, p 135)

The world is hugely unequal, and that inequality has been growing for centuries. As a result, just three areas dominate the cartogram of global GDP: North America, Western Europe and Japan/China. These countries form the three circles of wealth in Figure X.8a above. The particular kind of class segregation found within Britain today is as a result of its position on the edge of one of those circles. Poorer countries tend to have far greater inequalities.

Figure X.8b shows the world shaped by poverty, in this case poverty as revealed through the numbers of people who are undernourished. Inequalities in most of the countries drawn large here tend to be far greater than those found within the richer countries. Income inequalities between people are found to be lowest in Cuba and China (note that the data were for 2002) and highest in South Africa and Brazil. The most unequal of the rich countries can also be seen in the map of undernourishment as millions are still going hungry in the US. Compare Eastern Europe to the UK to see one reason why there has been migration into the lower parts of the British class hierarchy from Eastern Europe in recent years. And look at how Eastern Europe has fared economically since 1989 (see Figure X.7).

**Figure X.9: Inequality in income in Britain, top 1%, 1918-2011**



Source: Dorling (2011, p 70)

It takes a greatly divided world for immigration status to become so linked to class at the top and bottom of the class scale, but it also takes the country into which immigrants are entering to be highly divided for there to be extra places at the bottom and top of that scale to be populated. Figure X.9 shows how the proportion of all income received by the best-off 1 per cent in Britain fell from 1918 through to 1979 and then rose relentlessly. The best-off 1% took a greater and greater share of national income almost every year from 1979 through to 2014 by which time their share had both risen to 15% and was rising faster than in any earlier year according to HMR estimates. After paying tax, about a third of their income, their share of total national income rose from 8.2% in 2012-13 to 9.8% in 2013-14 (Wintour 2014). Note that Figure X.9 is based on a different data series which considers inequalities between households which are greater still. It fell like this in most countries, but then only rose as high again in a few countries, particularly in the UK and US. In the UK it is currently rising rapidly back to its 1918 peak as average incomes are falling in relation to inflation and incomes at the top are continuing to climb rapidly. Taxation now mutes the inequalities a little, but it in the past it was used to mute them far more. Today the highest earning 1% of individuals pay about a third of all their income in tax reducing their tax-home share from around 15% to just under 10%. Income tax rates were much higher for most of the period when income inequalities were falling. High taxation of very high incomes helped deter greed.

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 Guardian journalist and former newspaper editor Peter Wilby asked the obvious question about all this in May 2011:

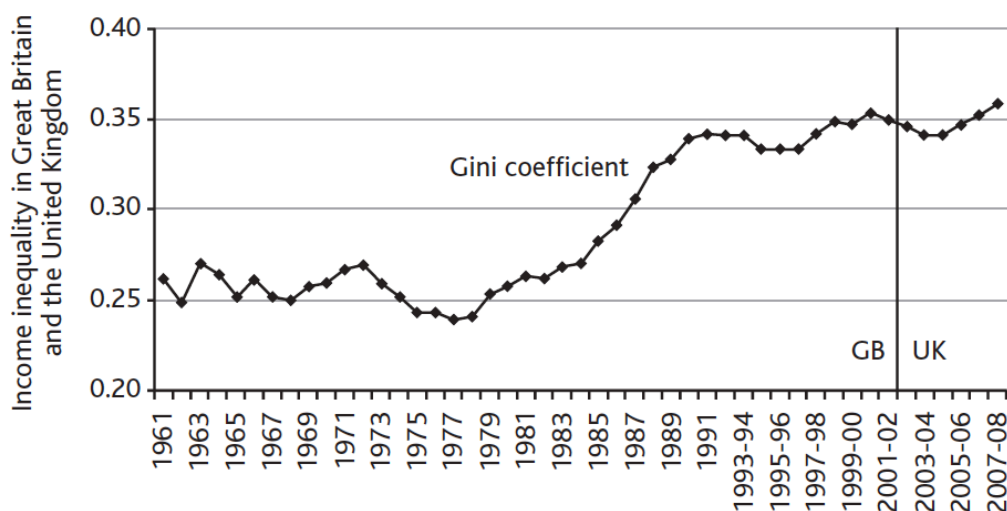
*Why aren't we more angry? Why isn't blood running, metaphorically at least, in the streets? Evidence of how the rich prosper while everyone else struggles with inflation, public spending cuts and static wages arrives almost daily. The Institute for Fiscal Studies reports that last year incomes among the top 1% grew at the fastest rate in a decade. According to the Sunday Times Rich List, the top 1,000 are £60.2bn better off this year than in 2010, bringing their collective wealth close to the record pre-recession levels. (Wilby, 2011)*

He concluded:

*This generation of the middle classes has internalised the values of individualist aspiration, as zealously propagated by Tony Blair as by Margaret Thatcher. It does not look to the application of social justice to improve its lot. It expects to rely on its own efforts to get ahead and, crucially, to maintain its position. As psychologists will tell you, fear of loss is more powerful than the prospect of gain. The struggling middle classes look down more anxiously than they look up, particularly in recession and sluggish recovery. Polls show they dislike high income inequalities but are lukewarm about redistribution. They worry that they are unlikely to benefit and may even lose from it; and worse still, those below them will be pulled up sufficiently to threaten their status. This is exactly the mindset in the US, where individualist values are more deeply embedded. Americans accepted tax cuts for the rich with equanimity. Better to let the rich keep their money, they calculated, than to have it benefit economic and social inferiors.*

In other affluent countries people think in different ways to the British who have become habituated to high levels of inequality over a long time. If you were born after 1989 then you have known nothing else. Figure X.10 shows how abruptly inequalities rose in Britain during the 1980s.

**Figure X.10: Inequality in income in Britain, GINI, 1961-2008**



Source: Dorling (2011, p 69)

High income inequality means high and rising inequalities in wealth and growing poverty, but poverty for other people if you do not live in poor areas. As the rich become more and more segregated from the poor in Britain rising poverty affects their daily lives less and less. This is easily illustrated if the fortunes of people living in the seats of 1997 Labour Cabinet ministers are compared to the fortunes of those living in the seats of the then Conservative Shadow Cabinet. Labour was traditionally the political party of the poor in Britain and the Conservatives were the party of the rich. For every 100 people who were poor in 1991 in those Conservative strong holds, 197 were poor in traditional Labour areas. That rose to 201 by 2001.

**Table X.2: Class residential segregation in Britain, 1997-2005 (%)**

Constituencies grouped by the political post held by the MP elected for each seat immediately after the 1997 General Election	Cabinet Minister	Government Minister (non-cabinet)	Government Backbench	Non-Tory Opposition (Lib Dem/ PC/SNP)	Conservative Backbench	Conservative Shadow Cabinet
Breadline poor latest estimates (at time of publication this was 2001)	201%	178%	133%	127%	103%	100%
Breadline poor 1991 estimates	197%	173%	127%	125%	101%	100%
Asset wealthy latest estimates (at time of publication this was 2001)	22%	26%	61%	84%	107%	100%
Asset wealthy 1991 estimates	29%	39%	76%	94%	119%	100%

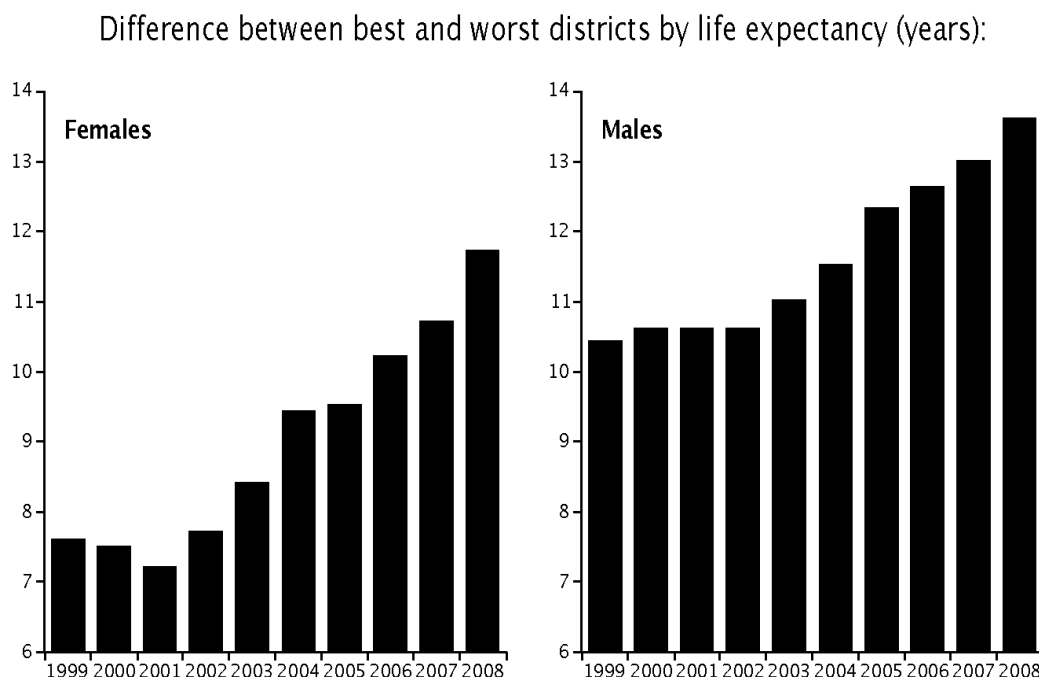
Source: Dorling (2011, p 20)

Much more dramatic was the move away of wealth from Labour areas between 1991 and 2001. For every 100 people who were wealthy in Conservative areas in 1991, 29 were wealthy in Labour areas. That fell to 22 by 2001. All this is shown in Table X.2, as are the numbers of intermediate areas. Labour came to power in the face of high and rising inequalities, including those measured by income and wealth, and hence, growing class segregation. Initially it muted slightly the previous Conservative administration's celebration of inequality, partly because its ministers were still finding their feet and sorting out trouble-makers from among the back benches. Labour policies on education did reduce gaps a little, but in general they allowed division to continue to grow, and the spatial outcomes reflect that (see Figure X.11).

As areas become more segregated between rich and poor, as people with better health in poorer areas leave, as those whose lives suddenly take a turn for the worse in more affluent areas also have to leave because the living has become so expensive, class and place begin to conflate. Income, wealth and location all tend to convey the same meanings. You can begin to tell more and more about who someone is, and how much money they had to get there, from their postcode.

Sorting postcodes by poverty rate, or in the case of Table X.3 below, wards by poverty rate, can be used to reveal all kinds of macro-trends, even among the rarest of outcomes. In this case the growing national murder rate is shown to have become more and more concentrated within the poorest areas of Britain over time. Growing class segregation means a return to Victorian inequalities where murder is relatively common in what were called slum areas, but hardly known among the gentry. Although most things in life in Britain are far better than they were in Victorian times, murder rates have returned to what they were then. This is despite it being illegal to carry weapons now. Firearms could be legally carried then!

**Figure X.11: Inequality in health in Britain, mortality, 1999-2008**



Source: Dorling (2011, p 71)

Many murders are conducted in the heat of the moment with very little premeditation, but allowing class divides to continue to grow and for people to become more and more segregated as a result will increase rates of violence overall (Dorling et al, 2008). Some might think that that violence increases mainly in places some distance from them, but generally, more unequal societies become nastier and more brutal places to live and compete in no matter where any one individual lives.

Almost all affluent societies in the world are less class-ridden than Britain. The segregation of people by social class in Britain is so acute that we tend to think of it as normal. Just as a White American in 1950s Mississippi might have thought it normal to eat in a Whites-only caf. and to sit at the front of the bus and never socialise with Black Americans so, in class-segregated Britain, we are increasingly tending to 'stick to our own'. We have schools for our social class, universities for our social class (or no university), jobs for our social class, housing estates, holidays, clothes, hobbies, even jokes for one social class and not another. And all this is becoming more and more established, but it is also becoming more noticed and resented by many.

In Japan, over the course of the last 20 years, housing and land prices have been falling every year (Allen, 2011; Nakaya, 2011). Close to the heart of the British class system is land and the wealth stored in housing. At one point recently, half of all personal wealth in Britain was held in the form of housing equity, but only by the minority who own property or the shrinking group who were purchasing it. That proportion has now fallen as, outside of London and the South East, housing and land values have been falling. When the property bubble finally bursts it tends, as the Japanese experiences have shown, to carry on deflating year after year. If we come together in future in Britain, it is more likely to be with a long, slow, hissing sound, as the land and housing markets gradually lose momentum, rather than with a bang. It is possible to imagine one can hear that noise beginning today, but to be sure

Author accepted manuscript 'Class Segregation' to appear in *Considering Class: Theory, Culture and the Media in the 21st Century* (Chapter Author: Danny Dorling) *Studies in Critical Social Sciences*, Volume: 113, January 2018 DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004319523\\_006](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004319523_006) that class segregation is reducing, wait until there is any evident sign of the value of property in London falling, and those falls being sustained; at present there is precious little sign of that.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The 1918 general election was known the khaki elections, due to the importance of demobilised soldiers, often still in uniform. A very large number of Liberal and Tory MPs stood on the same 'ticket'. They were literally issued a coupon by Lloyd George and the Conservative leader Bonar Law as candidates who had agreed to support the pair and hence Conservative voting may have appeared more segregated than it was as Conservatives could choose to vote for a coupon Liberal in many areas rather than a Conservative without a ticket or one unlikely to win locally. Almost a hundred years later the Conservative and Liberal party are again in coalition.

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