



SHARING SPACES: SEGREGATION, INTEGRATION, AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS

by *Chagai M. Weiss*



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Economic development, migration, and urbanization, are transforming cities across the world, contributing to diversity along ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic lines. An array of social groups reside in cities like Berlin, Nairobi, Jerusalem, and Chicago. However urban segregation, conceptualized as “the extent to which individuals of different groups occupy or experience different social environments” (Reardon and O’Sullivan 2004), limits intergroup engagement.

In *figure 1*, I provide a descriptive account of residential segregation between migrants and European natives in Berlin, London, and Paris.¹ This figure demonstrates significant variation in the spatial distribution of groups within and across cities. Such variation in residential segregation has been shown to have important political, economic, and social consequences (Kasara 2013; Trounstein 2016; Nathan 2016; Ejdemyr, Kramon and Robinson 2018; Tajima, Samphantharak and Ostwald 2018).

Indeed, urban segregation significantly shapes the most central phenomena that interest po-

litical scientists, including: voting behavior (Enos 2016), public goods provision (Tajima, Samphantharak and Ostwald 2018), political violence (Bhavnani et al. 2014), elite favoritism (Ejdemyr, Kramon and Robinson 2018), discrimination (Enos and Gidron 2016), and intergroup attitudes (Kasara, 2013). It follows that understanding the social and political attitudes and behaviors of citizens and elites, requires paying close attention to the distribution of those citizens and elites across urban space (Enos 2017). Since physical and psychological barriers divide cities into neighborhoods and intensify social divisions, and since such social divisions impact multiple political and economic interactions, a first step towards understanding the multiple effects of segregation entails exploring its links with intergroup relations.

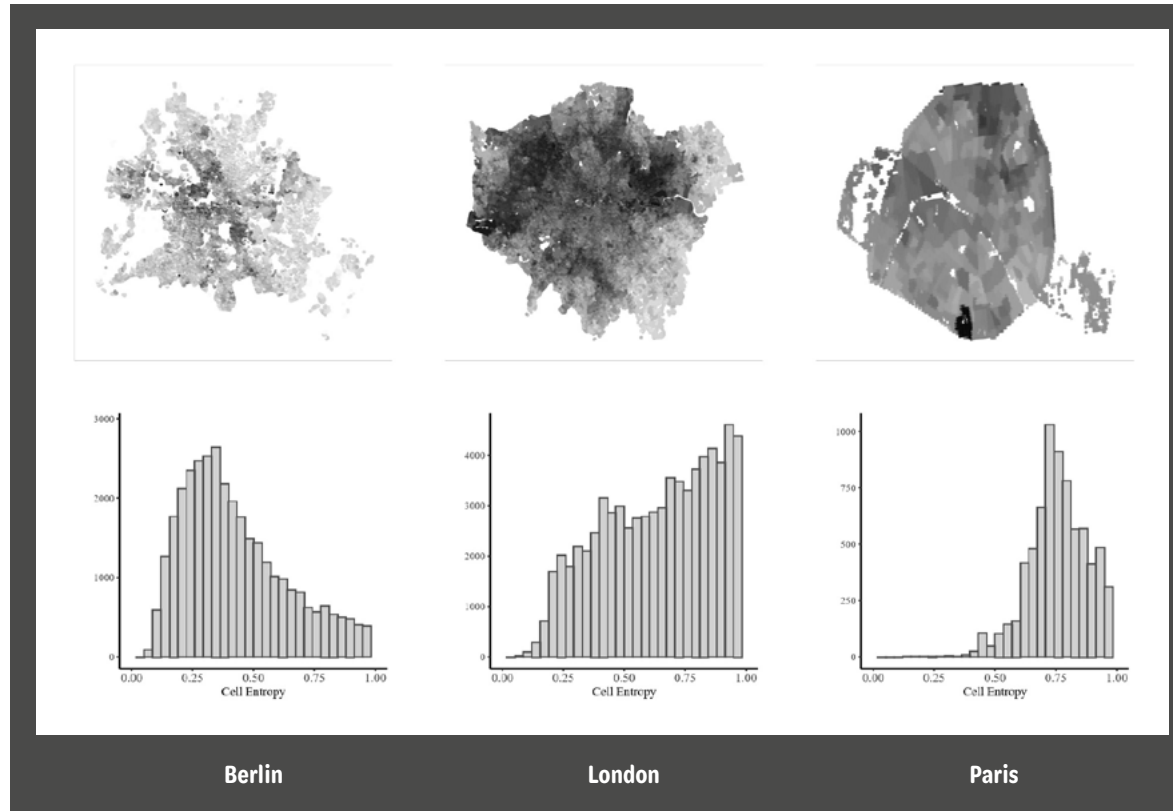
In this paper, I discuss the role of urban segregation in shaping intergroup relations. As depicted in *Figure 2*, I emphasize the central theoretical and empirical focus on residential segregation as a *cause*, and intergroup contact as a *mechanism* shaping intergroup relations (Kasara

1. Specifically, I divide each city into 100x100 meter cells, and calculate a commonly used diversity score (entropy index) for each cell. Data for these maps was provided by the Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography, as well as the National Statistical Institutes DESTATIS (Germany), and INSEE (France). Replication materials can be accessed at: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/YLLX8V>



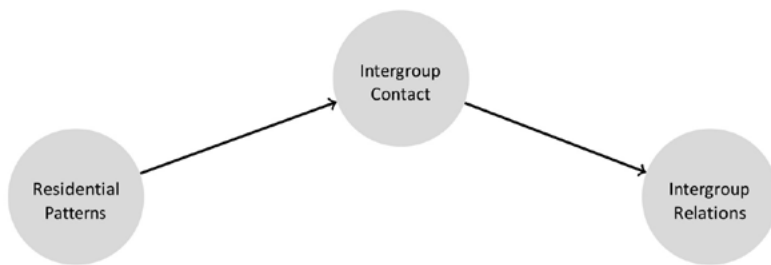
Figure 1:

Urban Residential Segregation of Natives and Migrants - The upper three panels map entropy scores for 100x100 meter grids in Berlin, London and Paris. Darker shades denote increased diversity, whereas lighter shades represent residentially segregated areas. The lower three panels plot the distribution of 100x100 cells from each city by their entropy score. Entropy scores closer to 0 represent residentially segregated cells. Entropy scores are calculated based on census data recording the origin of residents from different countries in each 100x100 meter grid using the diverse R package.



2013; Bhavnani et al. 2014; Eric Oliver and Wong 2003; Bazzi et al. 2019; Bowyer 2009; Sturgis et al. 2011).² In doing so, I review studies from American and comparative politics which consider *how, why, and under what conditions* does segregation affect intergroup relations.

an exciting avenue for future research on urban segregation entails unpacking the black-box of intergroup contact, which links residential patterns with intergroup relations. Specifically, I propose that scholars of urban segregation can draw on recent advances in the study of social contact (Scacco and Warren 2018; Mousa 2020; Rao 2019; Weiss 2020), and develop theoretical and empirical frameworks which pay closer attention to the *types of contact* yielded by residential patterns, and their diverging effects on intergroup relations.

**Figure 2:**

Theorized Relationship between Segregation, Contact and Prejudice

I then turn to critically evaluate our current understanding of the links between segregation, contact, and intergroup relations. I suggest that

What do we know about residential segregation and intergroup relations?

Social scientists have long considered the distribution of racial and ethnic groups across space

2. Segregation has been shown to affect intergroup attitudes through psychological mechanisms which are orthogonal to intergroup contact (Enos and Celaya 2018). However, in this short piece I focus on the role of direct interactions. For a rich psychological theory of geography and intergroup relations which considers mechanisms other than intergroup contact, see Enos (2017).

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as a potent determinant of intergroup relations. These explorations are often linked to early theories of racial threat (Key 1949), and intergroup contact (Allport 1954).

The racial threat framework suggests that whites' racial animosity increases with the share of Blacks in their population. The contact hypothesis suggests that under favorable conditions, direct engagement with out-groups can reduce prejudice. At times, these frameworks are pitted against each other as competing theories. However, it is important to acknowledge that to a great extent Key (1949) and Allport (1954) focus on different questions, causes, and mechanisms.

Building on these early frameworks, scholars of American politics have leveraged granular census files, geocoded surveys, and voting records, in order to empirically examine the relations between segregation and intergroup relations (Giles and Hertz 1994; Oliver and Mendelberg 2000; Enos 2017). There is evidence to suggest that residents of diverse neighborhoods develop more tolerant attitudes (Oliver and Wong 2003). However, recent studies of the second great migration in California, and the demolition of public housing in Chicago, suggest that proximity to minority communities may engender conservative political preferences, and support towards racially charged policies (Enos 2016; Reny and Newman 2020).

At first, data limitations hindered comparative explorations of segregation (Kasara 2013). Nonetheless, in recent years scholars overcame these challenges providing rigorous evidence regarding the links between residential patterns

and intergroup relations in many different contexts, including: Kenya, Iraq, Israel, Indonesia, and Turkey (Weidmann and Salehyan 2013; Bhavnani et al. 2014; Enos and Gidron 2016; Hjorth 2017; Robinson 2017; Bazzi et al. 2019; Livny 2020).

A groundbreaking analysis of segregation patterns in Kenya, finds that residents of segregated areas are less trusting towards members of other ethnic groups (Kasara 2013), and this in turn results in higher levels of intergroup violence (Kasara 2017). Similarly, analyses of cross- and sub-national survey data from Africa demonstrate that ethnic diversity paired with segregation results in lower levels of intergroup trust (Robinson 2017). In contrast, survey evidence from India demonstrates that residential proximity increases group based preferences for co-ethnic leaders, and does not promote more tolerant attitudes (Spater 2020). Similarly, analyses of public opinion data from Britain do not find evidence for a strong relationship between segregation and generalized trust. Lastly, empirically grounded agent based models of violence in Jerusalem, suggest that segregation may actually reduce intergroup conflict when social distance between groups is large (Bhavnani et al. 2014).

Taken together, the existing evidence regarding the effects of segregation on intergroup relations is somewhat mixed. More so, multiple contextual variables including socio-economic conditions (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000), the salience of national rhetoric (Hopkins 2010), social distance (Bhavnani et al. 2014), and group size (Enos and Gidron 2016), are thought to moderate the effects of segregation on intergroup relations.³ Therefore, one interpretation

3. However, it is important to acknowledge that socio-economic conditions and social distance may be a cause of segregation. Therefore, empirically identifying their moderating effects introduces challenges relating to posttreatment bias (Montgomery, Nyhan and Torres 2018).



of these conflicting findings may suggest that segregation has diverging effects across different contexts. In other words, the mere fact that members of different groups share spaces, does not alone determine the quality of intergroup relations. Consequentially, scholars ought to consider the nature of intergroup relations which emerge in the shadow of segregation and integration (Varshney 2003).

Residential patterns, types of contact, and intergroup relations

As demonstrated in *Figure 2*, political scientists often suggest that segregation affects intergroup relations through a mechanism of intergroup contact (Kasara 2013; Eric Oliver and Wong 2003; Bazzi et al. 2019; Bowyer 2009; Sturgis et al. 2011). The logic of this argument is as follows: Segregation limits intergroup contact; therefore, in-groups in segregated environments rarely get a chance to engage with out-groups and collect information and positive experiences which reduce prejudice. Despite its intuitiveness, several empirical patterns complicate this notion:

1. Residential patterns are one determinant of contact. However, their centrality may be attenuated in urban contexts, if mobility and shared institutions connect citizens from different backgrounds.
2. Different residential patterns, as well as other urban characteristics, may account for divergent types of intergroup contact.
3. Different types of contact likely have heterogeneous effects on intergroup relations.
4. These different effects vary in their magnitude and duration.

The limited theoretical and empirical consideration of contact as a complex mechanism which can either impair or improve intergroup relations is understandable. Indeed, until recently, evidence regarding the heterogeneous effects of different types of contact was rather limited. However, recent advances in the intergroup contact literature can help us make significant strides towards a robust understanding of the relations between segregation, contact, and prejudice.

Following calls to rigorously evaluate Allport's theoretical framework (Paluck and Green 2009; Paluck, Green and Green 2019), a recent wave of experimental studies has demonstrated the heterogeneous effects of different types of contact. Generally, we have evidence to suggest that collaborative intergroup contact reduces prejudice, whereas adversarial contact impairs intergroup relations (Lowe 2018). More specifically, engaging with out-groups as part of soccer leagues in Erbil and Qarqosh (Mousa 2020), or vocational programs in Kaduna (Scacco and Warren 2018), has been shown to promote more tolerant behavior. Similarly, diverse schools in Mumbai (Rao 2019), and Israeli medical clinics which facilitate intergroup contact between patients and doctors (Weiss 2020), contribute to favorable intergroup relations. These insights suggest that specific forms of engagement within urban space may promote positive intergroup relations.

However, interactions with out-groups are not a panacea for intergroup relations. Indeed, brief exposure to Hispanic workers in Boston train stations (Enos 2014), and casual contact with out-group daily laborers in Afghanistan (Condra and Linardi 2019) have been shown to impair in-



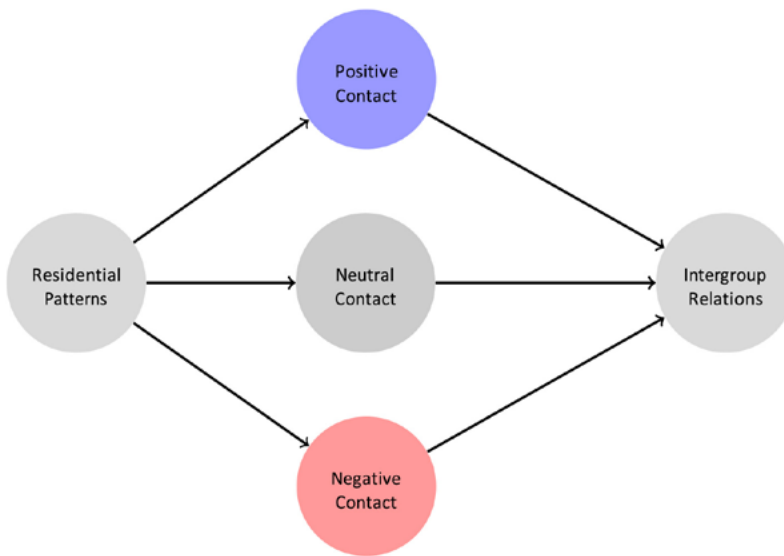


Figure 3:
Opening the Blackbox:
Segregation may cause
different types of contact,
which in turn shape inter-
group relations

tergroup relations.⁴ Clearly, not all types of contact improve intergroup relations, and absent meaningful engagement, diversity may enhance animosity between members of different groups.

Unpacking the blackbox of intergroup contact

Building on recent patterns in the social contact literature, I suggest that scholars of segregation unpack the blackbox of contact, which links between segregation and intergroup relations. As depicted in *Figure 3*, residential patterns may lead to positive, negative, or neutral forms of intergroup engagement. These in turn will collectively shape intergroup relations in a complex fashion. By unpacking the blackbox of intergroup contact, researchers can get a richer understanding of the types of interactions that occur in different segregated and integrated urban spaces. Consequently, these understandings will provide insight not only to *whether* segregation shapes intergroup relations, but also to *why* and *under what conditions* does tolerance emerge.

Unpacking the blackbox of intergroup contact introduces a host of unexplored yet interesting questions for scholars of segregation:

1. Do different residential patterns lead to varying types of intergroup contact?
2. Can shared institutions (e.g. schools, associational organization, hospitals) increase the share of positive interactions in segregated urban spaces?
3. How do institutions which promote positive contact, moderate the general effects of segregation?
4. Do negative (or positive) experiences of intergroup contact increase (or decrease) social sorting and preferences for segregation and social distance?

Answering these questions in a rigorous manner is likely beyond the scope of any one individual study. Still, future research should aim to draw more explicit links between the empirical study of residential patterns, and the emerging social contact literature. Specifically, scholars of segregation can build on recent findings and ask, what types of engagement segregation promotes in the case(s) they are analyzing. Concurrently, scholars of intergroup contact may ask: how might micro-effects inform broader patterns of segregation (Humphreys and Scacco 2020). These efforts will likely promote a stronger understanding of the links between segregation, contact, and intergroup relations. ●

4. In the immigration literature, recent studies demonstrate that brief exposure to migrants also promotes exclusionary attitudes and behaviors (Hangartner et al. 2019; Dinas et al. 2019).

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