

Social Segregation: The Honest Answer

On the 28th of August 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.

During that speech he said "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."

A lot has changed in the last 65 years all over the world, but the same dynamic still holds true, there are groups within the population who for whatever reason don't integrate fully within their respective societies.

The rule that applies is quite straightforward; people who are different are treated differently. This ranges from picking words carefully to actual full-blown hatred still in some parts of the world.

If you are lucky enough to work somewhere that provides a hot meal at lunch or dinnertime you'll see exactly what I mean. Different departments sit at different tables and even from there they sub-divide. They split up firstly by department, and then by friendship groups.

In my place of work things are slightly different, once they have split by department, they then split by which country they came from. It is amusing to see a group of Polish workers sitting at a large table with 2 extra spaces and then when an English member of the same department arrives they elect to sit on their own rather than become uncomfortable during their short lunch break.

I also have a very good friend who recently changed departments; she moved from my department to another and since then has pretty much ignored all of us. She has become the essence of her current department.

Similarly, every child is taught to separate himself or herself from everyone else from primary school age onwards. There are always small friendship groups, even in a small class of around thirty for the sake of argument the numbers of boys and girls will be even at fifteen in each class. There are also two classes in each year. (60 children, 30 Boys, 30 Girls in case you can't do the maths...)

The majority of boys in school will play football in their play times, there are the few who either don't want to play football, or indeed can't play football. Already here you can see how these young boys are at a disadvantage. At this young of an age, the boys will mostly have nothing to do with the girls except for the occasional game, when no one brought a ball into school.

The girls likewise wanted nothing to do with the boys except when it suited them. They similarly split themselves up, their friendship groups weren't ever as cut and dry as those of the boys but whilst they were established they were very nearly unbreakable. Of course these didn't last very long, usually only a week or two before there was an argument with the wrong person and all of a sudden

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someone who was previously part of the 'cool group' is hanging around with a different group. You've all seen the power the playground clique has over the rest of the population. Everyone wants to be a part of them in order to further their own social standings. For this exact reason people are excluded, if everyone were a part of the group there'd be none of the competition for a place.

Now you'd think that the dynamics of a place of work or playground aren't representative of the country as a whole, but that is where you'd be wrong. They aren't to be compared like for like, but you'd be better off using these social dynamics to better understand the national picture.

Within the country there are the different classes, whilst the government has tried to convince people that the old class system no longer exists, it is apparent that it still does. Even simply, you have the people who own their house outright. Those who own their house with a mortgage. Those whom rent privately and then the council tenants.

The large majority of the country fit into the middle class band, we're average, not especially noticed by the whole. However, amongst the average, you'll find groups again, as we've already seen with the staff canteen, languages are a huge factor in the social groups we form. Immigrants especially gravitate towards each other with the intention of replicating the feel of being at home. They may be thousands of miles from home but if they speak their own language or celebrate their national holidays it allows them to deal with the stress of being in another country.

Now the governments view of course, is...you're more than welcome to come to the UK, end of story. Our joining of the EU of course has brought floods of eastern Europeans to the country seeking employment, whilst this isn't at first glance a bad thing it does need you to think about it.

Firstly, why are they here? There is a better life to be had here. There is more work and consequently, more money available here. They do any job; it's not about what they do but rather, how long they do it for, how much they get paid. I personally have a similar philosophy; as long as I'm getting paid I'll do pretty much anything that the bosses will ask me to.

The second question to be asked is how long are they here for? This is the million pound question and one that begs the answer: not very long. Granted some of the immigrants will want to stay, however, most have plans to return home older, richer with enough to live comfortably. From the five very good polish friends I have, only one has plans to live here in the UK for any significant length of time. One has actually already left. She worked in a crap job five days a week for over a year and saved enough money to put herself through university. Good for her. Bad for the countries economy.

Those whom look to leave have a particular part to play in the downfall of the British economy. Whilst I wouldn't go as far to say that they aren't paying tax or anything. They're just not spending money. Those who plan to leave save up or

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send the money out of the country to their particular homeland. Occasionally they'll have families to support back at home, young children, parents, brothers and sisters. It's all so important to look at them as doing menial tasks that no-one else wants to do, but if they're not contributing to the country's spending totals they're not helping anyone but themselves.

Conversely, those who seek to remain, to settle and live in the country permanently are more than welcome to, they'll save like a normal person, their expenditures are the same as any other resident, vital resources as well as luxurious goods.

But a question does present itself. Should the country as a whole do more to extend a welcome to those who come across with the aim to working and leaving?

Perhaps if more of an effort were to be made to understand and respect the culture of those who seek to live in the country they'd feel more at ease and certainly more willing to stay. An undertaking as such would always be welcomed BUT missions such as this aren't likely to succeed on those who never planned to stay.

Those, whom separate themselves from the 'native' inhabitants purely by their own doing, will never be influenced to pack up and leave their home, even if it were for a much better one.

Nor should they be forced to, using foreign nationals for work is one thing but denying them their cultural heritage is a completely different ball game. Neither can we be forced to put up with their culture as a mark of respect.

Religion is another thing that has the entire world walking on eggshells. People go out of their way to avoid pissing off the wrong ones. A cartoon had hate mobs lining the streets and the wrong name for a teddy bear had a woman lose her job.

The world has gone crazy. People live in communities of their fellow countrymen thousands of miles from home to avoid having to mix with their natives. I don't just mean those whom travel to Britain for a better life. The Brits are also guilty of such crimes. The Spanish coastal towns are littered with ex-pat communities.

It doesn't just work one way; everyone wants to stay with what they know. It's a basic truth of the human condition. Change isn't necessarily a good thing.