

PLANNED INTEGRATED AND DESEGREGATED SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Carol McClenahan, Ed Cairns,
Seamus Dunn, and Valerie Morgan¹
*Centre for the Study of Conflict
University of Ulster, Coleraine*

Socioeconomic status level of residential segregation level of political violence in home areas and frequency of church attendance are examined for 11 to 12 year old (N=230) and 14 to 15 year old (N=152) pupils attending a planned integrated school a Protestant desegregated school and a Catholic desegregated school in Northern Ireland. Of the total sample 52% were Protestant and 48% Catholic. While no differences were found for socioeconomic status there were significant differences for residential segregation and political violence levels among the Protestant and Catholic pupils as a function of school type. Pupils attending the Protestant desegregated school were more likely to live in religiously mixed areas than pupils in the other two schools while pupils attending the planned integrated school were more likely to live in areas with higher levels of political violence. Church attendance was found to differ significantly across the schools for Protestant pupils only. Protestant pupils from the Catholic desegregated and integrated schools attended less frequently than pupils in the Protestant desegregated school.

The majority of schools in Northern Ireland can be described as either Catholic or Protestant, meaning that staff and pupils are homogenous in religion (see Darby & Dunn, 1987, Darby, Murray, Dunn, Batts, Farren, & Harris, 1977). There are, however, a number of desegregated schools, which include a minority of 'other denomination' staff and pupils on their rolls. In desegregated (or unplanned integrated) schools, it appears that pupils from the minority group are accepted with little or no accommodation being made for religious or cultural differences (see Spencer, 1987). These schools have been joined, over the last ten years, by a small number of planned integrated schools which comprise a balanced number of both Protestant and Catholic staff and pupils and accommodate both cultural traditions in their organization and curriculum (Dunn, 1989). At the time the present study was carried out there were 14 planned

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integrated schools in Northern Ireland, 12 at primary level (age 5-11 years), and two at secondary level (age 11-18 years).

The backgrounds of pupils attending planned integrated and desegregated schools in Northern Ireland has been the subject of much speculation but little research. The purpose of the study reported in this paper was to examine differences between pupils from three schools (a planned integrated, a Protestant desegregated, and a Catholic desegregated) in terms of their socioeconomic status, the amount of residential segregation and political violence in their 'home areas,' and how often they attended church.

Data relating to the socioeconomic status of pupils were obtained for two reasons. The first and most obvious was that socioeconomic status may be related to pupil attitudes. The second reason was that the information is of interest for its own sake. It has often been suggested that only middle-class parents are willing to send their children to religiously desegregated schools in Northern Ireland. In particular, as Morgan, Dunn, Cairns, & Fraser (1992) have observed, this has been an accusation that has been levelled at (planned) integrated schools.

As a corollary to this suggestion, it is also sometimes suggested that children attending integrated schools come from areas that are not only middle-class but also largely residentially integrated in terms of denomination. This stereotype is partly based on the mistaken belief that it is only middle-class areas in Northern Ireland that are residentially integrated (Poole, 1982). Another common belief is that children from integrated schools come from areas that are largely untouched by political violence.

The view of the hierarchy of the Catholic church in Ireland is that Catholic pupils attending integrated schools will not receive the necessary teaching in the Catholic faith. The role of Catholic education is seen as essential in protecting the faith of future generations (Conway, 1971) and children's religious faith is felt to be under threat if they do not attend a Catholic school. On the other hand, while some Protestant denominations have welcomed integrated education, others appear to harbour the same suspicion as Catholics that integration basically means diminution in religious practice.

One crude measure of religious practice is the frequency with which people attend church. The 1989 Social Attitudes survey report found that 62% of people attend Church once a week in Northern Ireland (86% Catholic and 44% Protestant). Figures have consistently found the rate of church attendance to be greater among Catholics than among Protestants (Rose, 1971; Moxon-Browne, 1983). For example, Russell (1974) found that while 90% of his sample of Catholic boys attended mass weekly, the figure for weekly church attendance among Protestant boys was only 45 percent. Francis & Greer (1990) have also

shown that the mean score for pupils on *religiosity measures is higher in Catholic schools than in Protestant schools*

The study reported in this paper, which was part of a larger study, was carried out in three schools in Northern Ireland – a planned integrated school, a Protestant desegregated school, and a Catholic desegregated school. Its purpose was to *determine whether pupils attending the three schools differed in terms of their socioeconomic status, the level of segregation which resulted in the neighbourhoods in which they lived, the level of political violence in those neighbourhoods, and the frequency of the pupils' church attendance*

METHOD

Sample

There are only two secondary (catering for pupils over 11 years of age) planned integrated schools in Northern Ireland. Both are mixed gender and comprehensive. Although there are several state-run (de facto Protestant) mixed-gender schools that are attended by some Catholic pupils, we could identify only one mixed-gender Catholic-run school that was attended by a not inconsiderable number of Protestant children. All of the religiously desegregated schools identified were, with one exception, grammar schools, which cater for the minority of more academically able students in Northern Ireland. The three schools from which we collected data were (i) a planned integrated secondary comprehensive school, which is mixed-gender and in which about 50% of students are Catholic, (ii) a Protestant desegregated secondary grammar school, which is mixed-gender and in which about 38% of students are Catholic, (iii) a Catholic desegregated secondary grammar school, which is mixed-gender and in which about 75% of students are Catholic.

Subjects

Subjects were 1st form (aged 11 to 12 years) and 4th form (aged 14 to 15 years) pupils. There were 97 such pupils in the planned integrated secondary school, 214 in the Protestant desegregated school, and 71 in the Catholic desegregated school. Overall, 52% of the pupils were Protestant and 48% were Catholic. 60% were in first year and 40% in fourth year.

The Protestant desegregated school was chosen because of the high proportion of Catholic pupils on its roll and the Catholic desegregated school for its uniqueness. Unfortunately, we gained access to only one of the two planned integrated secondary schools.

Collection of data took place during the school year 1990-91.

Procedure

A short questionnaire was used to gather demographic information and to determine the religious affiliation of pupils and how often they attended church.

Religious affiliation. Bearing in mind the ethical problems associated with research conducted in Northern Ireland generally, but especially with children and young people, pupils were asked to name the primary school they had attended, as a proxy for religious affiliation (this procedure was determined by consulting the 'Religious Equality of Opportunity in Employment - Classification of Schools for Monitoring Purposes'). This is recognised as the best way, next to actually asking pupils, of determining religious affiliation and is used by the government when monitoring fair employment practices. It must be recognized, however, that while this indicates a Protestant or Catholic school background, it does not necessarily reflect the religious (practising or non-practising) or political upbringing of the child within the family environment. A small number of pupils who had attended religiously mixed primary schools were excluded from analyses.

Socioeconomic status. Three questions were asked: 'Do you have a phone?... yes/no', 'How many cars does your family own?' and 'How many television sets are in your house?' In response to the latter two questions, each pupil stated the actual number of cars and television sets in the family. These questions were asked to provide a proxy for socioeconomic status. This indirect method avoided having to ask pupils about parents' occupation, income, or type of house tenure.

Residential segregation. Pupils were asked to provide the name of the street or road on which they lived. This information was recorded in terms of electoral wards and, with the help of a demographer (M. Poole), was used to determine the amount of residential segregation in the child's home area. This was done by classifying the area where the child lived as Catholic (80%+ Catholic), Desegregated (79% - 21% Catholic), or Protestant (20% or less Catholic) (see Doherty, 1990). These figures are based on the number of self-identified Catholics in each ward in 1981 as a percentage of all the census respondents who gave a religious self-identity. (The 'not stated' category in the census classification of religious affiliation was excluded from both the numerator and the denominator in the calculation.) A score was computed for each pupil ranging from 1 indicating an area with 0-9.99% Catholics in the population to 10 for an area with 90 - 100% Catholics.

Political violence. Electoral ward data were also used to classify the area in which each child lived in terms of amount of political violence (categorized as high, medium, or low). Although each was allocated a coding, the violence rate was not calculated for each ward separately. In the case of urban wards, except

for Belfast and Londonderry, it was considered more meaningful to give a coding based on the violence level for the town as a whole within which the ward lies. Similarly, for rural wards, the code is based on the violence figures for a rural region containing several contiguous wards. In Belfast, each ward has been coded according to the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) region within which it lies. In all cases, violence data is for the period 1969-1983. A score was computed for each child, 1 indicating an area with a low level of violence, 2 an area with a medium level of violence, and 3 an area with a high level of violence.

Church attendance Pupils were asked the following question 'Apart from special occasions like weddings, funerals and baptisms how often do you attend church?' Responses were recorded on the following scale: once a week (1), once a fortnight (2), once a month (3), twice a year (4), once a year or less (5), never (6). A pupil's score could range from 1 to 6.

RESULTS

Socioeconomic Status

Because all the children had been asked to state the actual number of cars and television sets in their family it was possible to pursue this matter a little further by conducting a one-way analysis of variance on these figures (Table 1). These analyses indicated that the mean number of cars was 1.48 for Protestant children with no differences between schools ($F=73$, $df=2,193$). For Catholic children the equivalent figure was 1.30 with again no significant difference between schools ($F=1.54$, $df=2,183$). Protestant children reported owning on average 2.84 television sets ($F=51$, $df=2,193$) and Catholic children 2.80 sets ($F=1.44$, $df=2,183$). Again, for neither of these two groups was there a statistically significant difference between schools.

Residential Segregation

In the Protestant desegregated school, 97% of Protestant pupils and 75% of Catholic pupils came from residentially mixed areas while the remaining Catholic pupils lived in mainly Catholic areas. In the Catholic desegregated school, 72% of Protestant pupils came from a residentially mixed area and 28% from a mainly Protestant area. Sixty-five per cent of Catholic pupils came from residentially mixed areas and 33% from mainly Protestant areas. In the planned integrated school, 61% of Protestants lived in residentially mixed areas, 32% in areas with large Protestant populations, and 7% in areas with large Catholic

populations. The equivalent figures for the Catholic pupils are 64%, 24%, and 12% respectively (Table 2).

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGES OF CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT PUPILS WHO INDICATED THAT THEIR FAMILY HAD A PHONE, TWO OR MORE TELEVISION SETS, OR A CAR

| School type | Protestant desegregated | Catholic desegregated | Planned integrated |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Protestant pupils | |
| (N) | 131 | 18 | 47 |
| % phone | 94.7 | 94.4 | 85.1 |
| % 2+ tvs | 93.8 | 88.9 | 91.4 |
| % car | 98.5 | 83.3 | 89.4 |
| | | Catholic pupils | |
| (N) | 83 | 53 | 50 |
| % phone | 90.4 | 100.0 | 90.0 |
| % 2+ tvs | 89.2 | 88.7 | 92.0 |
| % ca | 88.0 | 92.5 | 80.0 |

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGES OF CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT PUPILS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

| School type | Protestant desegregated | Catholic desegregated | Planned integrated |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Protestant pupils | |
| (N) | 131 | 18 | 47 |
| Catholic | 3.0 | 0 | 6.8 |
| Mixed | 97.0 | 72.2 | 61.3 |
| Protestant | 0 | 27.8 | 31.9 |
| | | Catholic pupils | |
| (N) | 83 | 53 | 50 |
| Catholic | 24.7 | 2.1 | 12.0 |
| Mixed | 75.3 | 64.6 | 64.0 |
| Protestant | 0 | 33.3 | 24.0 |

A one-way analysis of variance of the residential segregation data indicated that among both Protestant and Catholic pupils there are highly significant differences between schools (Protestant pupils $F=24.16$, $df=2,190$, $p<0.01$, Catholic pupils $F=29.02$, $df=2,176$, $p<0.01$) For Catholic pupils the mean scores are 2.61 in the Catholic desegregated school, 3.66 in the integrated school, and 4.89 in the Protestant desegregated school. The corresponding figures for Protestant pupils are 3.02, 4.30, and 5.89.

Political Violence

The most notable feature of the data relating to political violence is that, in contrast to a mere 0% to 2.3% of Protestant and 2% to 3% of Catholic pupils in the other two schools, 96% to 98% of pupils in the planned integrated school came from areas where political violence was classified as medium or high (Table 3).

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGES OF CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT PUPILS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

| School type | Protestant desegregated | Catholic desegregated | Planned integrated |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| (N) | 131 | 18 | 47 |
| violence medium/high | 2.3 | 0 | 97.8 |
| (N) | 83 | 53 | 50 |
| violence medium/high | 2.5 | 2.1 | 96.0 |

A one-way analysis of variance on these figures for both Protestant and Catholic pupils showed highly significant differences between schools (Protestant pupils $F=615.56$, $df=2,190$, $p<0.01$, Catholic pupils $F=415.63$, $df=2,176$, $p<0.01$) The mean scores are 1.04, 1.02 and 2.68 for Catholic pupils and 1.00, 1.02, and 2.68 for Protestant pupils in the Catholic desegregated, Protestant desegregated, and integrated schools respectively.

Church Attendance

Overall a greater number of Catholic than of Protestant pupils in all three schools attend church weekly.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGES OF CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT PUPILS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

| School type | Protestant desegregated | | Catholic desegregated | | Planned integrated | |
|-------------|-------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| | Protestant pupils | | | | | |
| (N) | (74) | (57) | (14) | (4) | (28) | (19) |
| weekly | 62.2 | 59.6 | 50.0 | 0.0 | 48.8 | 26.3 |
| never | 6.8 | 8.8 | 35.7 | 50.0 | 20.7 | 26.3 |
| | Catholic pupils | | | | | |
| (N) | (47) | (36) | (40) | (13) | (27) | (23) |
| weekly | 91.5 | 97.1 | 84.6 | 84.6 | 88.9 | 60.9 |
| never | 0.0 | 2.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.4 | 4.3 |

A two-way analysis of covariance (school x age) with level of political violence and degree of religious segregation in the child's home area, plus number of cars and television sets in the home as the covariates, was carried out on the data obtained from the Protestant children. A main effect for school ($F=4.36$; $df=2,181$; $p<.05$) indicated that Protestant pupils attending the Catholic desegregated school and those attending the integrated school attended church less frequently (mean scores: 3.78 and 3.34 respectively) compared to Protestant children who were pupils at the Protestant desegregated school (mean score: 2.12). There was no main effect for age or statistically significant interaction between age and school type.

Similar statistical treatment of the data from the Catholic children showed no statistically significant difference between the children from the different types of schools and no interaction between school and age.

DISCUSSION

It is commonly believed that children who attend religiously mixed schools come from largely middle-class families, that they live in areas that are residentially mixed, and that these areas have been relatively untouched by the

political violence in Northern Ireland. While data from the present study cannot provide information in strictly social class terms, it is of interest to note that there were no differences between the schools on the indicators of home background which we used. Firmer data were available concerning the type of area pupils lived in. Our findings indicate that the majority of pupils in each school and from each denomination lived in a residentially mixed area. This is particularly true of the Protestant pupils at the Protestant desegregated school. However, Protestant and Catholic children at the integrated school and Catholic children at the Catholic desegregated school were somewhat less likely to live in mixed religion areas.

While the majority of pupils from the Catholic and Protestant desegregated schools came from areas with little or no political violence, most of those attending the planned integrated school came from areas with high levels of violence, regardless of denominational background. This, of course, may say more about where the schools are situated than anything else. The planned integrated school in our study is situated in Belfast, where a large part of the violence in Northern Ireland has occurred.

There was no evidence in our study that the type of school attended by Catholic pupils was related to the frequency with which they attended church. Protestant children at the Catholic desegregated and integrated schools, however, attended church less frequently than their co-religionists.

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