

RELIGIOUS RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATIONS IN AUSTRALIA

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Data from the 1996 Census are examined at postcode level to determine whether there exist in Australia significant locations of religious residential concentration. No postcode was discovered to have more than sixty per cent of any religious group; no minority religious group was discovered to make up more than forty per cent of any postcode. Comparisons of 1986, 1991 and 1996 census data at the Statistical Local Area (SLA) level provide mixed evidence regarding the trends in religious residential concentrations. A variety of factors shape the formation of religious residential concentrations of which religion is only one.

Residential concentrations of particular groups of people have concerned social and urban planners for some time. Birrell and others have examined the emergence of residential concentrations of comparatively poor people from non-English-speaking backgrounds (NESB) in Sydney and Melbourne.¹ Religion may be a factor in the emergence of residential concentrations as people who share cultural backgrounds including religion seek to live near each other, or are attracted by services provided by religious organisations.² In addition, religion may be used as a dimension in the identification of residential concentrations of people.

As religious plurality has become a major characteristic of many societies due to immigration and conversion, the analysis of religious residential concentrations becomes one of the issues societies face in the management of religious diversity.³ The past few decades have witnessed the settlement of many religious groups relatively new to their societies.⁴ In many parts of the world religious diversity has been associated with conflict and war. In Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States religious diversity has increased without violence or harsh conflict. While violent religious conflict seems remote from life

in Australia, the rise of religious diversity due to immigration and conversion raises questions about the potential for religious inter-group conflict in Australia. Have religious groups settled in isolated pockets, or has religious settlement in Australia been more residentially diffused? This investigation replicates and extends earlier analysis of 1986 Australian census data in order to ascertain the extent of change in religious residential concentration over the last three censuses.

Much previous research into religious and ethnic residential concentration was conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom, and like that of Birrell, was largely concerned with the negative socioeconomic impact of residential concentration. The study of ethnic residential concentration, particularly in the United States, is associated with the concept of 'ghetto'. While historically referring to non-voluntary residential segregation of Jews in particular urban quarters in some European cities, in the United States the term has come to refer to predominantly Black, or Hispanic, sections of inner cities that were also often slums. However, Jupp et al. state on the basis of 1986 census data that Australia does not have ghettos in this sense.⁵ In addition, these authors concluded that where

ethnic residential concentration was highest, segregation did not occur because of the overall diversity of those districts. The maps produced by Hugo from 1986 census data confirm this finding.⁶ Similarly, Burnley's analysis of 1991 Australian census data concluded that ethnic ghettos do not exist in Australia in terms of the criteria used in the USA which require a homogeneous minority group to be more than 80 per cent of the population of an area for it to be classified a ghetto.⁷

EXPLAINING RELIGIOUS RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATION

Religious residential concentration may reflect timing of migration. The Chicago School's observations of residential settlement patterns led to the development of spatial assimilation theory which contends that immigrant groups first live in specific suburbs close to people of the same cultural and linguistic origins and where work is readily available. As immigrants' socio-economic situation improves and 'assimilation' occurs through adaptation to and entry into a new linguistic and cultural environment, these people move to suburbs inhabited primarily by the dominant cultural and ethnic group. In these suburbs, immigrants and especially their children, further assimilate. More recent American studies have indicated that as the barriers to immigrants directly entering suburbs are lowered with the increased availability of appropriate employment and cheap housing, direct suburban settlement is becoming more frequent.⁸ Similarly, Jupp et al. noted two distinct patterns of Australian immigrant residential settlement. Direct migration into 'utilitarian suburbs' — for industrial work and cheap land — or to 'rural and provincial settlements' — for traditional agricultural activity, like market

gardening.⁹ In Australia, the location and nature of present day religious concentrations is likely to reflect the time that particular groups of immigrants arrived. Post-war migrants have tended to settle in urban areas. However, this process does not affect all migrants equally. Birrell and others have noted that migrants from NESB backgrounds now settle initially in outer suburbs and are less likely to move from early areas of settlement than are English-speaking background (ESB) migrants and Australian-born residents.¹⁰ This may well result in persisting, rather than transitional, residential concentrations of some groups, including religious groups.

While language and country of origin may also play a role in the process of emerging residential concentrations, religious factors may also operate. There may be some religious groups whose beliefs and practices promote increasing religious residential concentrations over time. Muslim and Jewish commercial centres provide the permitted halal and kosher food. Similarly, Orthodox Jews need to live within walking distance of a synagogue as they not allowed to ride in any type of vehicle on the Sabbath. Religious concentration may also occur around religious buildings and schools.

This form of gathering reflects the need for cultural, linguistic and social support as well as the need to pursue religious and spiritual activities. The need for this support and the desire to be near a mosque, combined with hostility and discrimination experienced from the host society, is one reason for Islamic residential concentration.¹¹ Jupp et al. suggest that areas of high commercial activity by particular ethnic groups were often the cause of unfounded AngloAustralian fears that ghettos were emerging, but these authors found that the concentration of

ethnic commercial activity was not paralleled by the residential patterns. However, these unfounded fears were seen to be one source of racial discrimination against particular groups such as 'Asians' and Arabic-speaking Muslims.¹²

This paper raises and answers three questions about religious residential concentrations in Australia. To what extent does Australia contain areas of high residential concentrations of religious groups? Is religious concentration associated with socioeconomic disadvantage? Is there evidence that religious residential concentration is increasing?

MEASURING RELIGIOUS RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATION

Our first question was answered negatively. Consistent with analyses of the 1986 and 1991 census, our examination of the 1996 census revealed that there were no areas of Australia, large or small, in which one religious group exceeded 70 per cent of the population, let alone the American standard of 80 per cent. The one exception was the Cocos Islands off Indonesia where Muslims predominate. There is no urban area in which one religious group exceeds 60 per cent of the population. Since no group utterly dominated any place, another definition of religious residential concentration was required. The measure we adopted was to identify those areas in which a particular religious group exceeded its overall population percentage by more than three standard deviations. This has allowed us to map the religious density of religious groups and the religious diversity of suburbs in Australia.

We also decided to limit our analysis to the state of Victoria — population 4,373,518 in 1996 — and to use postcodes as the unit of local analysis. Victoria has

a high level of migrant diversity making it a good test case.

This study is based on the 1996 census using similar variables to Jupp et. al., though following our initial analysis we have used a slightly different method. Jupp et. al., used Local Government Areas (LGAs) as the unit of analysis. By contrast, this study uses Australian postcode areas as the unit of analysis because these relate more strongly to individual suburbs. In urban areas postcodes form part of a resident's identity along with the name of the suburb. Moreover, Victorian LGAs were amalgamated in the early to mid-1990s creating much larger geographical areas relating less clearly to suburban characteristics. As a result postcodes present a more locally recognisable residential unit for the analysis of religious concentration. One disadvantage of using postcode areas is that they vary in terms of population and geographical size and some boundaries have changed over time. The smallest unit for which readily comparable time change data are available from the census is Statistical Local Area (SLA). Victoria is divided into 202 SLAs. Our examination of change in religious concentration over time uses Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) concorded data for SLA providing consistent boundaries for comparisons across the 1986, 1991 and 1996 censuses.¹³

Victoria has 623 postcode areas. Postcodes with comparatively high levels of religious residential concentration were identified in the following way. The proportion of each religious group in each postcode was calculated. The mean proportion of each religious group across all 623 postcodes was then calculated. This produced a distribution of postcode percentages for each group enabling the cal-

culatation of standard deviations. The data presented in Table 1 indicate that each group has a different distribution of percentages. This method of identifying areas of religious residential concentration examines a group's distribution of percentages and asks in which postcodes are its percentages three standard deviations above its overall Victoria postcode mean. Where this occurs, the group is deemed to be residentially concentrated. In this way the degree of concentration is not arbitrarily set, nor is it set by comparison with other groups, but is simply a property of the group's percentage distribution across postcodes.

The results, including the postcode with the highest proportion of each group and the relationship between postcode mean and population per cent are presented in Table 1. Postcodes in which a religious group was three standard deviations above its overall Victorian postcode mean are identified and examined. The postcodes identified in this way represent the most residentially concentrated areas for that particular group.

The following analysis of these data proceeds at two levels. First we examine the distribution of religious groups in the state of Victoria and secondly we examine five suburbs identified to have particularly high concentrations of a particular group.

THE RESIDENTIAL DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Table 1 presents the basic data on the postcode residential distribution of the twenty largest religious groups in Victoria. For each group, Table 1 presents the number of postcodes in which the percentage of the group exceeds its postcode mean by three standard deviations, the percentage of the state population represented by the group, the

group's highest postcode percentage, the postcode number in which that occurs, the name of the post code, the minimum postcode percentage of the group, the mean of the postcode percentages, and finally that percentage representing three standard deviations beyond the postcode mean for the group. The difference between a group's percentage in the state and their mean postcode percentage is due to the fact that the mean postcode percentage is an average of 623 postcode percentages.

Only Anglicans, Catholics and those declaring 'No Religion' are found in every postcode. These are the three largest groups being 17, 29 and 19 per cent of the population of Victoria each and together account for 65 per cent of that population.

While it might be expected that, as a group's size decreases, the propensity to residential concentration should increase, this is not supported by the data in Table 1. Baptists, Buddhists, Lutherans and Muslims have similar numbers but quite different distributions. Lutherans and Buddhists have significant residential concentrations in 16 and 17 postcodes while Baptists and Muslims show such concentrations in six and seven postcodes, respectively. However, Baptist and Lutheran residential concentrations are found in rural areas while Buddhist and Muslim residential concentrations are urban. Very small groups will easily spike high residential concentrations with quite small numbers unless they are very widely distributed in the population. For example, there are fewer than 3,000 Oriental Christians in Victoria, but there are 19 postcodes in which they appear at percentages more than three standard deviations greater than their postcode mean. A few families living in one postcode would quickly achieve this. For these reasons it is useful to have a more

detailed look at religious residential concentration by both religious group and by suburb.

A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS WITH URBAN CONCENTRATIONS

While each religious group presents a distinct pattern a few major distinctions emerge. First there are those groups residentially concentrated in rural areas — Anglicans, Uniting, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Churches of Christ, Baptist,¹⁴ Salvationists, Pentecostals, Mormons,

Brethren¹⁵ and those declaring ‘no religion’. Much of this reflects early settlement patterns of the state of Victoria. But post-war migration has caused the growth of many religious groups some of which had been barely noticeable before. This growth has occurred primarily in Melbourne. The urban residential concentration of these religious groups is considered in greater detail with the groups presented in order of numerical strength. For each of these groups an assessment will be made of whether their residential concentration is increasing or

Table 1: Residential concentrations of religious groups at the postcode level, Victoria 1996

Religious Group	No. of post-codes > 3 SD	% of Vic's population ^a	Highest concentration (%) (Postcode and name)	Lowest concentration (%)	PC Mean %	3 rd SD from mean
Anglicans	2	16.5	42.26 (3874 Sth Carrajung)	3.29	19.51	37.40
Baptists	4	1.4	10.06 (3537 Barraport)	0.00	1.18	4.12
Brethren	6	0.1	5.39 (3509 Linga)	0.00	0.08	1.00
Buddhists	17	1.4	17.21 (3171 Springvale)	0.00	0.68	5.55
Catholics	7	29.0	58.28 (3060 Fawkner)	4.95	24.93	49.56
Churches of Christ	9	0.5	10.05 (3391 Brim)	0.00	0.45	2.49
Hindus	12	0.4	2.17 (3168 Clayton)	0.00	0.19	1.22
Jehovah's Witnesses	9	0.3	3.84 (3335 Rockbank)	0.00	0.31	1.61
Jews	6	0.8	39.71 (3161 Caulfield Nth)	0.00	0.44	7.73
Latter-day Saints	12	0.2	2.21 (3236 Forrest)	0.00	0.13	0.78
Lutherans	16	1.0	29.57 (3423 Allanby)	0.00	1.40	9.81
Muslims	7	1.5	26.55 (3061 Campbellfield)	0.00	0.68	6.84
Oriental Christians	19	0.2	1.24 (3049 Attwood)	0.00	0.07	0.55
Orthodox	16	4.7	29.66 (3074 Thomastown)	0.00	2.21	13.57
Pentecostals	10	0.8	6.22 (3238 Laver's Hill)	0.00	0.64	2.49
Presbyterians	10	3.9	25.82 (3324 Lismore)	0.00	4.81	13.18
Salvation Army	14	0.4	2.41 (3418 Nhill)	0.00	0.33	1.47
Seventh-day	12	0.2	5.94 (3799 Warburton)	0.00	0.17	1.27
Uniting Church	9	7.4	50.66 (3487 Lascelles)	0.00	11.19	33.52
No Religion	3	18.7	50.62 (3891 Genoa)	1.97	19.12	38.56

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Census 1996

^a Does not add to 100 % because other religions and not stated inadequately described not shown.

^b The second most concentrated Hindu area has been selected given the very small population of the first.

SD: Standard Deviation PC: Postcode

decreasing using concordant SLA data. In each case the population of the group according to the 1996 census is presented in brackets following its name.

Catholics (1,257,782)

Residential concentrations of Catholics three standard deviations above their postcode mean of 25 per cent were found in seven postcodes, with the highest proportion representing 58 per cent of the population of Fawkner, a northern suburb of Melbourne. While Catholicism was originally established in Australia through Irish convicts on the first fleet in 1788, highly concentrated Catholic areas relate more to mid-20th century Italian migration. Catholics are the most numerous religious group in Victoria and the most residentially concentrated in the outer northwestern suburbs of Melbourne. There is no evidence of increasing Catholic residential concentration.

The Orthodox (204,609)

The Orthodox, of which Greek Orthodox are the largest single component, exceeded three standard deviations beyond their postcode mean of 2.2 per cent in sixteen postcodes. Their highest residential concentration was in Thomastown at 30 per cent. Other residential concentrations of Orthodox were found in western, northern and southeastern suburbs of Melbourne. There were twenty-four postcodes with more than 2,000 Orthodox. Many of the Orthodox arrived in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. Between 1986 and 1996, they increased by 16 per cent, mainly through births rather than migration. During that period they decreased slightly in concentration. In 1986, 50 per cent of Orthodox were found in 13 SLAs. In 1996, 50 per cent were found in 14 SLAs indicating a slight reduction in minor religious residential concentration.

Muslims (67,047)

Muslims were three standard deviations above their postcode mean of 0.7 per cent in seven postcode areas, the highest of which was Campbellfield, a northern suburb of Melbourne, in which they represented over a quarter of the population. Muslims were residentially concentrated in the northern suburbs of Melbourne and in some southern suburbs. There were five postcodes in which there were more than 2,600 Muslims in 1996. Between 1986 and 1996, there has been a slight tendency for the residential concentration of Muslims in Victoria to increase. In 1986, 50 per cent of all Muslims lived in ten statistical local areas. In 1996, a similar proportion lived in nine statistical local areas. The SLA of Hume-Broadmeadows has the largest number of Muslims — 10,094 (15.5 per cent). No other SLA exceeds 3,500 Muslims. There were few Muslims living in rural Victoria in 1996.

Buddhists (62,784)

Buddhist residential concentrations were three standard deviations above their postcode mean of 0.7 per cent in 17 postcodes and were at their greatest at Springvale at 17 per cent. Areas of high Buddhist concentration were located in the inner north to northeast and the inner to mid-western suburbs of Melbourne. An additional area of high Buddhist concentration was in the outer southern suburbs. The residential concentration of Buddhists appears to be decreasing slightly. In 1986, 50 per cent of all Buddhists were found in nine SLAs. By 1996, this had expanded to ten SLAs. Again, there are few Buddhists living in rural Victoria.

Jews (35,995)

Residential concentrations of Jews were

three standard deviations above their postcode mean of 0.44 per cent in six postcodes and the highest concentration was in Caulfield North at just under 40 per cent of the population. The choice of this location reflects early location of synagogues and Jewish social services and post World War II migration to Melbourne's inner Southeast. In 1986, fifty per cent of all Victorian Jews were living in three SLAs. By 1996, fifty per cent lived in only two SLAs, indicating that the residential concentration of Jewish people has been increasing in recent years.

Hindus (16,708)

Residential concentrations of Hindus were above three standard deviations over their postcode mean in twelve postcodes and were most concentrated at Genoa (rural Victoria) but, given that this represented just three people of the Hindu religion this postcode was excluded from analysis. The second highest concentration was Clayton North where 2.17 per cent of the population were Hindu compared with a Victorian mean of 0.19 per cent. In only two postcodes were there more than 500 Hindu residents. The main Hindu region of Melbourne was located around the outer southeastern suburbs. The number of Hindus in Victoria has risen by over 235 per cent between 1986 and 1996. Further analysis shows that the concentration of Hindus is increasing slightly. In 1986, 50

per cent of all Hindus in Victoria were found in 18 SLAs. By 1996, 50 per cent were living in 15 SLAs.

RELIGIOUS RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATION: ANOTHER VIEW

Another way of examining religious residential concentration is to ask what proportion of a group resides in a particular SLA. The SLA level was selected because it allows an assessment over the 1986, 1991 and 1996 censuses. We will consider Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and Hindus in the SLA with greatest numbers of each. The largest residential concentration of Muslims, Buddhists and Jews is clearly within one SLA. For each of these groups the next SLA concentration is about one third of this maximum. Hindus are much more dispersed with nearly equal residential concentrations in eight SLAs. Table 2 presents the trends in the proportion of each religious group that resides in the SLA of their greatest concentration.

Hindus are the most dispersed of these groups and Jews the least. Nearly 40 per cent of Jews in Victoria live in the SLA of Glen Eira-Caulfield and over 10 per cent in the SLA of Port Philip-St Kilda. Viewed in this way, Muslim and Buddhist residential concentrations have risen and then declined slightly between 1986 and 1996. However, the proportion of Jews and Hindus who reside in one SLA has increased.

A DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF SIX POSTCODES

Religious groups that settled in Australia before World War II enjoy wide distribution throughout the State and substantial presence in urban areas. Their residential concentrations are located in sparsely populated rural areas. The residential concentrations of more

Table 2: The proportion of each religious group resident in the SLA in which it is most numerous.

	1986	1991	1996
Muslims (Hume -Broadmeadows)	11.5	15.4	15.0
Buddhists (Dandenong-Bal)	10.5	15.4	15.04
Jews (Glen Eira - Caulfield)	36.1	36.7	39.5
Hindus (Monash - Waverley East)	3.7	4.2	5.3

recently arrived groups are found in urban areas. Both settlement patterns reflect the location of economic opportunities prevalent at the time the group arrived. Moreover the support services for recently arrived immigrants are located in cities. In order to paint a more complete picture of what is happening in metropolitan areas the Melbourne postcodes with highest rates of religious residential concentration for each of six religious groups were selected for further consideration. Six urban postcodes will be described in detail — Catholics in Fawkner, Jews in Caulfield North, Orthodox in Thomastown, Muslims in Campbellfield, Buddhists in Springvale and Hindus in Clayton North.

Table 3 compares information about six urban postcodes each with the highest residential concentration of one religious group. Of the six postcodes examined above, four were in the bottom five per cent of postcodes as measured by the Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)¹⁶ score of disadvantage. The densest residential concentration was among Catholics in Fawkner. The relatively low SEIFA score in this postcode

probably reflects the fact that this is an elderly group with a high proportion retired. However, the presence of a high residential concentration of a religious group does not necessarily imply a low socio-economic level. North Caulfield has a comparatively high socio-economic status. One factor in the relative wealth of this postcode is that many who migrated here earlier and with valued training and skills live here.

Springvale provides a marked comparison with North Caulfield as it has a comparatively low socio-economic level. However, again this appears to have little to do with the concentration of a particular religious group. Rather, it is a result of recent settlement of people from many backgrounds who have few skills and resources, many of whom have been refugees. A fifth do not speak English well and the same proportion work as labourers. According to the 1996 Census, unemployment is at 8.1 per cent and only three in every 20 earn over \$500 a week. Around 15 per cent of the total populations of Clayton North (a Hindu area) and Springvale (a Buddhist area) arrived between 1991 and 1996, while another 18

Table 3: Six postcodes with the highest religious residential concentrations of post-war immigrants, 1996

	Postcodes					
	Fawkner	Caulfield	Thomastown	Campbellfield	Springvale	Clayton North
Religious concentration	Catholics	Jews	Orthodox	Muslims	Buddhists	Hindus
Concentration level (%)	58	40	30	25	17	2
Other religious concentrations (%)	Anglican 7 Muslim 6	Catholic 13 Anglican 9	Catholic 37 Muslim 7	Catholic 42 Orthodox 11	Orthodox 8 Anglican 6	Catholic 29 Orthodox 11
NESB concentration (%)	39	20	47	43	35	35
Unemployed (%)	6	4	6	7	8	6
Individual income <\$500 per week (%)	72	64	61	69	60	67
SEIFA score	897	1,115	919	900	869	968

Source: ABS, 1996 Census

per cent of Clayton North and 22 per cent of Springvale's total populations had arrived prior to 1981. This indicates that religious concentration in those areas is comprised of a number of waves of immigration and that their relatively low SEIFA score is the result of recency of migration combined with a comparative lack of skills rather than religion. The association between NESB and SEIFA score is quite strong in Table 3.

CONCLUSION

This paper has described the patterns and trends of religious residential concentration in the state of Victoria. Religious groups are not randomly distributed in Australia, or in Victoria. Nevertheless, no Victorian postcode or SLA constituted a religious ghetto as this term has been defined in American literature. The locations of residential concentrations of religious groups that were identified were primarily a result of timing patterns of immigrant settlement. There are no religious groups that have grown substantial residential concentrations due to proselytising in Australia. Suburbs including high residential concentrations of some religious groups also include substantial proportions of other groups thus maintaining religious diversity at the local level. The most religiously concentrated postcode was 58 per cent Catholic, but the individuals professing the Catholic faith were from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. All postcodes with comparatively high residential concentrations of Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Jews and most Christian denominations also include a range of

other groups.

There is some evidence that high concentration of religious groups who have settled in Australia since World War II is associated with lower socio-economic levels. However, this association appears to reflect timing of migration, possession of marketable skills and facility with English rather than anything to do with religious belief, practice or residential concentration.

Many Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox, Hindu and Buddhist immigrants have settled in particular suburbs. This has occurred partly because of employment opportunities, the availability of housing in the appropriate price bracket, the presence of other people from a similar background living in the area, a high level of family-reunion related migration and the availability of religious and ethnic resources such as social services, appropriate food and opportunities for worship.¹⁷ Sponsorship, similarities with existing migrant communities, including shared religious faith, and availability of social services may promote the increase of religious residential concentrations. As religious settlement proceeds and more services — religious and social — are supplied by religious groups there may be an increased tendency towards religious residential concentration. However, the evidence on whether religious residential concentration has been increasing or decreasing is mixed.

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- ¹² Jupp et al. op., 1990, cit.
- ¹³ In Victoria most LGAs contain two or three SLAs.
- ¹⁴ The only urban postcode above three standard deviations for Baptists was Kangaroo Ground at five per cent. This area does not have a large population and includes the Wycliffe Bible Translators with on-site accommodation for linguists.
- ¹⁵ The only postcode of Brethren concentration in Melbourne is located at Kangaroo Ground at 1.6 per cent. As for the Baptists, this is likely to be due to an overall low population and the location of the Wycliffe Bible Translators.
- ¹⁶ *Socio-economic Indexes for Areas*, Catalogue no. 2912.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra. 1994. A SEIFA score of 1000 indicates the national mean. Scores above 1000 indicate comparatively 'advantaged' suburbs and scores below 1000 relative disadvantage.
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