

Differences and  
inequalities are made  
and remade on a  
street



**Outline some of the ways in which differences and inequalities are made and remade on a street that you know.**

To discuss the subject, I've chosen to use Portobello Road located in London District - Notting Hill as an example. It is a very well known street, full of little shops, small businesses and presenting the majority of aspects of our social lives. Portobello Road isn't a main street, but because of a huge variety of activities and a mixture of people from different cultural backgrounds, it became a landmark and a perfect place to make observations and find out about social differences.

Walking down the top part of Portobello Road, we can instantly recognize economical status of the residents living there. The top of the road is occupied by rather wealthy people and it is one of the major factors creating a pattern, following which, that part of the street has been developed. Expensive antique shops, jewelers, fashionable clothes boutiques and collectables of any kind are the main feature in this area. As the Portobello Road is a great tourist attraction, gross of the shops are very traditional. Also here takes place an annual event - Notting Hill Carnival. Residents, (mostly white, English or European) are usually absent during day time, due to work commitments, but even in the evening and at night, there are not many activities available, apart from a few, very stylish cafeterias, gathering people like artists, antique dealers, often celebrities. Children usually do not attend local schools, as private tuition is preferable and family activities are rather organized away from the area.

While the top of Portobello Road is generally a peaceful oasis, the other end is rather rough as a result of an assemblage of people from different minority

ethnic backgrounds. The population condensed there is made of mostly immigrants. Variety of races, cultures and religions shaped the look of this part of the street. Food shopping here is much cheaper, more affordable for local consumers, most of the goods are available from the market stalls throughout the week, often ran by people living in the area. Saturday's market, enables to shop for second hand and cheap street fashion clothing.

Condensation of ethnic minorities has become a source of frequent conflicts between cultural groups. In this part of the street, the crime statistics are much higher (Met. Police Crime Mapping, 2009). It refers to the general status of the population in this section of Portobello Road, where level of education is much lower and children attend community schools, therefore learning standards are usually much lower, because of cultural and language differences,

Following this very brief description, we can already distinguish between groups. It seems, that wealth, education and cultural background are the main differences, which cause certain inequalities in their lives. Talking about the culture, we have to mention religion as an important factor in shaping social attitudes. They are all connected and "stimulate" each other in order to form an identity. The wealth and cultural background usually decides about education and what type of the school a child will go to. Most of the private schools are Catholic, what makes them less attractive and less appropriate as a choice for parents coming from minorities. They tend to send their offspring to community schools, where they feel more secure and somehow more welcome.

The very early stage of our lives, when we start to discover the world, learn about life from different points of view, is vital, as following this knowledge, we will act and behave as we were taught. The knowledge that we gained not only from the school that we attend, but also from our homes and social circles. While the communities coexist on the street, they are visibly unequal. They live within their own social circles, having their own attitudes towards others, dealing with every day issues in their own way (Hetherington, 2009). Portobello Road is a classic example of that. The behaviours and attitudes are passed from generation to generation, within the social groups. Cultural background is a very important aspect when it comes to shaping opinions, confidence and social position. Children inherit social habits from the very early age and usually follow the same path in the future.

Although the social structure reshapes constantly, they will always be an issue of differences and inequalities, as the people pass the pattern from generation to generation and the presented example of Portobello Road is a very good illustration of the process. There are many factors having a huge impact on creating differences. This essay highlights just three of them: wealth, education and cultural background.

**References:****Video:**

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