
The Changing Landscape: Diverse Friendships and the Effects of Contextual Diversity on Youth Outcomes

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Advisory groups

- Stakeholder group and Young People and Parents group
- Purpose:
 - To discuss plans for analysis, emerging findings, and how these findings relate to young people experiences in families, friendships, schools and communities
 - To develop plans and materials for reporting and disseminating findings in a young-people friendly way (e.g., through blogs and animations)



Project Background: Diversity

- Social spaces are becoming increasingly ethnically and racially diverse
- Spending time with those are different can reduce prejudices and improve cross-group interactions
- But, just because diverse individuals are in the same room, doesn't mean they will interact with each other. Across educational (and other) settings, children and adults tend to self-segregate
- People feel more comfortable and prefer to remain close with those who are similar to themselves, maintaining distance from those who are different

Is Diversity Good or Bad?

- Researchers argue about whether spending time with diverse others has positive of negative consequences
 - Some argue it can increase anxiety, which can impact health. And for some groups, being in diverse schools can negatively influence academic performance
 - Others argue that spending time with diverse others can reduce anxiety, improve health and boost education outcomes
 - But there are issues with this research
 - it does not tend to look at changes over time
 - it often considers being in the same space as diversity (but diverse people often don't interact)
 - largely from North America
 - We want to know how diversity is associated with education and health outcomes for young people in the UK from all different ethnic backgrounds
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Research Questions

1. What best predicts the diversity of young people's friendships?

Is it parental beliefs? Amount of diversity seen in the school? And/or amount of diversity seen in the neighbourhood?

Do changes in diversity – either in-situ or via household mobility – lead to changes in friendship diversity? Do these relationships differ for minority and majority groups?

2. What are the consequences of diversity on educational attitudes and aspirations?

Are levels of diversity (interpersonal friendships, school, neighbourhood) associated with educational attitudes & aspirations? Does this differ for minority and majority group members?

3. What are the consequences of diversity on physical and mental health?

Are levels of diversity (interpersonal friendships, school, neighbourhood) associated with physical and mental health outcomes? Does this differ for minority and majority group members?

Method

- Data from Millennium Cohort Study, NPD and Census
- Sample of over 6 thousand young people and their families
- Young people age 11 and 14 living in England who answered the question:

How many of your (close) friends are from the same ethnic group as you?

RQ1 Predictors of diverse friendships at age 11 and 14

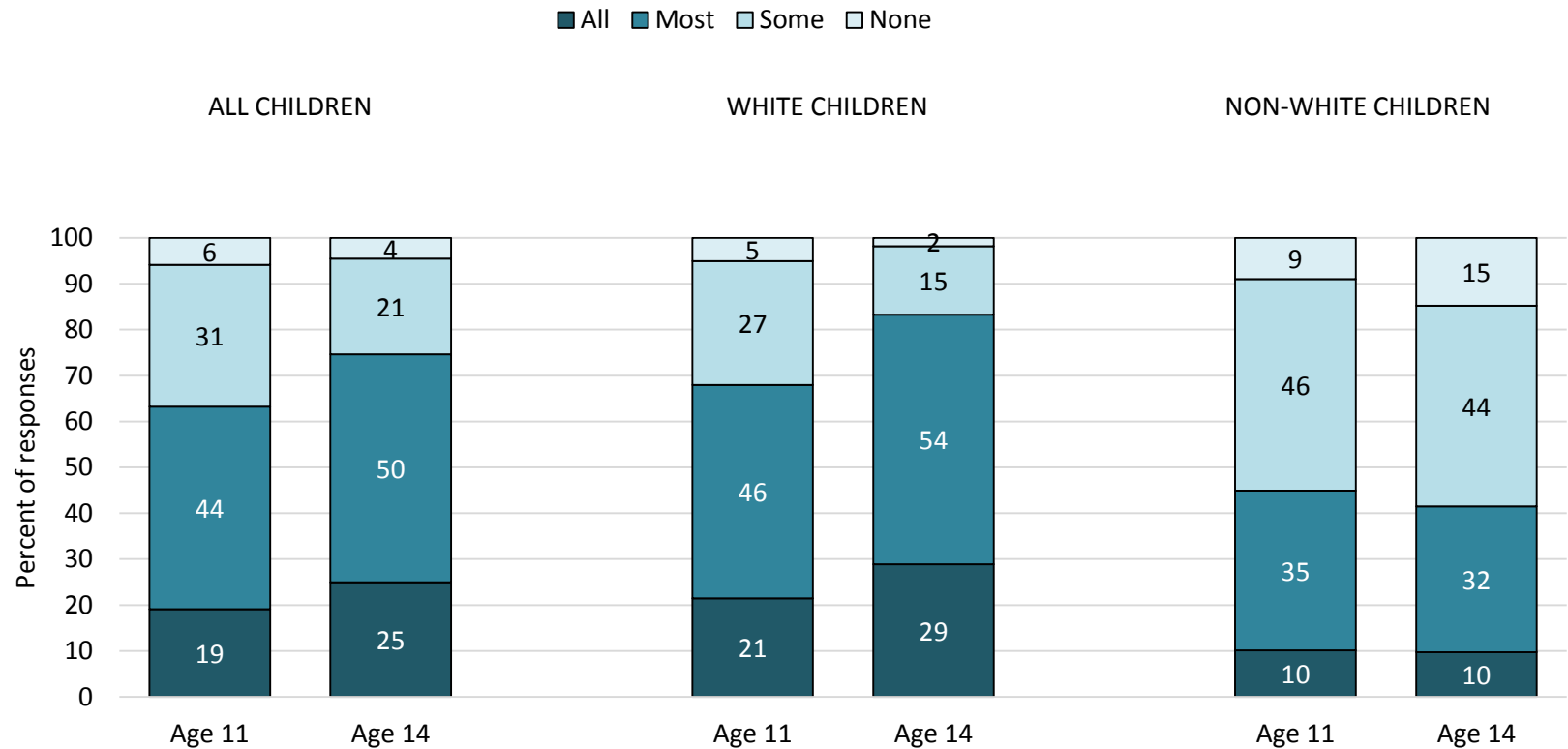
- Parent attitudes towards diversity expressed at child's age of 9 months and 5 years:
 - S3 Wouldn't mind CM attending mixed race (50/50) school
 - S1 Children another race at school
 - S1 Family from another race as neighbours
 - S1 All right for different races to get married
- Controls: gender, hh income, education level of each parent, number of parents in the hh, number of siblings, number of older siblings, no of friends from the same school and area, ward in EN (adv/ disadv/ethnic)

RQ 2 & 3 Outcomes of diverse friendships

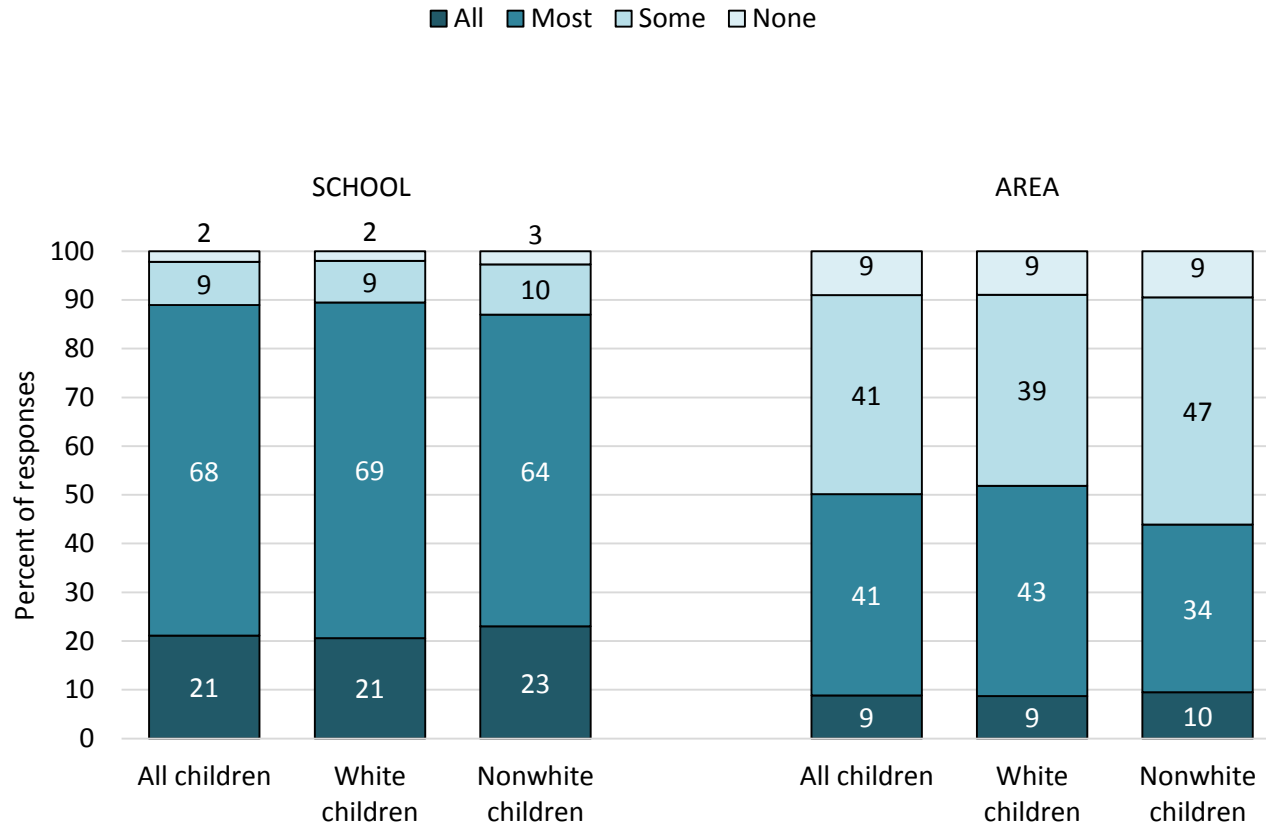
- RQ2 educational attitudes and aspirations
- RQ3 physical and mental health

- School and neighbourhood level diversity from NPD and Census 2001 and 2011, and its change over time
- Other variables: FSM eligibility, SEN, school type and size , Key Stage 1 and 2 assessment results, value added results, proportion of speakers of EAL

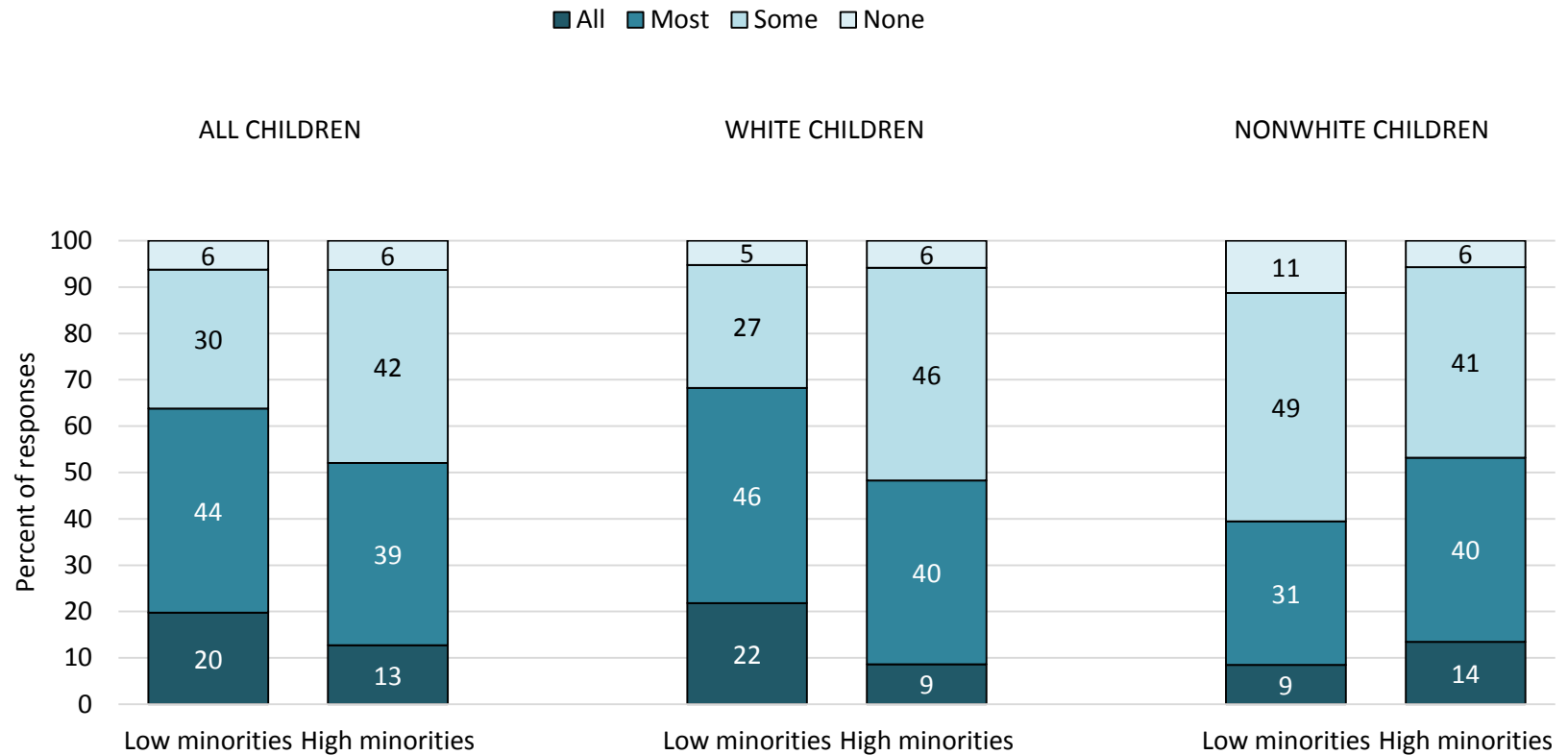
Does ethnic diversity in friendships change between 11 and 14?



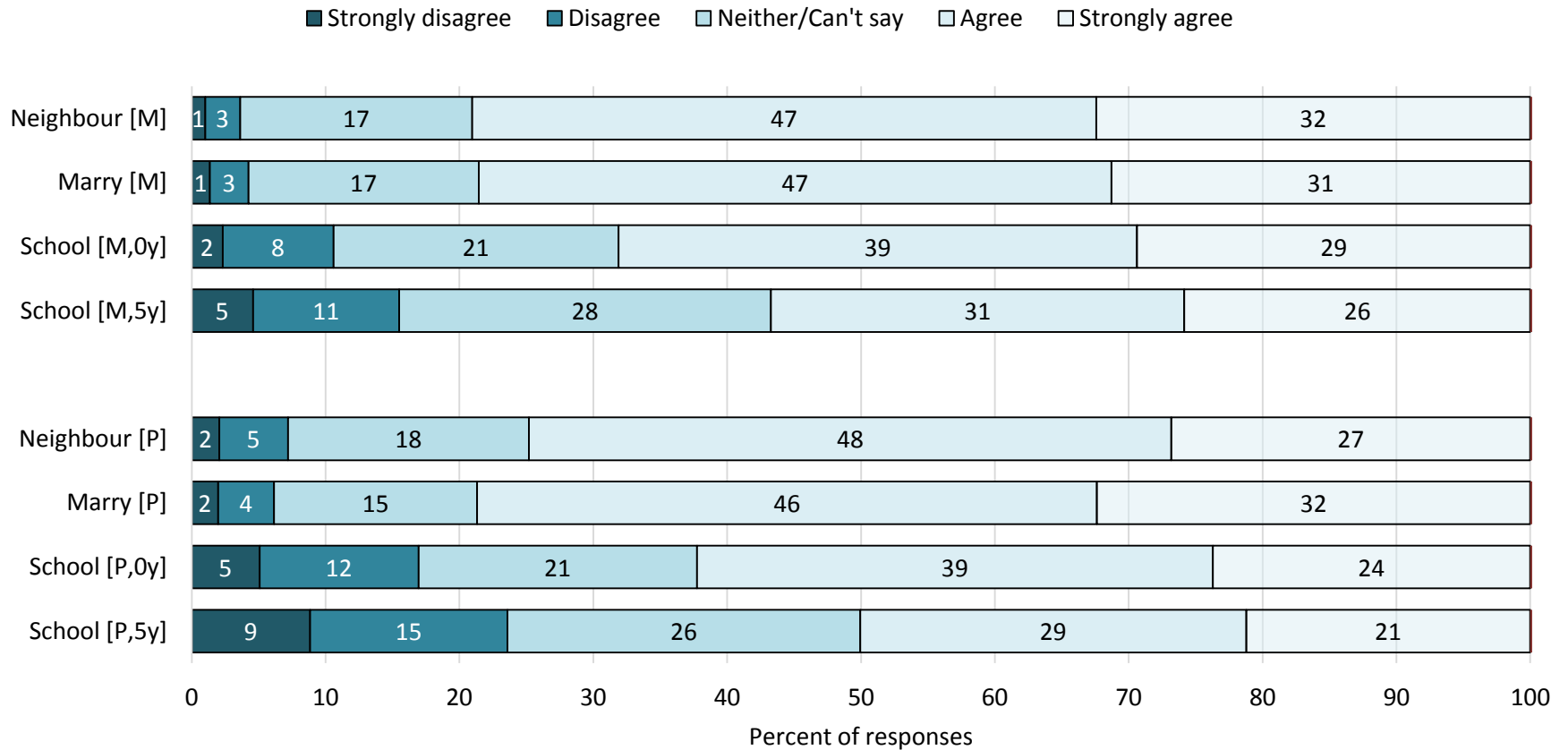
To what extent are friendships at age 11 drawn from people in the same school and neighbourhood?



How does neighbourhood ethnic composition affect the diversity of children's friendships at 11?



Do parental attitudes to diversity predict diversity of children's friendships at age 11 and 14?



Do parental attitudes to diversity predict diversity of children's friendships at age 11 and 14?

	Main parent	Partner
% no change	45.8%	44.3%
% change within broad Agreement or Disagreement	17.3%	17.2%
% becoming more anti-diverse	34.4%	35.4%
% becoming more pro-diverse	19.8%	20.2%

Do parental attitudes to diversity predict diversity of children's friendships at age 11 and 14?

- Age 11: negative effect of anti-diversity attitude of mother for white children, and anti-diversity attitude of partner for non-white children
- Age 14: no effect

	Age 11		Age 14	
	White	Non-white	White	Non-white
Positive effect=more diverse friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living in high minority ward • living in London • having older siblings at age 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living in London 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age 11 friendships • living in high minority ward, • living in London 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age 11 friendships, • household income level
Negative effect=less diverse friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • household income level • mother's high education level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living in high minority ward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being female 	

Thank You for your time & attention!

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