

Schools and Parents in Partnership..... challenges and opportunities

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Choice and its impact on Social Capital- Whose?

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- Why Social Capital?
- Children and Social Capital Literature
- The value of Children's Social Capital
- Our Research
- Our Results
- Policy Implications

Why Social Capital?

- Social relationships as complimenting not detracting from economic welfare
- Have value in themselves, not to be reduced to input: output framework
- Social Capital as an iterative process, not a quick-fix

- *“Those friends whom people have known since school or college serve as anchor points in their lives and can help to provide emotional integration and development” (Pahl 1998. 103).*

- Robert Putnam
- ‘neighbourhood schools (can) provide unique sites for building social capital – friendship, habits of co-operation, solidarity’ (2000:362)
- Social Capital can be negative- gangs being a prime example
- Positive Social Capital is associated with formal organisations that bridge social divides- civic associations

- Social Capital as residing in individual family and community relationships
- Enhanced Social Capital improves exam results and staying on rates
- Largely through improved surveillance of children

- Social Capital, like culture, transmitted through children
- Reproducing class relationships - for example in access to 'good' secondary schools - Ball, Reay and now Willetts
- Children as carriers, not autonomous agents

- Children's 'capital' as trust building- Adults' community involvement frequently builds on children's interactions, especially for mobile middle class
- Though downgraded as a basis for school 'choice', children's friendships can be important in transition to secondary school
- Children as more open to cross ethnic social relationships, hence to forging community cohesion

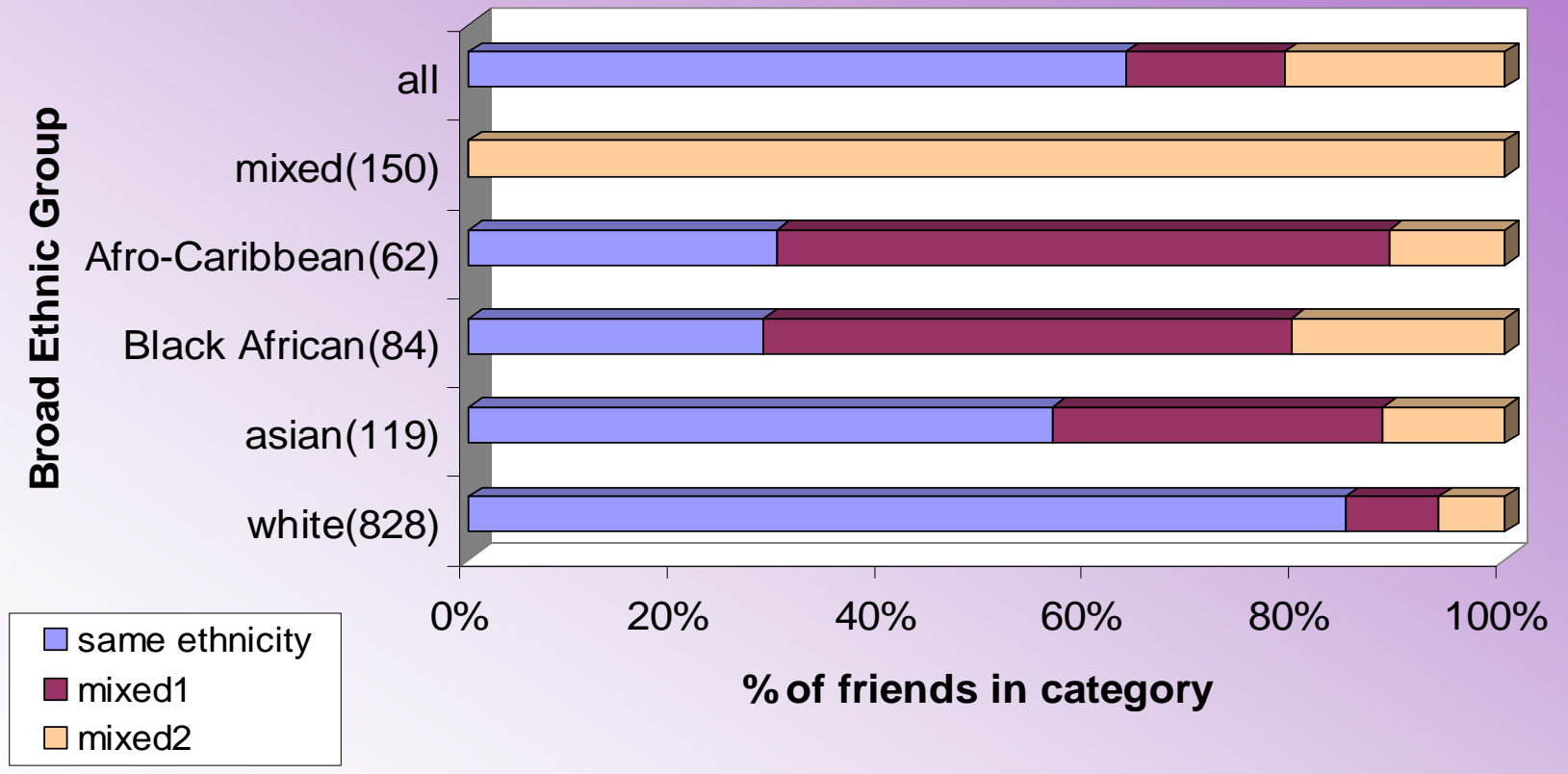
- 600 children in 12 English primary schools: 20 Year 6 classes: moved to 112 secondary schools
- Between 3.3% and 90.2% of children in the sample schools are classified as 'white British'
- 75 children followed to Secondary School/ interviews 75 parents and children
- Asked about out of school activities and travel

- Social Capital assessed as friendship patterns ($= < 4$ per child)
- 1800 friendships amongst the children: ethnic data on 1250 friendship links
- Detailed analysis of Yr 6 classes with mixed ethnic intakes and with mixed social class intakes

Research Findings 1

- The ethnic mix of primary schools can vary within local areas: parental prejudices and the rhetoric of choice reduce the chances of children from different backgrounds being in the same primary class.
- Children in mixed primary schools are not highly conscious of racial differences and are largely unaware of the religion of their friends.

Degree of Inter-Ethnic Friendship in Primary sample 2003/4



- The positive benefits of mixed primary schooling particularly for white children, extend into the early years of secondary school
- Secondary school transfer processes tended to disrupt pre-existing inter-ethnic friendships more than others.

- *“...I would much rather children go locally ‘cos they would be mixing with their local kids and have a better circle of friends.... I think everyone wants their kids to go locally but there again, everyone wants them to go to an academic school as well” (Interview with Lena, White working class mother, East London).*

- Some parents learned to respect people from other backgrounds as a result of their children's experiences in mixed schools.
- LENA: *You tend to mix with people you are familiar with and who have your values. I tend to socialise like that. Joe will mix with whoever* (Lena, White British, working class, Inner East London, 2004).

CLAIRE: I do feel that the Asian boys are the nicest boys in his class so I think they have a common, we have a common link with them cos they have a nice, you know, morals... A lot of Mary's friends tend to be Muslim so I think there must be a lot in common with the way we bring our own up. I have very high expectations of behaviour and NEVER put up with bad behaviour from my children so they tend to be attracted to similar to themselves that know how to behave. (White British, Borderline working/middle class, Central London, 2004).

- The more parents were involved in the lives of their neighbours, the greater parents' confidence in safety of the area and the more freedom they gave their children.
- This in turn impacts upon their classmates' autonomy.

- Community benefits to be drawn from day to day interactions, getting to know individuals on basis of equal and shared attributes
- Children need to be able to make own choices of friends in own space: parents had fears of over-dependence as well as of strangers

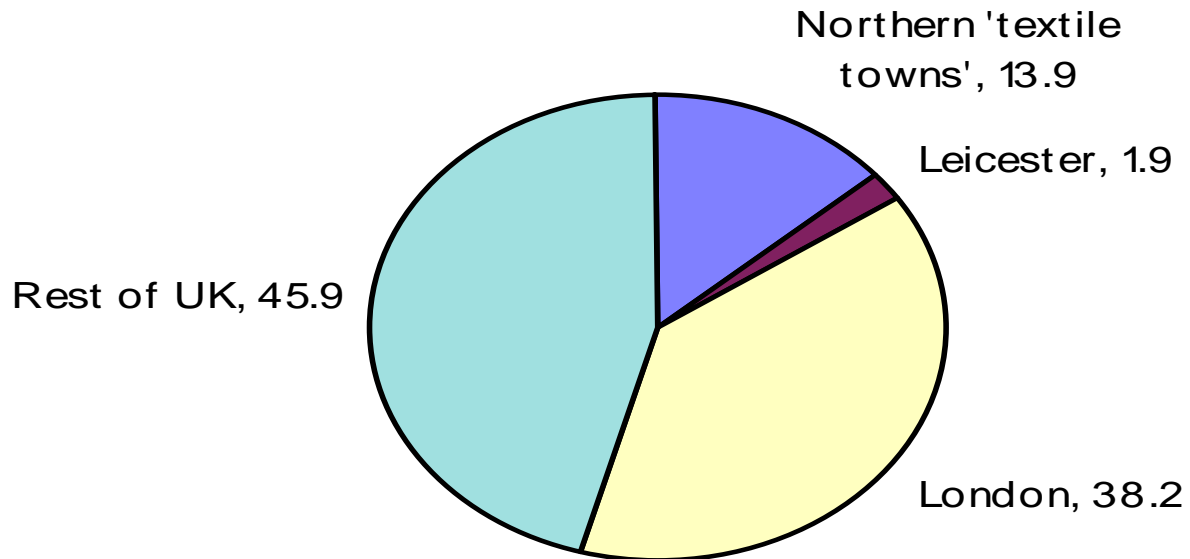
- Sharing schooling is integral to community cohesion agenda, especially at primary level
- Segregation at primary level has to be tackled, it is not solely a result of residential segregation

- Any 'duty' to promote community cohesion has to include allocation procedures in all schools- not just maintained schools
- More emphasis required on the way ethnic minority children can raise aspirations, behaviour and results of others, even where home language is not English

- Needs to view children as citizens, whose current everyday worlds are places of citizenship- neither innocent angels, nor wicked devils.
- Need space to explore assumptions of parents, what they can do to break down barriers
- Link to parents concerns that children are ‘too home-centred’, lack ability to explore

- Reproduce study of children's friendships, and their longer term effects and of spatial mobility on a much larger scale.
- Develop robust criteria for evaluating the 'success' of school-twinning and community cohesion events
- Constantly query concepts of ethnic identities and faith identity

Distribution of Muslim Population GB 2001



■ Northern 'textile towns' ■ Leicester ■ London ■ Rest of UK