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Creating cohesive citizens in England? Exploring the role of diversity, deprivation and democratic climate at school

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Abstract

Over the past decade, cohesion and integration have been a key concern for policymakers in countries across Europe and North America. The rapid increase in immigration, coupled with the perception of rapid social change and instability, is seen to have presented communities and governments with a range of 'new' challenges. In the attendant debates, schools are often presented as part of the solution to these challenges, but much remains unknown about the relationship between schools and community cohesion. This article therefore explores the role of schools as a site of socialisation for children and young people and their role in fostering the attitudes, behaviours and norms that are typically associated with citizens in a cohesive society. This article focuses in particular on the role of school demographics and school climate and uses longitudinal data from students in England to examine these relationships.

Keywords

Citizenship, community cohesion, deprivation, diversity, education, England

Introduction

Over the past decade or so, cohesion and integration have been a key concern for policymakers in countries across Europe and North America, including the countries that are the focus of this special issue, namely, Canada, Sweden, France and England.[1] The increase in immigration, coupled with the perception of rapid social change and instability, is seen to have presented communities and governments with a range of 'new' challenges, ranging from the practical (such as provision of

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housing and schooling) to the political (who should have access to these resources?) to the cultural (how do we maintain a sense of common values and community when the make-up of the community is changing rapidly?).[2] In debates about the latter, education is often seen as part of the solution, and the recent interest in citizenship education in Western developed countries can be attributed at least in part to the perceived need to address the challenges facing social and community cohesion (Osler and Starkey, 2006). However, beyond the formal citizenship education curriculum, it is often assumed that schools play two further but equally important roles. First, schools (or at least public schools) can provide a social setting in which students learn about (and are socialised into) the civic 'rules', norms and values of the community (and by extension, the attitudes and behaviours that are associated with 'good' citizens in a cohesive community). Second, schools can (at least in theory) provide students with opportunities to meet and mix with people from different backgrounds, thus providing opportunities for the bonding and bridging that are supposed to underpin community cohesion (see Putnam, 2007; Laurence, 2011).

Yet while schools have been the target of many community cohesion policies, few studies have explored this 'informal' role of schools empirically, particularly in the context of social change when the implications of demographic shifts are being debated. This article thus seeks to contribute to this debate by examining the question: *beyond the citizenship education curriculum, what role do schools play in inculcating in children the attitudes, attachments and behaviours that are associated with 'good' citizens in a cohesive community?* In the process, this article will focus on the role of three school characteristics that might contribute to shaping students' civic attitudes and behaviours – that is, the levels of diversity, deprivation and democratic climate in the school. As we will see in the discussion below, it has been suggested that each of these school-level variables can contribute to creating community cohesion in one way or another, be it in a negative or positive way. However, many of these claims remain under-tested, and this article thus seeks to examine these propositions using multilevel modelling of longitudinal data from students. In exploring these themes, this article will focus on the case of England, where community cohesion has recently been the subject of a series of policy debates and policy initiatives (see, for example, Home Office, 2001a, 2001b; Ratcliffe et al., 2008; Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2010). This article will argue that, in this case anyway, these school characteristics play little or no role shaping the attitudes, attachments and behaviours that are associated with community cohesion and argue that simply tinkering with school climate and demographics will do little to counteract the current challenges to community cohesion.

What is community cohesion? Current conceptualisations and challenges in England and beyond

What constitutes a cohesive community or society has been subject to much debate, not only in the past decade (Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC), 2007; Mason, 2010) but arguably since the 19th century (see Green et al., 2006: 6). The terminology that is used to debate these issues has varied over time and across countries,[3] and the debate has at times suffered from conceptual fuzziness and/or conceptual conflation wherein concepts such as social capital, social cohesion and community cohesion are equated with one another (Green et al., 2006: 21; Laurence, 2011: 72). In the first decade of this millennium, the term 'community cohesion' dominated policy debates in England, and it is this concept (and its associated education policies) that is the focus of this article. Although the precise meaning of community cohesion continued to be debated and modified in English policy circles over the past decade (see DCLG, 2010[4]), some of the most prominent (and dominant) ideas underpinning this concept can be found in the 2007 *Guidance for*

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schools on the duty to promote community cohesion (Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2007). In this document, community cohesion was defined as follows:

> By community cohesion we mean working towards a society in which there is a **common vision** and **sense of belonging** by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar **life opportunities** are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community. (DCSF, 2007: 3, emphasis in original)

In other words, community cohesion was defined in terms of shared values, solidarity, affective ties to communities, respect for cultural and economic differences and access to equal opportunities. This conceptualisation reflects some of the key constructs in the corresponding academic and the policy literature, both in the England and elsewhere. In addition, although not apparent in this DCSF definition, cohesion has also been linked to economic and cultural inclusion, trust, tolerance and participation in the community (see Chan et al., 2006).

Interest in the concept of community cohesion first emerged in England following the outbreak of what is commonly referred to as 'disturbances' in Oldham and other towns in Northern England in 2001, which brought national attention to the divisions in these towns, many of which were attributed to the fact that the Asian and White communities in the area effectively lived 'parallel lives' (see Home Office, 2001a, 2001b; Cheong et al., 2007; Letki, 2008; Mason, 2010). Political interest in this subject intensified, however, in the aftermath of the London bombings in 2005, amid concern that these bombings were conducted by so-called 'home grown' terrorists who had not been sufficiently integrated into British society. The perceived need to focus on integration and cohesion was further compounded by the marked increase in migration (particularly after the expansion of the European Union in 2004) and subsequent public disquiet.

These concerns prompted a slew of policy reviews and initiatives (see DCLG, 2010), many of which signalled the key role of schools in creating cohesive communities. For example, as part of this burgeoning agenda the government commissioned a review of its policies towards education for diversity (Ajegbo et al., 2007), which ultimately led to increased emphasis being placed on identity and diversity issues in the 2008 National Curriculum as well as in the revised citizenship education curriculum (Cremin and Warwick, 2008: 42). Official support was also provided for extracurricular activities that brought students from different faiths or ethnic communities together (see, for example, Kerr et al., 2011; on more recent policy innovations in this vein, see Birdwell et al., 2013). More broadly, the then (Labour) government also introduced a statutory duty for schools to promote community cohesion, coupled with an obligation on school inspectors to review and report on schools' policies and progress in this area (an obligation which has since been removed).[5]

The accompanying *Guidance to schools on the Duty to Promote Community Cohesion* (DCSF, 2007) reflects key assumptions about the relationship between schools and cohesion. As Flanagan et al. (2007) point out, schools are commonly seen to serve two functions in relation to (re)producing cohesion. First, schools are supposed to provide children with the education and skills that will 'redress inequalities of birth by equalising opportunities for achievement' (Flanagan et al., 2007: 422). In addition, however, schools are also supposed to inculcate young people with a set of dispositions, attitudes and expected behaviours and in the process to socialise them into the norms of their (cohesive) community. This socialisation can take place not only explicitly through the formal curriculum but also implicitly through the hidden curriculum. For example, research on youth citizenship and schools has shown that a school climate that is open and democratic is more likely to increase pupils' levels of tolerance, trust and civic commitment (Flanagan and Stout, 2010: 752),

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each of which appears to be expected of 'good' citizens in cohesive communities. Lundahl and Olson (2013) also touch upon these issues in their contribution to this issue.

These sentiments are reflected in the *Guidance* document (DCSF, 2007) and underpin key aspects of the policy proposals and rationale. In addition, however, the *Guidance* also reflects an expectation that schools can contribute to this goal by providing opportunities for learning and mixing with children from diverse backgrounds. That is, schools with diverse populations (be it in terms of ethnicity, religion or social class) could draw on their 'natural resources' to provide these opportunities, while schools with a monocultural population could compensate for this by, for example, participating in activities with other, more diverse, schools (DCSF, 2007: 8). Implicit in this thinking is the assumption that contact between different groups can make a positive contribution towards community cohesion and help overcome the contemporary challenges to community cohesion (namely, dealing with diversity). This is frequently referred to as the 'contact hypothesis' – that is, the contention that increased contact between groups from different backgrounds (ethnic, religious or other) can reduce intergroup prejudice by facilitating an increase in knowledge and mutual understanding (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). This theory has, in turn, been used to suggest that schools should be less segregated (ethnically, religiously and economically), as if diversifying school populations could automatically help to create a cohesive society. Yet the contact hypothesis also has a converse – a 'threat hypothesis' – which suggests that greater contact can, in fact, *increase* intergroup tensions, as the new groups threaten the dominant groups' access to or control over certain resources (Laurence, 2011: 73). This hypothesis thus throws into question the assumption (or aspiration) that diverse school populations can contribute to creating cohesive citizens and communities.

The relative merits of these opposing hypotheses have been debated in the academic literature, but the findings that have been produced to date are not sufficient to support either hypothesis conclusively. Indeed, current research suggests that the relationship between diversity and cohesion is not necessarily straightforward or consistent across countries (Putnam, 2007: 157). For example, while ethnic diversity has undermined community cohesion in some contexts (Putnam, 2007), in the English case, Laurence and Heath (2008: 41) found that ethnically diverse areas tend to be *more* rather than less cohesive and that it is 'deprivation that undermines cohesion, not diversity' (Laurence and Heath, 2008: 41; see also Letki, 2008). Moreover, few studies have used schools to test these rival hypotheses. There is a dearth of empirical research on the role of schools in creating community cohesion more broadly,[6] much less on the relationship between school demographics and school climate in helping children and young people to develop the behaviours, attitudes and dispositions that are typically associated with community cohesion. The few studies that do exist provide conflicting accounts of the impact of ethnic diversity at school and suggest that it is not just ethnic diversity that is associated with community cohesion but also deprivation and school climate (see Demack et al., 2010; Janmaat, 2010; Kokkonen et al., 2010).

In sum, then, there continues to be debate about not only the meaning of cohesion but also the factors that influence it and the potential role that schools can play in cultivating cohesion. In many cases, however, the studies were limited to a select number of community cohesion 'indicators' and thus provide us with only partial insight into a complex concept and the role of schools. This article therefore proposes to explore some of these assumptions and measures empirically using a wider range of indicators and longitudinal data from students in England. More specifically, drawing on the policy and academic literature discussed above, this analysis will consider the following propositions:

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1. Higher proportions of ethnic diversity in their school community will have a positive effect on the attitudes, behaviours and attachments that are usually associated with community cohesion.
2. By contrast, higher proportions of deprivation in the school community will have a *negative* effect on the attitudes, behaviours and attachments that are usually associated with community cohesion.
3. An open or democratic school climate will have a positive impact on the attitudes, behaviours and attachments that are usually associated with community cohesion.

In the next section, we describe what these attitudes, behaviours and attachments are and how they have been operationalised here.

Data and methods

The findings presented here are based on an analysis of data from Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS), which (among other things) collected survey data from a complete cohort of young people from a nationally representative[7] sample of 112 maintained schools in England (achieving a response rate of 47% from an original sample of 240 schools). This is a unique dataset that can give us unparalleled insight into the ways in which student attitudes are shaped and can change over the course of their adolescence. To date, five waves of the survey have been conducted, although this article will just draw on data from the first four. The first wave took place in 2002–2003, when the cohort was at the start of their compulsory secondary education and 11–12 years of age. The cohorts were surveyed again in 2005, when they were aged 13–14 years (Wave 2) and in 2007 when the participants were aged 15–16 years and reaching the end of compulsory secondary education (Wave 3).[8] Wave 4 of the survey was conducted in 2009 when the cohort was in the final year of secondary education (i.e. age 17–18 years) or had left education for employment, training or other opportunities. In Wave 1 of this survey (in 2002–2003), 18,583 students completed the survey; however, in keeping with many longitudinal studies, there was considerable attrition from the original sample over time, particularly towards the end of the study[9] (i.e. between Waves 3 and 4), and in Wave 4, the number of respondents fell to 1325.[10] Despite this attrition, this dataset continues to provide useful insights. In particular, the longitudinal nature of the data enables us to assess whether any relationships that are identified persist over time, which in turn provides additional confirmation (or otherwise) that a relationship exists and is not temporary or an anomaly. However, to account for the attrition, after Wave 1 the data from each subsequent survey were weighted to match the characteristics of the larger Wave 1 sample in terms of gender, ethnicity and number of books in home.

To analyse these data, we created a series of random fixed effects multilevel models. Multilevel modelling (MLM) is a development of regression analysis that takes account of the structure of the data. It is particularly important within our dataset as the students taking part in the study are grouped within schools and students within the same school may exhibit a certain amount of similar behaviour; MLM takes account of these potential similarities, allowing both the strength of relationships between variables and the standard errors associated with these to be estimated more accurately. In this article, the model is concerned with identifying the impact of school-level variables on a series of community cohesion outcomes. How these variables were selected and operationalised is discussed below, but once these variables were created, the relationship at each wave of the survey was explored using a multilevel model with the following basic equation

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$$Y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \left(\sum_{k=1}^{p} \beta_k X_{ijk} \right) + u_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

In this equation, Y_{ij} is the outcome of interest for the *i*th individual in the *j*th school, X_{ijk} is the value of the *k*th independent variable and β_k is the associated regression coefficient, u_j is the effect of the *j*th school on the outcome of interest and ε_{ij} is the error term denoting the difference between the predicted and actual score of the *i*th individual in the *j*th school on the outcome of interest. In order to simplify our results, non-significant coefficients were removed from the model using a backwards stepwise procedure[11] resulting in a final model for each outcome of interest containing only those effects that were found to be statistically significant.

The only exception to the procedure described above was for the outcome 'Participation in Civic Activities' (discussed below). This outcome was defined as a dichotomous variable equal to 1 if a young person had taken part in any of the relevant activities and equal to zero otherwise. In this instance, binary logistic MLM was used. The underlying formula for binary logistic MLM is identical to that above except that rather than Y_{ij} itself being the outcome the multilevel model explores the relationship between the predictors described below and the log of the odds on Y_{ij} being equal to 1.[12]

Selecting and operationalising the outcomes of interest

Measuring community cohesion remains a murky and contested area. In the policy arena, a rather narrow definition has tended to be used, at least in England. Indeed, one indicator in particular has been 'presented as capturing the main essence of community cohesion in a single survey question' (namely, the percentage of people who believe that people from different backgrounds 'get on well together' in their local area) (Demack et al., 2010: 17). As Ratcliffe et al. (2008: 14–16) point out, there are a number of limitations to this approach, both methodologically and substantively. However, such limitations are not limited to the policy arena; questions have also been raised about how the concept of cohesion has been operationalised in the academic literature. In particular, academic research in this area has tended to focus on exploring the role (or limits) of social capital in creating cohesive communities and societies (Putnam, 2007; Letki, 2008), using levels of generalised or interpersonal trust as a (if not the) key indicator. Yet critics of this approach suggest that trust (and indeed social capital more broadly) is only one indicator and that by focusing exclusively on this concept, many of the other dimensions of cohesion (at the social or community level) remain untapped (Hooghe et al., 2006).[13] Others go even further and argue that restricting the analysis to only one indicator may provide limited or misleading findings (Letki, 2008: 120). There is thus an increasing awareness that cohesion should be seen as a 'multi-faceted concept and [that] much closer attention needs to be paid to better capture is multi-dimensionality' (Laurence, 2011: 85). The relationship between these different dimensions may not always be clear or consistent (at least statistically) but by recognising that it does have multiple dimensions, and exploring this in empirical research, we can start to better understand these relationships (Green et al., 2006: 178–179).

In light of this, a range of outcome indicators were used in this analysis presented here. First, in keeping with previous cohesion studies, we included a measure of *interpersonal trust*. Second, despite its tendency to focus on using trust as the key indicator, this same literature also provided pointers towards additional indicators that could be used, including participating in neighbourhood projects, giving to good causes and doing voluntary work or giving informal help (Putnam, 2007: 149–150; Letki, 2008). Civic participation thus became an additional indicator in our analytical

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framework. In this case, due to the young age of the participants, we included a measure not just of actual *current participation* in civic activities (such as charitable fundraising) but also of their *norms and beliefs about civic participation*. Third, as noted above, current policy in England suggests that community cohesion also involves a sense of belonging and ties to one's community (DCSF, 2007). As a result, we included two further indicators that measured young people's sense of belonging to their communities (*community attachment*) and their ties to their community (*embedded in the community*).

Finally, following Laurence (2011) and Janmaat (2010), we also included a measure of students' tolerance of ethnic diversity. Although some argue that tolerance of ethnic diversity is not a precondition for cohesion (Chan et al., 2006: 284; Green et al., 2006: 5), one of the key tenets of community cohesion policy (at least for education) is that the 'diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued' (DCSF, 2007: 3); in this context, then, it would appear apposite to include an indicator that tries to capture this concept. However, for the purposes of this analysis we focused on ***in***tolerance, rather than tolerance, and operationalised this through a measure of students' reports of negative attitudes towards immigrants. This approach makes it easier to test the 'threat hypothesis' and the contention that higher levels of deprivation can lead to intolerance towards others.

Each of these outcomes were measured and operationalised using a composite factor, a technique that combines a series of related survey items to create an overall measure of the variable of interest. The items that were used in each factor are listed in Table 1. All but one of the factors (see below) were derived using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and the items used in each factor are listed in Table 1, along with the corresponding Cronbach's alpha score for each factor.[14] The latter is a measure of the internal reliability of factors, and in this case, the scores ranged from 0.55 to 0.72, which reflects an acceptable degree of reliability within this context.

Selecting and operationalising the predictors

This article is primarily concerned with the effects of school ethos and school demographics, and in particular of the level of ethnic diversity and the level of deprivation. Although ethnicity remains one of the key variables in educational research, the measurement of ethnicity among school populations remains limited. In this case, the level of ethnic diversity within a given school population was measured using the National Foundation for Education Research's (NFER) Register of Schools, which indicated the proportion of White British students in each school. The level of deprivation in the school population was then measured in a similar way (and from the same source), this time using the proportional take-up of free school meals (FSM) as an indicator of deprivation. Although using FSM as a measure of deprivation is also not without problems, it still remains a robust measure and one of the best available in the case of England (see Gorard, 2012).

As a measure of the democratic school climate, we developed a composite score from the CELS survey of schools, which ran alongside the survey of students and was completed by head teachers or senior leaders in the participating schools.[15] The items that we used in this score were as follows:

- The whole school is involved in discussions and decision-making
- There are good relationships within the school between staff and students
- Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities
- There are good active relationships with the wider community

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Table 1. Outcomes of interest and their measures.

Factor name	Items	Cronbach's α
Interpersonal trust	*How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?* • I trust people of my own age • I trust my neighbours • I trust my family • I trust teachers in my school	0.57
Intolerance (negative attitudes towards immigrants)	*How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?* • Britain does not have room to accept any more refugees • People who were not born in Britain, but who live here now, should have the same rights as everyone else[a] • People who were not born in Britain, but who live here now, should be required to learn English	0.61
Embedded in community	*How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the local neighbourhood in which you live?* • My neighbourhood is a place where neighbours look out for each other • My parents/carers have lots of friends in their neighbourhood • Most of my relatives live in my neighbourhood • There are lots of clubs and groups in my local neighbourhood that my friends and I could join • I have lots of friends in my neighbourhood	0.55
Community attachment	*How much do you feel part of the places listed below?* • I feel part of ... My neighbourhood • I feel part of ... My local town • I feel part of ... My school/college	0.72
Norms/beliefs about community participation	*How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?* • A good adult citizen takes an interest in local and community issues • A good adult citizen participates in activities to benefit people in the community • It is every person's duty to help out in their neighbourhood • People should look out for themselves, not for other people[a] • When local people campaign together, they can help to solve problems in the community	0.64
Actual participation in civic activities	*Respondents indicated that they took part in one or more of the following activities in the 12 months preceding the survey*: • Taken part in a sponsored activity for a group or club • Been part of a committee for a group or club • Helped to organise or run an event • Given any other help to a group or club • Helping in the local community • Raising money for a good cause or charity • Environmental clubs/groups • Human rights groups or organisations • School/pupil councils	0.67

[a]Responses reversed prior to inclusion in composite score.

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- Students have opportunities to be involved in running the school, through school/student councils
- Students are consulted about the development of school rules and policies

The Cronbach's alpha for this factor was 0.70, indicating that it was a sufficiently reliable to measure to be used within our analysis.

In addition to these three key predictors, we also included a number of control variables in the models to allow for the possibility that other community-, school- and/or individual-level variables may explain these outcomes. At the community level, for example, we included a measure of *community*-level deprivation, using data from the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).[16] At the school level, we included average achievement at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level; although this is a limited and examination-focused measure, it is often used as an overall indicator of school 'effectiveness' in England, and Demack et al. (2010: 38) found that students in low attaining schools tended to report lower levels of local cohesion. At the individual level, then, we included controls for ethnicity, gender, parental education and individual-level deprivation (see Putnam, 2007: 152; Laurence and Heath, 2008: 30). Individual level deprivation was measured here by the number of 'books in the home' (as reported by survey participants), a widely used proxy for measuring socio-economic status in research involving children and young people (as well as for measuring the cultural and educational resources in the home). While the 'books in the home' measure is not without limitations, it is highly correlated with household income and parent's educational attainment (see Scheutz et al., 2008 Baird, 2012: 493), and in the absence of data about actual household income or parental occupation,[17] this has been found to be a good proxy (Woessmann, 2008; Schuetz et al., 2008). Finally, by using longitudinal data, we were able to control for students' *prior* outcomes after Wave 1. The latter is particularly important, as this allowed us to separate those differences between groups that exist because of pre-existing differences from those that develop as students grow older. The results of this analysis are presented below.

Results

1. *Do higher proportions of ethnic diversity in the school community have a positive effect on the student attitudes, behaviours and attachments that are usually associated with community cohesion?*

Using these measures, the overall level of ethnic diversity in a school appears to have little or no relationship with the cohesion attitudes, behaviours and attachments of its students. Indeed, as Table 2(a) to 2(c) illustrates, school diversity was not statistically significant for most of the outcomes examined. Only a few exceptions to this pattern were identified. Wave 3 of the survey suggests that students in schools with a high proportion of White British students (i.e. schools with low levels of ethnic diversity) were more likely to express intolerance in the form of negative attitudes towards immigrants. In addition, at two data points, students in these schools were also less likely to agree with civic participation norms and less likely to take part in civic activities. However, while significant, the effects were very small, suggesting that the demographic make-up of the schools was not a key factor in shaping students' behaviours and attitudes in the realm of civic engagement.

These findings thus raise questions about the assumption that higher levels of diversity have a positive effect on the selected student attitudes, behaviours and attachments. Instead, these results suggest that the relationships in this case are best described as negligible or very limited.

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Table 2a. Results of multilevel modelling.

Table of fixed coefficients	Interpersonal trust				Intolerance (negative attitudes towards immigrants)			
	Wave 4 (age 17–18 years)	Wave 3 (age 15–16 years)	Wave 2 (age 13–14 years)	Wave 1 (age 11–12 years)	Wave 4 (age 17–18 years)	Wave 3 (age 15–16 years)	Wave 2 (age 13–14 years)	Wave 1 (age 11–12 years)
Predictor	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)
Intercept	38.98 (1.88)	35.87 (0.78)	41.44 (0.72)	63.43 (0.56)	12.27 (4.55)	45.15 (2.98)	40.41 (0.69)	50.7 (0.57)
School demographics and democratic climate								
School diversity (% White British pupils)	–	–	–	–	–	0.03 (0.02)	–	–
School deprivation (% entitled to free school meals)	−0.18 (0.06)	0.06 (0.02)	–	–	0.15 (0.06)	–	–	0.07 (0.03)
Democratic school climate	–	–	–	–	0.14 (0.05)	−0.07 (0.03)	–	–
Controls								
Prior score	0.45 (0.03)	0.39 (0.01)	0.28 (0.01)	NA	0.59 (0.02)	0.42 (0.01)	0.35 (0.01)	NA
Female	–	–	0.99 (0.35)	2.92 (0.28)	–	−3.85 (0.41)	–4.22 (0.36)	−4 (0.28)
Books in home – none (versus more than 200)	–	–	–	−12.36 (1)	–	–	–	–
Books in home – 1–10 (versus more than 200)	–	–	–	−4.41 (0.48)	–	–	1.32 (0.63)	1.66 (0.49)
Books in home – 10–50 (versus more than 200)	–	–	–	−1.38 (0.36)	–	1.14 (0.51)	0.94 (0.46)	1.23 (0.37)
Books in home – 51–100 (versus more than 200)	–	–	1.85 (0.41)	–	–	1.34 (0.48)	0.95 (0.44)	1.11 (0.35)
Books in home – 100–200 (versus more than 200)	–	–	1.52 (0.44)	1.17 (0.37)	–	–	–	–
Ethnicity – Asian	–	–	–	–	–	−10.11 (1)	−10.11 (0.75)	−7.29 (0.64)
Ethnicity – Black	−6.44 (3.02)	−2.83 (1.37)	−4.15 (1.14)	−3.97 (0.86)	–	−8.27 (1.42)	−8.31 (1.18)	−5.19 (0.88)
Ethnicity – other non-White	–	–	–	−4.4 (0.7)	−6.64 (2.56)	−6.68 (1.13)	−3.79 (0.91)	−5.74 (0.7)
Parental education – college or sixth form	–	–	1.16 (0.38)	1.57 (0.35)	–	–	–	–
Parental education – university	–	–	–	1.7 (0.35)	–	−1.62 (0.45)	−2.54 (0.4)	−2.44 (0.33)
Community-level deprivation (IDACI)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Average achievement in school	–	–	–	0.44 (0.17)	–	–	–	–

Source: *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study* 2001–2009. All results in this table are significant at the 5% level (i.e. $^{**}p < 0.05$).
SE: standard error; IDACI: Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index.

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Table 2b. Results of multilevel modelling.

Table of fixed coefficients	Embedded in neighbourhood				Community attachment			
	Wave 4 (age 17–18 years)	Wave 3 (age 15–16 years)	Wave 2 (age 13–14 years)	Wave 1 (age 11–12 years)	Wave 4 (age 17–18 years)	Wave 3 (age 15–16 years)	Wave 2 (age 13–14 years)	Wave 1 (age 11–12 years)
Predictor	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)
Intercept	16.68 (1.22)	20.74 (0.67)	23.43 (1.53)	48.45 (0.51)	27.6 (1.63)	29.07 (0.79)	35.36 (0.97)	56.37 (1.44)
School demographics and democratic climate								
School diversity (% White British pupils)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
School deprivation (% entitled to free school meals)	–	0.07 (0.03)	0.06 (0.02)	0.09 (0.03)	–	0.15 (0.03)	0.09 (0.04)	0.1 (0.04)
Democratic school climate	–	–	0.04 (0.02)	–	–	–	–	–
Controls								
Prior score	0.58 (0.03)	0.43 (0.01)	0.35 (0.01)	NA	0.47 (0.03)	0.39 (0.01)	0.29 (0.01)	NA
Female	–	–	1.1 (0.32)	1.7 (0.29)	–	–	1.61 (0.48)	1.58 (0.39)
Books in home – none (versus more than 200)	–	–	–	−6.16 (1.02)	−22.92 (8.29)	–	–	−12.58 (1.4)
Books in home – 1–10 (versus more than 200)	–	1.75 (0.71)	1.55 (0.55)	–	–	–	2.62 (0.92)	−4.58 (0.68)
Books in home – 10–50 (versus more than 200)	–	1.25 (0.53)	–	–	–	–	2.38 (0.7)	−2.29 (0.5)
Books in home – 51–100 (versus more than 200)	–	1.4 (0.51)	0.86 (0.37)	1.03 (0.34)	−3.75 (1.62)	–	2.81 (0.68)	–
Books in home – 100–200 (versus more than 200)	–	1.38 (0.53)	–	0.94 (0.37)	–	–	1.7 (0.71)	1.13 (0.52)
Ethnicity – Asian	–	4.14 (0.79)	3.85 (0.65)	3.05 (0.64)	–	4.02 (1.18)	2.39 (1.01)	–
Ethnicity – Black	–	–	–	–	–	4.5 (1.92)	–	–
Ethnicity – other non-White	–	–	–	−2.9 (0.71)	–	–	–	−4.57 (0.97)
Parental education – college or sixth form	–	–	0.97 (0.36)	1.32 (0.36)	–	–	1.41 (0.53)	2.19 (0.49)
Parental education – university	–	–	–	1.12 (0.35)	–	–	–	1.86 (0.49)
Community-level deprivation (IDACI)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Average achievement in school	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.93 (0.34)

Source: *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study* 2001–2009. All results in this table are significant at the 5% level (i.e. $^{**}p < 0.05$).
SE: standard error; IDACI: Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index.

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Table 2c. Results of multilevel modelling.

Table of fixed coefficients	Norms/beliefs about community participation			Actual participation in civic activities			
Predictor	Wave 4 (age 17–18 years)	Wave 3 (age 15–16 years)	Wave 2 (age 13–14 years)	Wave 4 (age 17–18 years)	Wave 3 (age 15–16 years)	Wave 2 (age 13–14 years)	Wave 1 (age 11–12 years)
	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Log odds (SE)	Log odds (SE)	Log odds (SE)	Log odds (SE)
Intercept	34.41 (1.71)	43.61 (1.18)	55.66 (1.03)	2.73 (0.77)	0.46 (0.2)	0.02 (0.16)	0.43 (0.12)
School demographics and democratic climate							
School diversity (% White British pupils)	–	−0.07 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.004 (0.002)	–	–
School deprivation (% entitled to free school meals)	–	–	–	−0.04 (0.01)	–	–	–
Democratic school climate	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Controls							
Prior score	0.42 (0.03)	0.29 (0.01)	NA	1.09 (0.19)	0.83 (0.06)	0.51 (0.05)	NA
Female	2.75 (0.88)	2.11 (0.32)	1.77 (0.26)	0.41 (0.18)	0.25 (0.05)	0.31 (0.05)	0.26 (0.04)
Books in home – none (versus more than 200)	–	−3.04 (1.22)	−6.67 (0.93)	−2.02 (0.77)	−0.8 (0.19)	–	−0.36 (0.12)
Books in home – 1–10 (versus more than 200)	–	−1.6 (0.58)	−2.38 (0.46)	–	−0.52 (0.09)	−0.27 (0.08)	−0.4 (0.06)
Books in home – 10–50 (versus more than 200)	–	−1.05 (0.39)	−1.29 (0.34)	−0.47 (0.21)	−0.21 (0.07)	−0.25 (0.06)	−0.31 (0.05)
Books in home – 51–100 (versus more than 200)	–	–	−0.72 (0.33)	–	−0.2 (0.07)	−0.12 (0.06)	−0.18 (0.05)
Books in home – 100–200 (versus more than 200)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ethnicity – Asian	–	–	3.34 (0.58)	–	–	–	–
Ethnicity – Black	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ethnicity – other non-white	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Parental education – college or sixth form	–	1.09 (0.38)	1.97 (0.32)	–	0.2 (0.06)	0.36 (0.06)	0.17 (0.04)
Parental education – university	–	1.6 (0.4)	2.37 (0.32)	–	0.35 (0.07)	0.47 (0.06)	0.26 (0.05)
Community-level deprivation (IDACI)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Average achievement in school	–	–	–	–	–	0.19 (0.05)	0.12 (0.04)

Source: *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study* 2001–2009. All results in this table are significant at the 5% level (i.e. $^{**}p < 0.05$).
SE: standard error; IDACI: Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index.

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2. *Do higher levels of deprivation in the school community have a negative effect on the student attitudes, behaviours and attachments that are usually associated with community cohesion?*

In comparison to ethnic diversity, the level of deprivation among the school population proved to be significantly associated with more of the outcomes of interest and at more data points (see Table 2(a) to 2(c)). For example, across three waves of the survey, the proportion of students entitled to FSM among a school's population was positively associated with student attachments and links to their community (for both outcomes, no relationship was found in Wave 4, which may be explained by the relatively small size of the sample). In other words, attending a more deprived school was associated with improved relationships within the community, a result which echoes Demack et al.'s (2010) findings but contrasts with some of the negative effects of deprivation found in other studies.

These findings also, therefore, appear to contradict the proposition put forward here, namely, that higher levels of deprivation in the school community have a negative effect on the selected student attitudes, behaviours and attachments. However, by looking across a range of indicators we can see that the impact of school-level deprivation is not always positive. At some data points (but notably, not all), high proportions of deprivation was also associated with more intolerance, and there was, on occasion, a negative relationship with interpersonal trust and participation in civic activities. It is also notable that the relationships that were significant were not always consistent. While there is a negative relationship between school deprivation and interpersonal trust in Wave 4, 2 years previously in Wave 3, this relationship was positive, and in the two previous waves, there was no significant relationship at all. Combined, then, these results indicate that the relationship between school deprivation and our community cohesion outcomes is not static or uniform.

3. *Does a democratic school climate have a positive impact on the student attitudes, behaviours and attachments that are usually associated with community cohesion?*

Across each of the models, the relationship between democratic school climate and the outcomes of interest was rarely significant. The only exceptions to this were found in relation to respondents' intolerance and their sense of embeddedness in their community. Once again, however, the relationships between school climate and these outcomes were not always consistent. For one, democratic school climate was only associated with embeddedness in community in Wave 2. Second, although the results in Wave 3 suggested that schools with democratic school climate are *less* likely to have students reporting negative attitudes to immigrants, in Wave 4 this relationship is reversed, suggesting that at this stage, students in these schools were *more* likely to express intolerance in the form of negative attitudes towards immigrants. In all three cases, the effects were small.

These findings differ notably from the propositions being tested here and the wider body of research it draws on. As noted above, previous research in the United States on youth citizenship and schools has shown that a school climate that is open and democratic is more likely to increase pupils' levels of tolerance, trust and civic commitment (Flanagan and Stout, 2010: 752). Yet in this dataset, democratic school climate was not significantly associated with trust or civic engagement and only associated with (in)tolerance at one data point (namely, in Wave 2). Some of the reasons for, and implications of, this are discussed in the final section.

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Discussion and conclusion

This article set out to examine the informal role of schools in socialising young people into the attitudes, behaviours and attachments that are often associated with community cohesion, implicitly or explicitly (on the informal role of schools in democratic citizenship learning, see Lundahl and Olson, 2013). In doing so, the article focused in particular on school context variables that have been posited (both in policy and in academia) as possible contributors to fostering community cohesion – namely, school climate and school demographics. The relationship between school climate and citizenship has been established in the citizenship education literature from the United States (see, for example, Homana et al., 2005), but its (potential) role in community cohesion remains little explored in empirical research. Likewise, there is a dearth of research on the implications of school diversity and deprivation, and the research that does exist has used limited indicators and produced inconclusive results (not unlike the broader literature on community cohesion itself, as discussed above). In this article, therefore, we analysed the impact of our predictors on a range of indicators, in an effort to try to capture the complexity of community cohesion and explore the ways in which children and young people acquire the attributes that are associated with individuals in a cohesive society.

In this context, this exploratory analysis produced three key findings. First, the analysis presented above suggests that even when using a range of indicators, the democratic climate of a school had little or no effect on young people's attitudes, attachments and behaviours once other individual- and school-level variables were taken into account. This finding confirms the results of previous analyses of this dataset (see Benton et al., 2008: 82–83), in which it was suggested that any benefits of school climate may be *in*direct rather than direct and this may thus be an avenue to examine in future research. However, the fact that this dataset is longitudinal and can control for prior outcomes may also be a contributing factor.

Second, and similarly, we also found little or no evidence of a relationship between the diversity of a school's population and the community cohesion outcomes of their students. This study did not include a measure of interaction or contact between ethnic groups within a school (or, for that matter, of contact between different socio-economic groups); further analysis of the relationship between school diversity and community cohesion is therefore required in future research. However, the results of this analysis do nonetheless suggest that the sheer fact of having an ethnically diverse school population does not necessarily lead to students reporting attitudes towards others or attachments to their communities that are significantly different from students in schools with low levels of ethnic diversity. And while there appears to be a significant relationship with civic engagement at some stages in youth development, the effects are small. These patterns thus suggest that, in this case anyway, the proportion of school diversity has little bearing on community cohesion outcomes examined here or that, at the very least, further research is required before we can assume that diversifying the intake of school populations is a useful policy solution as is sometimes suggested.

This is not to say that ethnicity is not a relevant factor.[18] Table 2(a) to 2(c) also illustrates that for most of the outcomes we examined, individual ethnic background was statistically significant at some stage, although the effects varied over time, across ethnic groups, and in their strength and effects. Describing and explaining these relationships in any detail are beyond the scope of this article, but it is notable that there was little or no relationship between ethnic background and the two civic participation outcomes that we examined here. This contrasts with the above finding that students in less diverse schools are less likely to participate in civic activities and less likely to agree with civic norms about community participation. These contrasting results warrant further attention to explore why schools with a high proportion of White British students are less likely to engage in or have positive attitudes towards civic participation.

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There was, in comparison, more evidence that school deprivation was associated with the outcomes of interest, but the results were not uniform or consistent. High levels of deprivation within the school community appears to have mixed effects – with some outcomes being positively associated with high levels of deprivation (namely, student attachments and links to their community) and some, on occasion, being negatively related to the outcomes of interest (i.e. increasing intolerance and decreasing interpersonal trust and participation in civic activities). Variable perceptions of *relative* deprivation may explain some of these disparities (Benton et al., 2008: 65), and this is a theory that will be examined in future research. That said, within these models it was deprivation at the *personal* level (as measured by the number of books in the home) rather than deprivation at the school level that appeared to have the strongest relationship with community cohesion, as personal deprivation was significantly associated with each of the outcomes of interest (which echoes the findings of Laurence and Heath, 2008; Letki, 2008 and others). Again, it is not possible within this article to describe or explore these relationships in any detail. However, it is important to note that the relationships we found were not necessarily stable and instead sometimes waned or changed as the participants got older. This becomes especially apparent when one looks at how the results change *across* the different waves of the survey. As Table 2(a) to 2(c) illustrates, once students' prior outcomes were taken into account (i.e. after Wave 1), the relationship between personal deprivation and these outcomes can change considerably, becoming weaker, and in some cases, even disappearing altogether. This suggests that perhaps personal deprivation is more important at some points than others and that cross-sectional studies may not give us sufficient insight into how (and when) this variable impacts on community cohesion.

Indeed, the strongest relationship that emerged in this analysis was one between students' *prior* outcomes and their current outcomes. Once the models were able to take these prior outcomes into account, it became clear that these were by far the strongest and most consistent predictor of students' *current* attitudes, attachments and behaviours. The effect also appears to get stronger over time; that is, students' attitudes when they are 16 years are a stronger predictor of their attitudes at age 18 than their attitudes at age 14 are of their attitudes when they are 16 years. This suggests that students' relationship with community cohesion may stabilise as they progress through adolescence, a finding that also emerged in similar analyses of young people's citizenship and civic outcomes (see Keating et al., 2010, 2011).

What, then, can we conclude from these results? Some of the measures that have been used in this analysis were, by necessity, crude and limited; but despite these limitations, this exploratory analysis provides some initial insights and points to some ways in which research and measures in this area could be developed in the future. First, the analysis confirmed that the use of multiple outcome measures can shed light on the complex relationship between the predictors and outcomes of interest. For example, it highlighted that the nature of these relationships are not stable or uniform – high levels of deprivation (and to a lesser extent, diversity) in the school community can have positive effects on some aspects of students' relationships with their community (such as their attachment and links to their community) but negative effects on others (such as attitudes towards immigrants, interpersonal trust and participation in civic activities). Second, the variable results produced from these multilevel models highlight that it is useful to take a longitudinal view of community cohesion, at least in respect of how children and young people acquire the attitudes, attachments and behaviours that are associated with individuals in a cohesive society. By looking across different waves of data, we found that some predictors waned in importance as the cohort got older, a trend which cross-sectional data would not be able to identify and which could result in the role of some variables being overlooked or overstated. Third, and relatedly, the importance of prior outcomes in these models suggests that young people's

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relationships with their communities are formed at an early stage and that early experiences continue to shape attitudes and behaviours in the medium and long term. This does not necessarily mean, however, that we should be pessimistic about changing attitudes and behaviours among older teenagers. Elsewhere we have argued that precisely because youth attitudes and behaviours stabilise over time '... the chances of learning being retained into adulthood would be higher if [citizenship education initiatives] continued through to the end of secondary education ...' (Keating et al., 2010: 67).

Finally, what is clear above all, however, is that here is a need for future theoretical and empirical research on cohesion and the impact of diversity, deprivation and school climate. The analysis presented here is still just exploratory and limited to the case of England. As the debates in the wider cohesion literature have shown (Putnam, 2007), the dynamics of cohesion can differ considerably cross-nationally. Much remains to be done if we are to understand the relationship between schools and the development of attitudes, attachments and behaviours that may contribute to creating community cohesion, much less devise policy interventions that might assist in the process. Chief among these next steps should be the development of better measures and data on school climate (particularly with regard to treatment of ethnic and religious minorities) and on interactions between communities *within* schools (which may give a better indication of how diversity or relative deprivation in schools can impact upon community cohesion). Schools are regularly viewed as a vehicle for fixing the problems that have been identified in the local community or society as a whole. Without improved data and measures, however, it will continue to be difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the contribution they can make to this complex process. On the basis of the data we do have, it would seem that merely tinkering with the demographic make-up or democratic climate of schools will do little to help communities face the current challenges of creating cohesion.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Notes

1. For an introduction to the cohesion and integration debates in Canada, see Soroka et al. (2007) and Stolle et al. (2008); in France, see Osler and Starkey (2009), and in Sweden, see Starkey and Osler (2009).
2. For most countries, these debates and challenges were not, in fact, 'new'. Countries such as Canada and England, for example, have a long history of diversity both 'within' and from previous immigrations (see, for example, Soroka et al., 2007). However, this continuity is often either overlooked and/or the nature of the challenges is presented as qualitatively and quantitatively different from those of the past.
3. See Chan et al. (2006).
4. On the evolution of official definitions of community cohesion between 2001 and 2010, see DCLG (2010). For critiques of the ideas and ideologies underpinning social and community cohesion policies in the United Kingdom, see, for example, Mason (2010), Cremin and Warwick (2008) and Cheong et al. (2007).
5. See http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/foi/disclosuresaboutchildrenyoungpeoplefamilies/a0077108/community-cohesion

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6. However, Green et al. (2006) have examined the relationship between educational systems and structures and cohesion at the *societal* level.
7. The characteristics of the sample of participating schools was checked against the characteristics of maintained schools nationally and were found to be representative in terms of region, GCSE attainment, percentage of students eligible for free school meals (FSM) and the percentage of students in English as an additional language. There was no within-school sample as whole year groups took part and so no requirement to check the representativeness of students within schools.
8. In terms of age of students and year groups, the following classification applies in schools in England. Year 7 students: age 11–12 years; Year 9: age 13–14 years; Year 11: age 15–16 years; Year 13 age 17–18 years.
9. In all, 58% of the original sample took part again in Wave 2, while in Wave 3, 38% of the original sample was retained and in Wave 4, just 5% of the original sample took part in the survey. However, we are confident that where possible using the whole set of respondents provides the most robust approach to analysis. New participants also completed the survey at each time point, which to some extent replaced those that had dropped out, and subsequent analysis revealed little difference between the responses of young people who were involved in the original survey compared to those who joined later.
10. This attrition, although large, was not necessarily surprising as Year 11 is a key transition point for young people in England. On completion of their Year 11 studies, a sizeable proportion of young people leave their current school to enter the workforce, start vocational training or continue their studies at another school or Sixth Form College. As a result, many of the participants in the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) cohort had moved from the school where they had completed the previous CELS questionnaires, and in these cases, we were often unable to collect data for Wave 4.
11. Under this procedure, an initial model is fitted using all independent variables. At this point, if any of the coefficients in the model are found not to be statistically significant, the least significant coefficient is removed and the model is refitted. This procedure is repeated until all the coefficients in the model are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.
12. That is, Y_{ij} in the above equation is replaced with $\log[P(Y_{ij} = 1)/(1 - P(Y_{ij} = 1))]$. In addition to this, the final error term is removed as the variance at the student level occurs naturally in that we are dealing with probabilities of events. An over-dispersion parameter is also added to the model to account for the possibility that the variance in outcomes may be marginally different to the amount of variance expected from the standard binomial model.
13. For a discussion of some of the key measurement problems, see Hooghe et al. (2006), Laurence (2011) and Gijsberts et al. (2012).
14. To calculate the factor scores for each outcome of interest, responses to each of the associated items were scored; this usually involved giving *strongly disagree* a score of zero, *disagree* a score of 1, *neither agree nor disagree* a score of 2, *agree* a score of 3 and *strongly agree* a score of 4. Once the individual item scores were calculated, the scores from each item were then summed to create overall factor scores for each outcome of interest. The internal reliability of each of these scores was then evaluated using Cronbach's alpha scores, which were calculated on the data collected from young people in Year 13 (aged 17 or 18 years). To facilitate this, factor scores were rescaled so that possible scores ranged between 0 and 100.
15. The number of head teachers providing this information varied throughout the study. These data were collected from 75 schools in 2007, 81 schools in 2005 and 84 schools in 2003. New data from schools were not collected in 2009, and so analysis of this year's data made use of the most recent measurement of school ethos; namely, data from 2007.
16. This variable was constructed based upon the area within which the school was situated rather than directly upon the area in which individual students live.

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17. CELS was unable to survey parents and did not include questions about in the student survey about parental income or occupation until Wave 4 (when the students were in Year 13 and aged 17–18 years). In self-administered surveys, student responses to questions about parental income or occupation are unreliable, as students are often unable to provide accurate information about these issues. However, the Wave 4 did include questions about parental occupation, which in turn allowed us to test whether its absence from the models was important. To this end, the multilevel models were re-run for Year 13 with this additional information included. It was found that parental occupation was only statistically significantly related to two of the seven outcomes once the other background variables available for analysis were taken into account. Furthermore, for those outcomes where parental occupation was significantly related to outcomes, it made little difference to the other coefficients included within the model. For this reason, we are confident that the unavailability of parental occupation as a predictor is not a serious weakness in our analysis.
18. The results also confirmed that there is a relationship between community cohesion and gender and parental education (see Putnam, 2007: 152; Laurence and Heath, 2008: 30).

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